MU professor, researcher dies of gastric cancer

Friday, October 21, 2011 | 2:51 p.m. CDT
BY CHRISTA PENNING

COLUMBIA — Cuihua Zhang died Oct. 1, 2011, in College Station, Texas, after a brief battle with gastric cancer. She was 49.

**Dr. Zhang was an associate professor at MU in the departments of internal medicine, medical pharmacology and physiology and nutrition and exercise physiology.** She was a researcher at MU’s Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center.

Dr. Zhang is survived by her husband, Marvin Harris; a son, Zhen Liu; one sister and three brothers.

A memorial service will be held from 5:15 to 6:30 p.m on Nov. 2 at MU’s Acuff Auditorium. A memorial fund has been established in Zhang’s name.
Curators narrowing search for system president


KANSAS CITY -- The governing body of the University of Missouri system hopes to have a short list of candidates within two weeks for the presidency of the four-campus system.

The Board of Curators is seeking a replacement for former President Gary Forsee, who stepped down in January to care for his wife as she battled cancer. The curators had private discussions about the search during their two-day meeting this week in Kansas City, and board Chairman Warren Erdman said the curators are "making great progress."

"We are narrowing down the field to the point where I would think within the next two weeks, we will probably be to a group of finalists," Erdman said during a post-meeting news conference on the University of Missouri-Kansas City campus. "We're getting down to a small pool."

The curators had reported having more than 100 potential candidates for the job of overseeing the Missouri system, and Erdman said they will take their short list to a 20-member advisory committee formed earlier this year to help the curators with the search. He said the curators have not decided how many candidates will be on the short list.

He also said there is no firm deadline for when a new president will be selected.

"I have said from the beginning from this process that I will not set deadlines, because when you set deadlines, you preclude some of your options," Erdman told reporters.

The Missouri system, with its flagship campus in Columbia and others in Kansas City, Rolla and St. Louis, has nearly 72,000 students and 7,800 faculty members. It also includes the University of Missouri health care system, which provides services around the state.

Forsee, a former chairman and chief executive of Sprint Nextel Corp., was hired by the curators in December 2007.
Until Forsee's replacement is named, Steve Owens is serving as acting president.

He'd previously served as the system's general counsel and has said he's not interested in the president's job.
UM curators to narrow presidential search to finalists

During 2 1/2 days of meetings, the UM System Board of Curators made substantial progress in the search for a new system leader.

The curators hope to narrow the field of candidates to a point that a list of finalists can be presented to the presidential search advisory committee within the next two weeks, board Chairman Warren Erdman said Friday.

Erdman would not comment on the number of remaining candidates and reiterated there is no timeline for making a decision. Former system President Gary Forsee resigned in January, and Steve Owens has been serving as interim president.

The press conference followed a closed executive session with the full board that lasted more than 90 minutes.

On Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, curators met for 10 hours at The Raphael Hotel in Kansas City to talk about the presidential search. Before the meeting, Erdman said the committee would be conducting routine business and no action would be taken.

During meetings Thursday, the board approved a range of topics, including a new retirement plan.

No new information was introduced about the retirement plan Thursday, but at an Oct. 4 meeting in St. Louis, curators reviewed a final proposal presented by Betsy Rodriguez, UM System vice president for human resources.

The approved 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 throughout the first half of next year.

'The arts are big business'
Before entering into executive session Friday morning, the curators held a public meeting focused on the system's role in advancing arts education in the state. Erdman set the stage by emphasizing the economic impact of the arts nationwide.

"The arts are big business, and they are indispensable to economic development," Erdman said. "Make no mistake, creating arts is central to economic development."

Erdman also introduced a short video highlighting some of the work being done to advance arts on the four UM campuses.

It showed the work of one student composer from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the role of an art history professor at Missouri University of Science and Technology in restoring a film about Thomas Hart Benton. The video also showed an overview of MU's Museum of Art and Archaeology and how the University of Missouri-St. Louis's performing arts center serves as a creative laboratory on campus.

Following Erdman's speech, interim President Owens reiterated that arts education is a fundamental part of the system's mission to produce well-rounded graduates.

"Art education expands the minds, enhancing other fields of study," Owens said. "If you want better doctors and engineers, educate them in the arts."

Owens pushed the board to continue to believe in the arts and humanities as a vital part of school curriculum. He said his concern is that if not careful, the system could become too concerned about monetizing education to get the most return for its investment in students.

Owens argued that as educators, the system needs to take the time and money to educate students in the arts to create critical-thinking, problem-solving members of society.

Fostering arts appreciation
Following Owens' speech, the system's four chancellors spoke about the arts on their campuses and how they are part of each school's identity in the community.

UMKC Chancellor Leo Morton spoke of the school's mission to become a performing arts leader in Kansas City and maintained the university has done that by strengthening partnerships with local art centers, including the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.
"The Kauffman Center alone is a national icon, and at UMKC we are contributing to this regional image in some major ways," Morton said.

Morton also emphasized the connections arts groups in Kansas City have to the university. He said 15 arts groups trace their genesis to UMKC arts faculty, students or alumni.

MU Chancellor Brady Deaton spoke about the work the MU School of Music does to foster arts in Columbia, including the Mizzou New Music Initiative.

The program provides scholarships for student composers and the opportunity for graduate-level students to perform original works of music. Deaton said hearing students' original compositions has been one of the most exciting experiences of his career.

"It's an incredible experience I would invite you to enjoy, because it's not often you get a chance to do that," he said.

Deaton went on to highlight award-winning alumni and faculty, including assistant art professor J. Brett Grill, who recently unveiled his seven-foot bronze statue of former President Gerald Ford, and MU playwright David Crespy, who was recently awarded a national Gold Medallion at the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.

Chancellors from UMSL and Missouri S&T also spoke about the importance of arts in their educational communities.

UMSL Chancellor Thomas George said his university is deeply involved in St. Louis by sponsoring galleries and public radio and reaching out to students through precollegiate arts outreach programs.

George said the project to put UMSL offices, classrooms and St. Louis Public Radio in Grand Center puts the school at the center of the local arts community.

Missouri S&T interim Chancellor Warren Wray said that even as a science and technology campus, Missouri S&T is still actively involved in the arts and strives to be an arts center in Rolla.

Erdman said after the presentations it's comforting to see all four universities engaged in the arts and in their students.
Health 'wired' for success

The curators concluded their open session meeting with the annual University Health System report from Hal Williamson, University of Missouri Health System vice chancellor. The report included an update of the Tiger Institute for Health Innovation, created by a partnership between MU and Cerner Corp.

Williamson said the institute aims to be able to analyze how the hospital uses technology to practice better medicine and was recently recognized as one of the nation's "Most Wired" hospitals, according to the 2011 Most Wired Survey, which recognizes the most technologically advanced hospitals in the country.

The board's next regularly scheduled meeting is set for Dec. 8-9 at UMSL.
MU numbers
Enrollment leads peer institutions

By HENRY J. WATERS III
Sunday, October 23, 2011

The surprising news that the University of Missouri’s undergraduate enrollment growth rate currently leads the nation reminds us where our real economic engine resides.

Since 2002, MU undergraduate ranks increased by 32 percent, exceeding all other members of the American Association of Universities (AAU) and of the Big 12. AAU runner-up UCal-San Diego grew by 24 percent; in the Big 12, Texas Tech was second with 13 percent.

The numbers include online students, who are important to the university but not so much to local economic development.

Most interesting to me, the largest growth comes from out-of-state students. Missouri demographics are producing fewer high school graduates. Probably more important, MU out-of-state tuition is competitive with comparable institutions.

And, of course, all public colleges are bargains compared with the most sought-after privates.

If current economic trends continue, schools like MU will experience growing competition from community colleges and smaller four-year public universities offering good basic education at substantially lower cost — not to mention a challenge from increasing online study opportunities.

There will always be a place for a full-service university like MU offering a good range of programs at relatively reasonable on-campus pricing. Maintaining the appeal on such campuses will be a tough balancing act, but MU is in as good a competitive position as most.

Back to the raw economic development effect, anyone who has taken a spin around the city lately is impressed with the boom in private student housing. Campus-owned apartments can’t keep up, leading to hundreds of new rooms scattered around the community, and more are on the horizon. This building boom is a local economic driver. If the rooms stay full, the temporary construction-related stimulus will give way to more permanent operational spending.

And local retailers of everything from eats and drinks to shoes and socks are happy to see more students milling about.
Despite current squeezes, higher education continues to be our major economic driver. Escalating enrollment costs will have to be tempered somehow, but public subsidies for college costs will continue at a pace private companies only can dream about.

Finally, important to MU growth is the appearance of the campus. MU has become one of the most attractive campuses anywhere. I can remember when it was not so. Give then-Chancellor Barbara Uehling a lot of credit for noticing upon her arrival the dismal condition of buildings and grounds. She and her minions in Jesse Hall launched a big campaign that shows off today.

Another milestone was the designation and implementation of the MU campus as a botanical garden, a naming that led to plants in the ground, so to speak. Beautiful landscaping is bound to impress visitors. Having cast the die, MU requires workers to do extraordinary maintenance to keep up with the campus-wide garden.

Not too long ago, I visited the campus of the University of Virginia, the storied location of Thomas Jefferson's architecture. Our group could not help noticing MU is more attractive.

While extolling the virtues of bricks and mortar — and grass — we should quickly mention the most important element of all: a solid educational program given top priority by Chancellor Brady Deaton & Co. Deaton is bogged down right now with athletic conference shenanigans, but his primary goals for MU remain rooted in the classroom, not the playing field.

Indeed, this academic sensibility is essential in the officer responsible for making a conference decision.

May the MU tribe increase, but, mostly, may its soul prosper.

HJW III

One father is worth more than a hundred schoolmasters.
Children with autism have distinct facial features: Study

October 21, 2011 2:47 PM

Children's faces were mapped with 17 points to determine if there were differences.

(CBS) Scientists may not agree on what causes autism, but a new study that looked at kids' facial characteristics might help researchers understand the origins of the developmental disorder.

The study found that children with autism have distinct differences in facial characteristics than typically developing children.

"There is no clear answer about whether autism is caused by genetics or by environmental influences," study author Dr. Kristina Aldridge, assistant professor of anatomy at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, said in a written statement. "If we can identify when these facial changes occur, we could pinpoint when autism may begin to develop in a child."

For the study - published in the Oct. 14 issue of Molecular Autism - researchers compared facial features in 64 boys with autism with faces of 41 typically developing boys, all 8-12 years old, with a 3-D camera system. After mapping out 17 points on faces, the researchers found significant differences between the two groups.

The study found children with autism had wider eyes, and a "broader upper face," compared with typically developing children. According to the study, children with autism also had a shorter middle region of the face - including the nose and cheeks - as well as a wider mouth and philtrum, the divot above the lip and below the nose.
The study also found that children with more severe autism traits such as behavioral problems, language difficulties, and repetitive behaviors had distinct facial differences from other children with milder autism.

Aldridge said finding out when these changes occur will enable researchers to focus on finding the disorders' underlying causes.

"Knowing that point in time could lead us to identify a genetic cause, a window of time when the embryo may be susceptible to an environmental factor, or both," she said.

One out of every 110 children has an autism spectrum disorder (ASD). People with an ASD may experience difficulties with social interaction, communication, intelligence, or behavior.

The CDC has more information on autism.
UM adopts revised employee benefits plan

By JANESCE SILVEY

KANSAS CITY — The University of Missouri's governing board voted to implement a new benefits plan for employees yesterday, ending a discussion that has spanned about two years.

The plan will require future employees to contribute part of their pay into their retirement packages. It will be offered to new employees who are hired starting Oct. 1, 2012.

Curator Don Downing of Webster Groves was the sole "no" vote. The Board of Curators will vote in December on vendors that will work with employees to navigate investment options.

Employees now have a plan that guarantees them retirement benefits totaling 2.2 percent of their salary for every year of employment once they're eligible to retire.

The university contributes 7.25 percent of salary into the plan, and employees pay a 1 percent or 2 percent match based on income level. Current faculty and staff will remain in that system.

Under a new combination plan, future hires will have some guarantee, with benefits totaling 1 percent of salary. UM will contribute the amount needed to fund that benefit.

Workers will still contribute 1 percent to 2 percent, depending on income. Employees also will have the option of contributing money into a defined contributions, or savings, plan with UM matching as much as 3 percent of pay.

That's a slight change from previous models the system presented to the board. At one time, the system had considered requiring workers to contribute to the savings plan, but that is no longer the case.

Former employees who return to work at a UM System campus after the new plan is implemented will be allowed to stay in the defined benefits plan if they were previously vested and did not opt to cash out when they left, said Betsy Rodriguez, vice president of human resources.

The new plan allows the university to better moderate risk and volatility, UM Interim President Steve Owens said, noting that contribution-based plans are gaining in popularity among colleges.

But it's not a cheaper option, at least in the short term. The new plan could cost the university an additional $173,000 on the low end to $518,000 on the high end when it is implemented next year, Rodriguez said.

However, in 20 years, the new benefits plan is expected to reduce UM's unfunded liability by $300 million.
Missouri authorizes chancellor to make final conference decision

By Steve Weiberg

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - Missouri appeared to move closer Friday toward a jump to the Southeastern Conference, authorizing its chancellor to make a final call -- which he said would come soon - and moving to defuse concerns in the state about the potential economic impact of a move.

University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton has been authorized to make conference alignment decisions by Missouri's board of curators.

"We're not looking at a long time frame. We want to confirm where we are ... as rapidly as possible," Chancellor Brady Deaton said at the end of three days of meetings of the school's board of curators.

"We do understand that there are ripple effects to all these decisions as conferences seek to reach that magic number that they want to see themselves at for effective competition. We don't feel pressure from that, let me say. We're looking out for what's best for the University of Missouri."

And so, a domino line of conferences awaiting a decision - from the Big 12 and SEC to the Big East, Mountain West and Conference USA - must wait a little longer. The Big 12 is bracing for a fourth announcement in 16 months that one of its member schools is leaving. If, somehow, Missouri doesn't make the move, the SEC will have to look elsewhere for a 14th school to fill out its lineup when Texas A&M comes aboard next year.

The struggling Big East is hoping to replenish its membership, and it has targeted five schools in the Mountain West and Conference USA and football independent Navy. But at least some of those institutions are wary of additional Big East defections, which could come if the Big 12 moves in on Louisville or West Virginia - or both, if the league opts to expand to 12 members.

Missouri officials made it clear Friday: Their concern also is about stability in a Big 12 that already has seen Nebraska, Colorado and A&M opt out.
"Those actions, I think in a sense, speak for themselves," said Deaton, a former agriculture economics and sociology professor who became Missouri's chancellor in 2004. "We assess those. They're a part of the environment we are recognizing and evaluating."

Missouri's board on Friday gave Deaton "authority to make decisions regarding conference alignment and to negotiate contracts related to such actions."

It also directed Deaton to work on staging a Missouri-anchored invitational basketball tournament and a football game against a "traditional regional rival" in Kansas City if the Tigers were to change their conference affiliation. That addresses worries in Kansas City about losing the Big 12 basketball tournament without Missouri in the conference and the Missouri-Kansas football game now played annually in the NFL Chiefs' Arrowhead Stadium.

Both events raise the city's sports profile and carry substantial economic impact.

Though the action seemed to point all the more toward Missouri's departure from the Big 12, athletics director Mike Alden said "to take that a step further and say, by extension, does that mean x, y and z? I wouldn't necessarily say that. I think what we heard, at least from our board today, is how important that Kansas City is to the University of Missouri, how important the University of Missouri is to Kansas City."

Deaton acknowledged exchanging information with the SEC. He also said a move, if Missouri makes it, likely "would be applicable to the next year" - countering a contention by interim Big 12 commissioner Chuck Neinas nine days earlier that it wouldn't happen before 2013.

Neinas released a statement Friday saying "it is propitious" that the school CEOs on the Big 12's board of directors are scheduled to meet Monday. "Obviously," he said, "conference membership will be thoroughly discussed at that time."
It's 'when,' not 'if' for MU move to SEC

BY VAHE GREGORIAN • vgregorian@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8199 | Posted: Sunday, October 23, 2011 12:10 am

COLUMBIA, Mo. • As of Friday, the true question of Mizzou's potential move from the Big 12 Conference to the Southeastern had shifted from "if" to "when" after the University of Missouri Board of Curators acted to authorize MU chancellor Brady Deaton to go from exploring options to acting on them.

The next phase of MU's withdrawal scheme could come as soon as Monday, when the Big 12 board is scheduled to have its fall meeting in Dallas, and there are rumblings of news being announced later in the week in Columbia.

Moreover, several media outlets wrote Saturday of specific elements of the move.

The Birmingham (Ala.) News reported that barring any legal or financial entanglements SEC leaders would approve the addition of Mizzou if MU agrees to play in the Eastern Division; the Columbia Daily Tribune was told by multiple sources that MU officials expect to be in the East.

That would make annual football opponents of Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, South Carolina, Tennessee and Vanderbilt.

The league also is believed to favor extending its scheduling model to include a built-in annual game against a school from the other division, with Arkansas or Texas A&M being the two most logical choices for MU.

It's not yet known whether the SEC would seek to have an eight- or nine-game conference schedule with a 14-team league.

However it plays out, the move has been bubbling up for weeks from MU fans, who inundated curators and Deaton's office with pro-SEC e-mails.

If not exactly unanimous, especially in the Kansas City area, many seem thrilled at the idea.

"The Big 12 is not a stable place," said longtime fan Dick Feldman, a St. Louis attorney and former president of the Tiger Club in St. Louis. "We've just recently seen that Texas has been looking to leave the conference as early as 2009, they looked again last year, they looked this year. Oklahoma the same thing."

To say nothing of the three that already have left.
The prospect of leaving that uncertainty to go to the best athletic conference in the country, the one that has produced the last five football national champions, is too enticing to pass up, he added.

"I know some people don't think we (would) have a lot in common, but if you look at it we border three of the states, we have traditions in football just like they do and I think we're a great fit," Feldman said. "Academically, with us added, they would have four (American Association of University) schools," one more than the Big 12.

As for competing in football, Feldman said, "Yes, it's going to be very competitive for us, but that's what it's all about. You get to compete with the best, and we get to see where we are."

Feldman acknowledged that MU will have to upgrade its facilities and budgets, each of which would be in the bottom third of the SEC.

But pointing to MU's progress in facilities in the last decade or so and 40 wins in the previous four seasons, he added, "Now we're a school that the SEC sees as a fit for them, so if they think we can compete, we think we can compete."

Feldman said if MU leaves he would miss the old Big 12 rivals, particularly Kansas. Then again, he noted MU essentially has made a statement it wants to play KU annually in Kansas City.

"So that's on Kansas, not us," he said. "We want to keep playing that game."

MU freshman Steve Goldberg, from New Jersey, says some of his friends around campus don't want Mizzou to leave because of the risk to the KU game and, in fact, worries about its ability to compete in the SEC.

"But when you look at it financially," he said, "it's definitely going to be for the best in the long run, I think."
Plenty of blame to spread around for Border closing

By SAM MELLINGER

So far, conference realignment has been terrific at making executives in college sports and television richer while steadily stepping on what's best for athletes and fans. As if that's not backward enough, we now have the most misguided decision and worst unintended consequence of them all.

The Border War rivalry between Kansas and Missouri, which has roots in the Civil War and was played on a football field in Kansas City before they were even in a conference together, is now effectively dead.

Dead because of ego. Dead because of pride. Dead because of delusion and testosterone and short-sightedness.

Missed is an obvious and undisputable fact: Just when a unique and irrationally heated rivalry is blessed with even more reason for beautiful and mutual hatred ... it dies.

The leaders on each side have done only enough to give their own biased fans something to blame the other guy for, creating an unnecessary cold war whose only victims will be their biggest rivalry and a city that's been among their best allies.

In the absence of good professional teams, Kansas City has embraced becoming one of the country's best college sports towns. This place has been nothing but good to KU and MU, and now we become collateral damage.

Missouri and Kansas can tell themselves reassuring lies about why it went down like this, but all that matters is that Kansas City and fans on both sides of the state line will be without some of our most intense and fun sports days of the year.

Kansas is too blind from envy to see it, mistaking stupidity for valor and deciding to take its basketball and go home if MU leaves the conference.

And Missouri is too arrogant from an SEC invitation to recognize it, too busy plotting its Big 12 escape for any sincere effort to save one of the best rivalries in all of sports.
Maybe it's the shine of SEC gold (MU), the blind pride in a league that's been a steady headache for nearly two years (KU) or the emotion of the moment (both), but can nobody see what's happening?

Kansas didn't get an invitation to a richer and more stable conference, so it will take its frustration out on the Heartland's best rivalry?

Missouri is done with the Big 12 and carries bitterness toward Texas, so MU won't fight for what is always its most important basketball games, and now perhaps its most lucrative football game?

Kansas people will blame this on Missouri, of course, saying that if MU really valued their relationship, it would stay in the Big 12. MU will recognize this as petty — why would it turn down more money and stability just because Kansas might have its feelings hurt?

Missouri people will blame this on Kansas, of course, saying they've made it perfectly clear they'd like to continue the rivalry after leaving the Big 12. This would be a terrific point, were it not for the fact that Friday's news conference was the first time KU administrators heard about MU's desire to keep playing.

That was either an irresponsible oversight by MU or a carefully planned way to push blame to KU, but either way it was done without any sincere effort to preserve the Border War.

KU fans think Missouri is scheduling itself about eight blowout losses every fall in the SEC, MU fans think Kansas fans should stop whining about an invitation they wish they had, and neither side is honest enough to recognize they'd do the same thing in the opposite situation.

Sadly, this is what we all expected to happen. Kansas basketball coach Bill Self was the first to say publicly that he wouldn't commit to playing Missouri if the Tigers left the Big 12.

But these decisions are bigger than basketball coaches, even ones as successful and beloved as Self. These decisions are made at the administrative level.

When it comes to ending 119-year rivalries — KU-MU is older than the American League, the Nobel Prize and license plates — only athletic directors and their bosses can make those decisions.

So before MU even officially leaves the Big 12, Kansas athletic director Sheahon Zenger used a two-paragraph statement to say that KU and Missouri would play only as members of the same conference — making Kansas City and the Border War an unnecessary casualty in conference realignment.

Right now, most KU fans are receiving this news like a championship parade down Mass Street. MU fans are telling themselves they don't care. Both are lying to themselves and, let's hope, in time will come around.
For now, Missouri should ask whether it will make as much money playing a nondescript football game against a school like San Diego State as it does against KU.

And KU should ask whether it will have as much fun playing nonconference games against schools like Tulsa or Colorado State as it does against Mizzou.

In what world does it make logical sense to discontinue your product’s most intense customer experience?

This isn’t about the survival of either school. Kansas will be just fine without playing Missouri. The opposite is true, too. The notion that either would be doing the other a favor by continuing a rivalry that benefits each side is small-minded and backward.

The shame of it is that while administrators protect their paychecks and egos, they’re dumping on a city that’s shown nothing but support and a rivalry that’s done nothing but help each school.
Deaton receives authority to decide Mizzou's conference home

By MIKE DeARMOND

University of Missouri Board of Curators chairman Warren Erdman on Friday gave the clearest indications yet the Tigers are headed toward a departure from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference.

Erdman said the curators have placed full authority for making that decision, including entering into contracts with other conferences, in the hands of MU chancellor Brady Deaton.

And he discussed contingencies that could maintain the Tigers' presence in Kansas City should they leave the Big 12. Erdman said MU is exploring the creation of a holiday basketball tournament involving the Tigers and continuing a football game against a traditional rival, namely Kansas, at Arrowhead Stadium.

But KU athletic director Sheahon Zenger indicated in a statement that the Border War rivalry likely would not continue if Missouri left the Big 12.

"The KU-Missouri rivalry belongs in the Big 12 Conference," Zenger said later Friday. "Should Missouri decide to leave the Big 12, we would wish them well."

That hasn't happened — yet. The curators' announcement Friday at the close of two days of meetings at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Student Union stopped short of definitively saying Missouri would apply and anticipate being accepted as the 14th member of the SEC.

"The reason that we are delegating this authority in the manner that we are," Erdman said, "is that's what we can do today."

On Oct. 4 Deaton was authorized by the curators to explore membership in other conferences. On Friday, Erdman said the authority given to Deaton now includes making a decision without further consultation with the board.

"I think that is a significant step," Erdman said. "Should his decision lead to our departure from the Big 12, this board is committed to doing what we can to preserve the rich tradition and heritage that is very important to us here."
Erdman's response at a brief news conference raised the question of why Missouri officials would bring up concrete examples of retaining a sports presence in the Kansas City area if the school was not already anticipating leaving the Big 12.

"We will be making a decision about pursuing an application to another conference, if we deem that in the best interests of the university," said Deaton, who appeared at the news conference alongside Erdman, interim University of Missouri system president Steve Owens and MU athletic director Mike Alden.

"The next step will be resolution of the question." Erdman said.

Sources told The Star on Friday afternoon that they anticipated the last big step would be taken by the middle of next week. And the consensus of those sources reflected a report earlier this week in The New York Times that Missouri's departure for the SEC was "inevitable and imminent."

Alden, as he did several weeks ago, acknowledged Missouri has had conversations with officials from conferences outside the Big 12.

Deaton said there was continuing contact with the Big 12 and interim commissioner Chuck Neinas, who said conference membership will be discussed during a regularly scheduled Board of Directors meeting on Monday.

"But we've also provided information to the SEC," Deaton said, "and we've asked for information from the SEC to inform us in regard to our future decision making."

The final question of the news conference, directed at Deaton by The Star, concerned whether a move to another conference would take place before the next athletic season, 2012-13, or be delayed until 2013-14, as has been suggested by Neinas.

"We would anticipate that our decision, whatever decision we make," Deaton said, "would be applicable to the next year."

If that's the case and Missouri leaves, it would be subject to a withdrawal penalty that could reach $30 million under Big 12 bylaws, although that figure could be negotiated down as Colorado and Nebraska did when those schools left the Big 12 before this season.

"This is a very complex transaction to consider," Erdman said. "Very complex. There are lots of important consequences. And as anxious as everyone, including our rabid fan base, is to have a definitive answer, we have to exercise our fiduciary duty.

"We are taking our time to analyze all of the issues."

As for what would happen next on the field, Alden said Missouri would want to continue its rivalry with Kansas "no matter what." The schools currently have an agreement to play their annual football game at Arrowhead through 2012.
"We've had a rivalry with the University of Kansas for 119 years," Alden said, "and we would hope that we would be able to continue to play that series, regardless of anything, for many years to come in all sports.

"Not just football and basketball, but all of our sports."

That's not a feeling shared by Kansas officials. KU basketball coach Bill Self earlier this month echoed Zenger's statement, saying the Jayhawks may not schedule the Tigers as a nonconference opponent.

Kansas City officials fear the Big 12 men's and women's basketball tournaments could leave the city if Missouri is no longer a conference member. The men's tournament is scheduled to be held at the Sprint Center through 2014, the women at Municipal Auditorium through 2013.

The event is one of the most important on the city's sports scene from a revenue-generating standpoint --- even more so than previously believed.

At last year's tournaments, an economic study conducted by the University of Arizona concluded an overall impact of $15 million to $19 million. That tops the bottom line of previous studies by at least $1 million. The survey found that 92 percent of the respondents said they planned to return for next year's tournament.

If the Big 12 tournament and Border War were no longer played in Kansas City, could Missouri bring in similar crowds for a holiday basketball tournament at the Sprint Center and a football game at Arrowhead Stadium?

If so, interim Kansas City Sports Commission president Cindy Smith would appreciate the business.

"It made me feel like they were leaning toward a move," Smith said. "It's like they were saying, 'We haven't forgotten about you.' "
Big 12 won’t dawdle if Missouri moves to the SEC

By BLAIR KERKHOFF Sun, Oct. 23, 2011 10:15 PM

Some six weeks after The Star first reported an informal offer from the Southeastern Conference to Missouri, the moment of acceptance is near.

It may be today. Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton is scheduled to meet with others on the Big 12 board of directors in Dallas, a face-to-face farewell perhaps.

The Big 12 could make a last-ditch effort to keep the Tigers, presenting an enticement package of a lengthy grant-of-rights, perhaps as many as 13 years; a first-tier TV rights proposal that would push Big 12 revenue to the top of the pyramid; and a reminder that Texas has backed off the high school content on its school-based network.

All indications are it won’t be enough, but it would allow the Big 12 to say it did everything in its power to keep a member whose departure will hurt as much as any of the previous ones, and in some ways more than Nebraska, Colorado and Texas A&M.

Mizzou, you will be reminded often in the next few days, will be leaving a conference it joined as a charter member in 1907 and stands to have relationships severed not only with longstanding rival Kansas but with Kansas City.

Missouri said all the right things last week about maintaining athletic ties with Kansas and Kansas City but sports life will be different, diminished, here without the conference relationship.

The Big 12 will endure, and expect at least one new school to be identified soon after Mizzou’s expected announcement.

Reports surfaced over the weekend that West Virginia has become the league’s leading expansion candidate. A source confirmed that to The Star on Sunday.

But the league continues to have conversations on whether to become a 10- or 12-team conference, and it remains uncertain how quickly movement can happen.
Ideally for football scheduling, next year’s SEC includes Missouri and the Big 12 includes West Virginia and/or other Big East schools.

That’s how quickly the most recent conference moves happened. Nebraska and Colorado aren’t spending a lame-duck season in the Big 12. Nor is Utah in the Mountain West or Boise State in the WAC. TCU accepted its Big East invitation on Nov. 30, 2010, too late to join that conference this season.

Nobody wants to quack like a lame duck. But the Big 12, which settled with the Cornhuskers and Buffaloes for exit-fee totals less than what the league’s bylaws stipulated, is expected to fight for every million with Missouri and Texas A&M.

The Big 12 will seek close to $30 million for both. Expect the schools to try to negotiate for about half of the total.

The Big East exit rule also is a problem. League bylaws require a 27-month notice for departure. That makes January 2014 — two football seasons — the earliest any Big East school could join the Big 12. And only a month or so earlier that Pittsburgh and Syracuse can join the ACC.

Perhaps the conferences can reach some kind of departure date/exit fee compromise. All parties want to get on with their new life.

“Behind the scenes,” Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione told reporters before the Sooners-Texas Tech game Saturday, “we will be doing as much as we can as quickly as we can to resolve it.”

As for the Big 12’s structure, if one school can join TCU in the conference for 2011, the football schedules are preserved with a two-out, two-in switch. That may be the best solution for next year.

But there continues to be sentiment in some conference corners for the Big 12 eventually to return to its original size. If that happens, look for Oklahoma and Texas to be placed in separate divisions.

The Sooners and Longhorns would become permanent crossover opponents for football. The speculation comes to an end soon, perhaps today if Missouri announces its intention or at least a news conference for later in the week in Columbia. At that point it won’t take long for the Big 12 to make its next move.
At this point, is it news that MU looks headed for SEC?

By Mike DeArmond - Posted on 23 October 2011

When it comes to breaking news about Missouri walking into the open arms of the Southeastern Conference there really is none.

Because the only breaking NEWS would be someone announcing that this conference connection WILL NOT take place.

And a turnaround of that proportion simply looks to be written on flimsy by those who cling to what they want rather than what seems so probable.

On Saturday, and again today, I've talked to all sorts of people familiar with the situation both at Missouri and elsewhere and every single one anticipates Missouri and the SEC will announce Mizzou as the 14th member of the SEC at some point this week.

I have confirmed Brady Deaton, the MU chancellor, plans to attend in person the Big 12 Board of Directors meeting scheduled for Monday in Dallas.

Deaton is not revealing if he will formally inform the Big 12 Conference of Missouri's conditional withdrawal (the condition being SEC acceptance) at that meeting. But it would be in keeping with the style of the man who has been authorized to make this decision by Board of Curator decree that he would not deliver such news in a fax or a telephone call.

As for the if and when of the Missouri/SEC courtship coming to fruition, the bet here is that it comes down my midweek, Thursday at the latest.

I cannot see this news being announced while Gary Pinkel and his football team hit the road on Friday for a Saturday morning game at Texas A&M. Nor would it be seemly to me that it be announced on a game day when the opposing team is another Big 12 team that has already announced it will be going to the SEC next year.

But all signs – including reports in SEC media outlets that Missouri has the votes to be welcomed into the new conference as a member of the SEC East – point to this story so well chronicled for so long to reach a conclusion in the next few days.
Missouri tries to soothe KU and Kansas City

By J. BRADY McCOLLOUGH

Missouri officials said Friday that they would pursue a football game in Kansas City against a traditional rival if the Tigers left the Big 12 Conference. MU athletic director Mike Alden said he would like that team to be Kansas.

Later Friday, Kansas athletic director Sheahon Zenger issued a statement indicating the Border War probably would not continue as a nonconference game.

"KU-Missouri is a great rivalry," Zenger said. "The University of Kansas is a great Midwestern school, loyal to our Midwestern conference and to our Midwestern roots. The KU-Missouri rivalry belongs in the Big 12 Conference. Should Missouri decide to leave the Big 12, we would wish them well."

Zenger's statement was similar to the sentiment expressed by KU basketball coach Bill Self earlier this month.

"If we play them moving forward, it'll be strictly because we think it's best for our basketball program," Self said. "Not because of what anybody else feels."

"There may be a time that we decide, 'It's time to do this.' But I can't see that being the immediate reaction."

The message has now been sent very clearly from KU that Missouri would be leaving behind a relationship with Kansas that's more than a century old if it goes to the Southeastern Conference. This year's football game at Arrowhead Stadium could be the last between the schools. According to KU and the NCAA, the all-time series stands at 55-55-9 (because KU forfeited its 1960 victory because it used an ineligible player, MU says it leads the series 56-54-9).

Kansas and Missouri have an agreement to play in Arrowhead through 2012. But MU officials said Friday that, if they were to leave the Big 12, they probably would begin play in their new conference next season. The 2012 game at Arrowhead would be Missouri's home game.

Beyond the likely loss of the Border War football game, the impact on Kansas City of a Missouri switch to the SEC isn't clear. Big 12 officials were at the Sprint Center this week at the conference's basketball media days, and although opposing coaches seemed to harbor a "Let 'em
go if they don’t want to be here,” attitude, Kansas City is left to wonder what happens to the basketball tournament played in a state without a league member.

The men’s tournament is set at Sprint Center through 2014, the women at Municipal Auditorium through 2013, and the event as a whole has an economic impact estimated at $15 million to $19 million.

If Missouri isn’t part of the Big 12 tournament after this season, Kansas City’s future with the event may rest with the fans of other area schools.

“Kansas, Kansas State and Iowa State fans have always supported it well,” said Cindy Smith, interim president of the Kansas City Sports Commission. “It may be that we’ll need them more than ever.”

Missouri officials suggested keeping a football game at Arrowhead and exploring the creation of a holiday basketball tournament involving the Tigers as ways to keep their presence in Kansas City if they move to the SEC.

Such a tournament was once a staple, when the Big Eight and its predecessor leagues held three-day conference basketball tournaments here in the post-Christmas period.

“That will take the concurrence of more schools than just us,” said Warren Erdman, chairman of the University of Missouri Board of Curators, on Friday. “But we’re committed to being an anchor and trying to make it work.”

Smith wondered how well the tournament would draw if Missouri weren’t part of the Big 12 and those games didn’t involve area competition.

“Part of the equation is the opponents,” Smith said. “Not just anybody and expect to have good crowds.”

As for a football game, Nebraska may be a possibility if Kansas isn’t interested in playing Missouri in a nonconference game. This summer, Nebraska athletic director Tom Osborne said the Cornhuskers were open to the idea of playing a game at Arrowhead.

“I don’t know how Kansas City views us, but we’ve had a lot of good memories here, and there are a lot of Nebraska fans here,” Osborne said. “Anything is possible.”
MU takes step away from Big 12
Board gives Deaton contract authority.

By DAVE MATTER
Published October 21, 2011 at 1:04 p.m. Updated October 21, 2011 at 2:43 p.m.

KANSAS CITY — The University of Missouri System Board of Curators' meeting wrapped up Friday with neither a withdrawal notice for the Big 12 or a formal application to the Southeastern Conference. But the board's three-day stay here ended with Chairman Warren Erdman unveiling two measures that would continue to pave Missouri's exit.

The board delegated Chancellor Brady Deaton the authority to decide conference alignment and negotiate any related contracts. Also, the board directed Deaton to explore hosting an invitational basketball tournament and football game in Kansas City.

Missouri would anchor the basketball tournament, perhaps over the holidays, Erdman suggested, presumably at the Sprint Center. The football game, featuring "a traditional, regional rivalry," would be held at Arrowhead Stadium, which is already the site of MU's Border Showdown series with Kansas through 2012.

Both measures further signal that Missouri is not long for the Big 12. The Kansas City proposals can be interpreted as concessions to the city that's been most resistant to Missouri's flirtation with the SEC, mostly because the move would cost Kansas City the Big 12 postseason basketball tournament.

"The board wants to make clear how highly we value the tradition here in Kansas City," said Erdman, the lone Kansas City resident on the board, "and should we depart the Big 12, we want to make it abundantly clear that we're going to pursue the possibility of the basketball tournament and the football game here in Kansas City."

Friday's press conference, held at the UMKC student union, followed a 90-minute closed executive board session. Erdman appeared alongside Deaton, interim UM President Steve Owens and Athletic Director Mike Alden. The same four took questions from reporters on Oct. 4 in St. Louis, following a four-hour closed session, during which the board granted Deaton power to explore conferences outside of the Big 12.

This time, Deaton has been cleared to act alone in deciding Missouri's conference. Deaton said MU has exchanged information with the SEC but continues to be part of the Big 12. He did not offer a timetable for the next step in the process.
"We want to confirm where we are with regard to conference alignment as rapidly as possible," Deaton said. "We do understand there are ripple effects to all of these decisions as conferences seek to reach that magic number that they want to see themselves at. We recognize that. We understand it. We don't feel pressure from that, let me say. We're looking out for what's best for the University of Missouri and Missouri student-athletes, for our fans, for our alumni base and for our efforts to generate future private giving to the university."

"We delegated to the chancellor the authority to make decisions including entering into contracts on conference alignment," Erdman said, "so that he can take that action without any further action by the Board of Curators. I think that's a significant step."

Striking a more decisive tone than during previous news conferences on this topic, Deaton noted the eagerness from MU fans and alumni to reach a decision but said there will be "no unnecessary or inappropriate delays in that process."

"There's no reluctance to go forward and make the right decision for the university," he said. "We will be making a decision about pursuing an application to another conference if we deem that in the best interest of the university."

Shortly after MU's contingent met with reporters, the Big 12 issued a statement from interim Commissioner Chuck Neinas: "We look forward to discussing Missouri's future with the Big 12 Conference. The school has been involved with the Big 12 and its predecessor conferences since 1907."

The Big 12 board of directors has a regularly scheduled meeting Monday, Neinas said in the statement.

"Obviously, conference membership will be thoroughly discussed at that time," he said.

Deaton relinquished his role as chairman of the Big 12 board of directors earlier this month and subsequently abstained from voting on two major measures: the granting of television rights to the conference for the next six years and inviting TCU to join the Big 12.

But he made clear Friday that Missouri remains a member of the Big 12 — for now.

"As long as Missouri remains a member of the Big 12, certainly we are a member of the board of the Big 12 and we'll continue that role" Deaton said. "We did not want that in any way to be a question that arises. We're going to be active in all respects to work toward the stability of the Big 12."

Unlike the last post-meeting news conference, the participants spoke openly about the possibility of leaving the Big 12. If that happens, Erdman noted the board's commitment to preserving "the rich tradition and heritage that is very important to us here," in Kansas City. Should MU join the SEC, Kansas would be the preferred opponent for the proposed game at Arrowhead. The longtime rivals moved their game there in 2007.

"Absolutely, we would want to continue to play Kansas no matter what," Alden said. "We've had a rivalry with the university of Kansas for 119 years, and we would hope we'd be able to play that series regardless of anything for many years to come, for all sports, not just football and basketball."

If Missouri were to leave the Big 12 for the SEC, Deaton said he anticipates joining in 2012.

"We would anticipate that our decision, whatever decision we make, would be applicable to the next year," Deaton said.
UM System Board of Curators grants Deaton decision-making powers

BY HARRY PLUMER

KANSAS CITY — The UM System Board of Curators was supposed to make Missouri’s conference alignment clearer with a press conference after two days of meetings.

Instead, the picture is still blurred.

In a resolution passed Friday morning, the board gave MU Chancellor Brady Deaton the power to make decisions regarding conference alignment, announced chairman Warren Erdman. Previously, any change in conference alignment would have had to be approved by the board.

Additionally, the board announced a directive that Missouri should explore the possibility of a neutral site football game against a “traditional rival” — likely Kansas — and an invitational basketball tournament in Kansas City.

These moves indicate more steps away from the Big 12, but not necessarily large ones.

With speculation abound that Missouri is considering a move to the Southeastern Conference, allowing Deaton to make the final decision without board approval makes that process simpler.

The Kansas City directive is likely aimed at the concerns of board members from the state’s western region who might be worried that a conference change could impact their area.

Erdman, who was the most straightforward speaker during the press conference, explained the reasoning of the Kansas City directive.

"Should his (Deaton’s) decision lead to our departure from the Big 12, this board is committed to doing what we can to preserve the rich tradition and heritage that is very
important to us here (in Kansas City)," Erdman said. "The board's intent was that if we
do not remain in this conference, the intent to schedule these events would take place."

Erdman and Deaton both called the issue "complex" many times.

"As anxious as everyone, including our rabid fan base, is to have a definitive answer, we
have to exercise our fiduciary duty and we are taking our time to analyze all of the issues
and to exercise that fiduciary duty on behalf of the university," Erdman said.

Deaton declined to give a timeline for the process, but described the next steps as "very
expeditious."

"There have been absolutely no extraordinary delays in our process," Deaton said.
"There will continue to be no unnecessary or inappropriate delays in the process.
There's no reluctance to go forward and make the right decision for the university."

Erdman, meanwhile, said the public step in the process would be the "final resolution of
the question."

Deaton will announce the next move, whenever it might come, and said MU's next step
if, it does leave, would be to pursue an application to another conference.

"We've asked for information from the SEC to inform us with regard to our future
decision making," Deaton said.

Friday was the first time anyone from MU confirmed specific communication with the
SEC.

Deaton also said that despite what interim Big 12 Commissioner Chuck Neinas said last
week, a move in conferences would likely be effective for next season.

The fiduciary duty Erdman referred to could include discussion on the Big 12 exit fee.
But when asked directly about that topic, Deaton did not answer, and said only that a
"range of complex issues" affect the topic.

Missouri could benefit financially from a move to the SEC. On Oct. 10, the Associated
Press published details of a 45-page document the board received at its last meeting. It
outlined a potential $12 million per year increase in revenue from a move to the SEC.

That was disputed by interim Big 12 Commissioner Chuck Neinas the next day.
"Let me say that Missouri, or an institution in the Southeastern Conference is going to make $12 million more annually and there are 14 members, that means they would have to increase their annual income from TV by $168 million," Neinas said. "I don't know, you can ask ESPN, or anybody if they want to pay another $168 million, I don't think that's in the cards."

The stability of the Big 12, which operated as a 10-team league this season after the 2010 departure of Nebraska and Colorado, had been in question for most of September since Texas A&M announced on Aug. 31 that it, too was leaving the conference. It was rumored that Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas Tech were headed to the Pac-12, and that the Big 12 was going to be nothing more than a memory.

But on Sept. 20, the Pac-12 announced it was not going to expand. That revitalized the Big 12. Instead of looking for ways to escape, conference members began the process of solving the problems that they felt were causing the league's turmoil.

Commissioner Dan Beebe was ousted after rumors abounded that schools were unhappy with how easily Beebe gave in to the demands of the University of Texas. He was replaced by Chuck Neinas.

Perhaps more importantly, the conference members agreed to share their Tier I and Tier II (over-the-air and cable broadcast revenue) television money evenly, which replaced a system where teams were compensated based on the amount of times they appeared on television.

There was just one catch to the new revenue sharing agreement. Each school had to approve a grant of rights of a minimum of six years, which meant that if a school left the Big 12, it would forfeit all of its television money from its new league to the Big 12 until the six years were up. In essence, as University of Oklahoma President David L. Boren put it, creating a pair of "very strong handcuffs."

The Big 12 announced on Oct. 3 that it expected each school to work to approve the grant of rights "expeditiously at the institutional level."

But Missouri went the other direction the very next day by taking a first definitive step away from the Big 12 when the board delegated to Deaton the power to explore Missouri's conference options.
Rumors flew about mutual interest between Missouri and the SEC, but nothing was confirmed from either party.

Friday was the first time that anyone from MU confirmed discussion with the SEC specifically.

Meanwhile, the SEC also stayed mum on the topic. The conference has released statements saying it had not offered membership to Missouri and also that it was in the process of working out a 13-team football schedule for the 2012 season.
COMMENT: Realignment Q&A — Tackling the next step for Missouri and the SEC

Sunday, October 23, 2011 | 7:48 p.m. CDT; updated 11:55 p.m. CDT, Sunday, October 23, 2011
BY HARRY PLOMER

Need help dissecting what’s going on with Missouri in conference realignment? Perhaps a translation from “curator-ese” into layman’s terms? Wondering why you’re hearing Missouri is going to be in the SEC East Division? You’ve got the questions, and we’ve got the answers.

What happened Friday in Kansas City?
The UM System Board of Curators gave MU Chancellor Brady Deaton the power to make decisions and enter into contracts relating to the school’s conference alignment.

What that really means is that Deaton has the power to negotiate and possibly seal a deal with the SEC without the approval of the curators. In essence, the curators have likely made their decision, and now it’s up to Deaton to execute its wishes.

This also makes the process far simpler. There will be no extra curators meeting to decide realignment. The next step will likely be an announcement from Deaton that Missouri is withdrawing from the Big 12.

Also, the curators issued a directive to MU to explore a neutral-site football game with a “traditional rival” (read: Kansas) and an invitational basketball tournament in Kansas City.

Securing the support of the curators from the Kansas City region was likely one of the last hurdles in getting them on board for a move to the SEC, which they felt would negatively impact the economy in their area. Those members were worried that Kansas City would lose the Big 12 basketball tournament — played 10 of 15 times there — and the Missouri-Kansas football game at Arrowhead Stadium if MU were to bolt the Big 12.

So by creating the condition that MU must find a way to at least recover some of that economic impact in Kansas City, the pro-SEC contingent of the board was able to satisfy the Kansas City contingent enough to convince it to take the next step toward the SEC.
Why would the curators bother to make that directive if the plan weren’t to leave the Big 12?
The short answer is that it probably wouldn’t.

The directive is probably the strongest indication yet that Missouri plans to leave the Big 12. The issue of economic impact in Kansas City seems like something to be concerned about only if the intent to leave is imminent. Deaton also, for the first time, admitted that he’s had discussions with the SEC.

Why didn’t the curators just announce Missouri was leaving on Friday?
During the Oct. 4 meeting, Missouri opened the door to leave the Big 12 by giving Deaton the power to explore MU’s options.

Announcing an official withdrawal would be equivalent to Missouri turning around, saying goodbye to all its old friends, leaving its key on the table and shutting it behind them. Once you shut that door, you can’t open it again.

And if you aren’t 100 percent, "lockdown sure" that you’ve got another door to open — in this case for MU, the SEC — then it would be foolish to prematurely leave.

So instead, the curators took another step out the door but didn’t close it all the way. Conceivably, if the SEC move were to fall through for any reason, MU could turn back around and say to the Big 12, “Just kidding! Can we just forget this ever happened and continue to be friends?”

Another possibility is that Deaton wanted to tell the other Big 12 presidents in person. Since they are meeting in Dallas on Monday, if Deaton feels like that’s the right thing to do, it doesn’t really hold up the show time-wise.

What is going to happen next?
Without supernatural powers, a crystal ball or even a working Magic 8-ball, no one can really say.

That said, the most likely scenario is that Deaton is going to announce sometime this week, possibly as soon as Monday, that Missouri is withdrawing from the Big 12.

The Big 12 Presidents are meeting Monday, and the word is that Deaton is going to be present and ready to discuss what Missouri is going to do next, though that is still unconfirmed.
Once again, it could just be that he is going to tell the Big 12 goodbye in person.

Once MU withdraws, if it follows a similar timeline to Texas A&M in its departure, the SEC Presidents will vote to accept it into the conference sometime with an a roughly seven-day period.

With a positive vote, Missouri would officially become a member of the SEC.

**What's all this grumbling about SEC divisions? Why in the name of geography would Missouri play in the SEC East?**
The simple answer is conference politics.

Missouri needs nine of 12 votes from the current SEC schools to be accepted into the league. According to reports, the only way that will happen is if the Tigers agree to play in the SEC East.

If we've learned one thing during conference realignment, it's that conferences have no respect for math or geography. MU's move to the SEC will do nothing to dispute that. If it were to join, MU would be the third westernmost school in the 14-team league. (Check out this map to see what the divisions would look like.)

In a pure geographic sense, the most obvious move would be to shift Auburn from the West to the East. But Alabama doesn't like that one bit. It feels its bitter rival would gain a recruiting advantage in Florida by moving. It's also concerned, because of how the new schedule would work, that it would lose an annual rivalry game with Tennessee.

So to appease Alabama, it appears the Tigers will be making frequent trips to Gainesville, Fla., Columbia, S.C. and Athens, Ga.

Whether that kind of travel burden is in the best interest of the Missouri athletics department is a whole different discussion. At this point, it's probably too late in the process for Deaton to demand to be added to the West, so MU will have to take what it can get.

However, regular trips to the east coast are going to be expensive, both financially and academically. An SEC move might be enough to recoup the extra travel costs, but there is no way to recover the extra class time Missouri's athletes would be missing.

**Is Missouri going to be competitive in the SEC in football?**
The short answer to this is that it really doesn't matter. This move is about stability, which MU feels the Big 12 lacks, and profit, which MU feels will increase in the SEC. Wins and losses don’t show up on Athletics Director Mike Alden’s balance sheet.

That said, it’s a topic worth discussing anyway, whether or not it impacts the decision-making process.

The prevailing wisdom is that Missouri is going to, for lack of a better term, get beat if it moves to the SEC. Fans feel that the program’s overall level of success is going to decrease.

Consider this, for a moment. In the Gary Pinkel era Missouri is 1-7 against Oklahoma and 0-5 against Texas. Is it really unreasonable that Missouri couldn’t duplicate that 1-12 record against the likes of Alabama and LSU?

Perhaps the second-tier SEC teams like Arkansas and South Carolina are better than Kansas State and Texas A&M (oh wait, it’ll be in the SEC, too), but in the end, if you’re going to be an elite program, you need to beat those teams anyway.

Does the “Kansas City directive” mean that if Missouri goes to the SEC, it will still play Kansas?
Not by a long shot, especially if you read anything into the rhetoric that has been coming from Lawrence over the past few days.

Kansas Athletics Director Sheahon Zenger issued a statement Friday afternoon shortly after the curators' press conference saying the following:

“KU-Missouri is a great rivalry. The University of Kansas is a great Midwestern school, loyal to our Midwestern conference and to our Midwestern roots. The KU-Missouri rivalry belongs in the Big 12 Conference. Should Missouri decide to leave the Big 12, we would wish them well.”

That doesn’t sound like a confirmation that Kansas is interested in continuing to play Missouri on a regular basis.

In football, while the game brings tradition, it also traditionally brings an “L” to Kansas' schedule in recent years.
With the Jayhawks football program struggling to find a lot of “W’s” on the schedule of late, removing Missouri from the schedule and replacing it with a cupcake would be something Zenger and his department would have to consider.

Basketball is no sure thing either.

Kansas basketball coach Bill Self spoke about the rivalry at the Big 12 basketball media day in Kansas City on Thursday, and his comments certainly didn't inspire a ton of confidence that the rivalry will continue on the hardwood.

“I may feel that we need to continue playing them, I may feel that we don't need to continue playing them,” Self said.
MU to offer athletic training degree
By JANESILVEY
Friday, October 21, 2011

KANSAS CITY — The University of Missouri plans to start offering degrees in athletic training, an addition that will cost funding up front but ultimately is expected to be a moneymaker.

The UM Board of Curators unanimously approved the program yesterday after assurances from Vice President of Academic Affairs Steve Graham that the degree offering was "very well thought-out."

Athletic training tops MU's list of most in-demand but not-yet-offered degrees, according to the proposal.

"We get a lot of inquiries," said Richard Oliver, dean of the School of Health Professions, which will house the program. "I have no concern about not having student demand."

The program will share space with the Department of Physical Therapy. The two disciplines are typically at odds with one another over practices, so this will provide a unique opportunity for both professions to find ways to coordinate, Graham said.

Adding the degree will require a new director, faculty members, some of whom will be adjunct, and advisers. Twenty-two new classes also will have to be created.

Oliver said he expects revenue to easily offset those expenses. The program needs to attract 60 students to be financially stable, but administrators expect enrollment to double that.

The department is expecting the program to generate a net income of $400,000 after the fourth year.

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and the Athletics Department have pledged to contribute some startup dollars and provide opportunities to students pursuing the degree. Ties to MU athletics and the university's orthopedic and medical facilities are expected to make the athletic-training program unique, even though a dozen other Missouri colleges, including William Woods University in Fulton, currently offer athletic-training degrees.

Oliver envisions students working with orthopedic groups throughout Mid-Missouri, as well.

There's also plenty of demand for workers in the profession, according to the proposal. That's partly because high schools and colleges are facing stricter guidelines when assessing athletes for injuries such as traumatic brain injuries, Oliver said. "They need to have athletic trainers who are trained to assess," he said.
Gwynn Hall to begin $11 million makeover

BY JANESI SILVEY

Friday, October 21, 2011

KANSAS CITY — The University of Missouri will pump new life into the nearly century-old Gwynn Hall on campus by preserving its stone exterior but gutting and renovating the interior.

All non-load-bearing walls will be removed in the construction process, allowing crews to reconstruct new spaces for modern offices, labs and classrooms. The mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems also will be replaced.

That's the same strategy MU used when renovating the historic Tate and Switzler halls, which reopened this fall.

The UM System Board of Curators approved the $11 million project at its meeting yesterday. Design of the interior is expected to be finished by next summer, with a contract slated to be awarded in September. Construction is expected to be finalized by September 2013.

Gwynn Hall, built in two phases in the early 1920s, is adjacent to Memorial Union and is part of MU's "white" campus. It houses the College of Human Environmental Sciences.

Funding to renovate Gwynn Hall comes mainly from MU's maintenance and repair budget, said Nikki Krawitz, the UM vice president of finance. The college also will contribute a portion, and $200,000 is coming from a J.R. Albert Foundation grant.

Using maintenance funds to repay bonds for construction is a relatively new strategy for the university that was first tested on Tate and Switzler halls. It worked, in part, because MU Campus Facilities bought basic materials in bulk to keep costs down and streamlined bidding and design processes, Gary Ward, associate vice chancellor for facilities, told the Tribune last year.

Gwynn, with repair needs totaling $9.4 million, is considered one of the roughest buildings on campus.

Using that money to instead revamp the facility is a wise use of university resources, Curator Don Downing said.
A developer has submitted an application to construct student housing on a University of Missouri-owned parking lot on Ninth Street just south of Chipotle Mexican Grill.

City planner Matthew Lepke said the developer has proposed to construct a five-story, 64-unit apartment building with four floors of apartments and a ground floor devoted to commercial development. Lepke said a survey of the foot traffic in the area of the proposed project indicated that about 14,000 people pass through the area each day.

"Obviously when you have that much foot traffic, it is a very visible and visited location," Lepke said. He said the building's units would feature two bedrooms and two bathrooms.

The applicant for the project is Travis McGee of Certified Realty Inc. McGee could not be reached yesterday for comment.

McGee's proposed project would come as part of a burst in new and planned student-oriented residential structures in the city. At Tenth and Elm streets, construction is under way for a 153-bed student apartment building, which will feature a banquet center and a rooftop restaurant and pool.

Behind the project is Trittenbach Development, owned by the Odle family, which also built the two-structure Brookside Downtown student housing complex just north of the project on Ninth Street. The Odles also have begun construction on a new 100-unit, student-oriented apartment building at College Avenue and Walnut Street.

This year, construction was completed on The Grove, a student apartment complex at Rock Quarry Road and Grindstone Parkway, and The Pointe at Rock Quarry Park, a student townhouse complex located just south of The Grove on Rock Quarry Road.

Austin, Texas-based student housing company Aspen Heights has applied to rezone the current site of the Regency Mobile Home Park for the construction of student housing, but concerns have been raised over the displacement of Regency residents. Last month, the Columbia Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously voted to reject a recommendation to the Columbia City Council to approve the project.

In an interview Thursday after a commission meeting, city Development Services Manager Pat Zenner joked that his upcoming development report for 2011 could be called "The Year of Student Housing."

McGee's proposal will be discussed at a Nov. 10 meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission.
MU to celebrate national Food Day
BY MEGAN O'NEILL
COLUMBIA — The first ever national Food Day will be held in communities across the nation on Monday to celebrate and encourage healthy and sustainable food systems.

The Mizzou Food Coalition, along with organizations across Columbia, will be hosting two free events on MU's campus during the day.

The Fair Food Fair will be held in Lower Bengal Lair in Memorial Union from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will offer information and tips on healthful recipes and ingredients, including fresh produce samples from Missouri Food for Missouri Farmers.

"FRESH," a documentary on the reinvention of the food system in America, will be screened at 7 p.m. in Conservation Auditorium in the Anheuser-Busch Natural Resources Building.

A panel discussion with field professionals will follow. The documentary, based in the Midwest, showcases the agricultural origins of food while encouraging the local food movement.

Food Day supports an overhaul of the American food system and initiatives to produce healthy options within the price range and reach of every American. Goals in local communities include reducing the marketing of junk food to children, supporting sustainable farms, reducing diet-related diseases and expanding access to healthy ingredients.

The event intends to educate Columbia residents on meal options created with vegetables, fruits and whole grains rather than factory-processed ingredients, as well as offer an opportunity to familiarize children with these ideas.

For more information on Food Day at MU as well as communities throughout the nation, visit their website.
In difficult negotiations, I often find it necessary to step back and obtain agreement based upon a mutual set of shared values. Then it is usually much easier to reach agreements on practical matters and on how to solve problems. Let me propose these shared values:

- Individuals must always be held accountable for the outcomes of their personal financial decisions. Otherwise, our personal freedoms will not endure.
- Public revenue must never be used to excuse personal debt because such an action would be no different than stealing from the Treasury.
- Our markets are to be used only to promote trade in the real value of goods and services, and they are not to be used to extract resources from the market by mere trickery without contributing real value to society.

If we can agree to these shared values, the United States can recover from the Great Recession.

Today, the majority of mortgage holders in many states owe more than the appraised value of their homes, causing great anxiety. Absurd ideas, such as walking away from our financial obligations en masse, could do extreme damage to our society. At this huge scale of an impending financial disaster, we need real leadership and creative thinking to avoid a terrible national crisis. This mortgage debt crisis threatens the personal financial security of our workforce, which is critically important to our free-market economy. If I have accurately listed our shared values above, the solution to our enduring housing crisis is clear. We need to provide a structure that will permit our country to recover from this crisis in an orderly and cost-effective manner.

To achieve this, it will be necessary to institute harsh legal repercussions for any person who attempts to walk away from an upside-down mortgage or other major debts. As grim as it is, we need to encourage these debtors who have no way to service their debt to declare bankruptcy instead. We could form a new, public-private corporation empowered to buy houses at the amount remaining on the mortgage when the owner declares bankruptcy. As part of the bankruptcy settlement, we could establish terms that will permit the owning family to remain in its home for a payment that equals 40 percent (or a number close to that carefully set by the courts) but make the full original mortgage debt endure through bankruptcy. Any unserviceable debt and interest (at current modest interest rates) will become essentially a mechanic's
lien that runs with the property and that must be paid in full before the property may be sold. With such an
arrangement, the bankrupt occupants need not fear eviction, permitting them to focus on their increased
work productivity instead.

Hopefully, this will permit their earning power to increase over time, with 40 percent of their increasing
household earnings continuing to go toward repayment of the full original debt. If debt remains when the
inhabitant dies, the property will be sold by the public-private corporation at fair market value as the
inhabitant’s estate settles. This will spread out the resolution of this crisis over the next few decades,
which will allow the markets time to adjust gradually without having to suffer another sudden shock. There
will be strong motivation for the inhabitant and his or her family to pay off the full original debt to avoid
losing the equity in the home, but now this will be far easier to do given the much lower interest rates than
before the bankruptcy settlement. The public-private corporation must ensure any public taxpayer money
invested in this operation is repaid with interest to the federal government, so public equity is always
respected. All remaining profits become part of the company’s net worth, to the benefit of the investors of
this publicly traded corporation.

This regulated public corporation will likely become very profitable because it will compete favorably with
wealthy individual investors who seek to acquire distressed properties and thereby profit
disproportionately on the misfortunes of those who cannot debt-service their homes. It will ensure that
investors with no major capitalization can buy stock and hence benefit from the opportunity to profit from
distressed properties as we work our way gradually out of the extreme financial mess. Otherwise, only
those with substantial available investment capital will be able to benefit from the resolution of this
problem, and the wealth disparity in the United States will get much worse.

If we don’t do something like this, we will essentially destroy the middle class and create a huge threat to
individual liberty and the representative democracy that we have enjoyed.

This approach assumes the value of real estate will continue to increase over time. This is a good bet
because our population continues to grow rapidly and the amount of land that we have to live on stays
constant.

Robert Duncan is the vice chancellor for research and a professor of physics at the University of Missouri-
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