MU vows to leave Big 12 next year

BY VAHE GREGORIAN | Posted: Thursday, December 15, 2011 12:20 am

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Even as the Big 12 continues behind the scenes to resist Mizzou's move to the Southeastern Conference for next year, the SEC next week will announce its 2012 football schedule with MU as part of it, athletics director Mike Alden said Wednesday.

While MU still is negotiating exit fees and grappling over the timetable with the Big 12, Alden and Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton said that MU is bent on a 2012 move despite the Big 12's concerns about whether West Virginia can replace MU by next year.

"We're going to the SEC (next year) regardless," said Deaton, who noted Mizzou's stated desire to move to the SEC in 2012 had come after "phone calls of assurance from the Big 12 commissioner and (chairman) of the board that it was OK to do that from their standpoint.

"We then later on got a call that said ... we're not sure about this, that, and the other, because we're not sure (about West Virginia's timetable)."

At which point Deaton recalled saying, "Look, you've set things in motion, we've set things in motion. We're continuing down this pathway, and we feel certainly within our rights to do that according to (Big 12) bylaws." 

The final chapter reflects a broader disconnect with the Big 12 that drove MU out behind Colorado, Nebraska and Texas A&M.

In Deaton's first extensive explanation of the move and its implications since the announcement Nov. 6, he peeled back fresh details of the process that compelled Mizzou to break off from a core conference affiliation it's had for more than a century to join a league that has never lost a member and probably will distribute several million dollars more a year to MU athletics but be an enormous competitive challenge.

Speaking with a handful of reporters who had been requesting an interview, Deaton acknowledged that the tipping point for change was a Sept. 2 outburst by Oklahoma president David Boren about OU being active in realignment talks.

That came only days after Big 12 leaders had "re-upped" their affirmations to stay together in the wake of Texas A&M becoming the third school to announce its departure in just over a year, Deaton said.
And it was only days after Deaton, then chairman of the conference, traveled Aug. 28 with Boren to College Station to make a last stand to keep A&M.

On that trip, Deaton remembered thinking, "Hey, we can make this thing work out. We might even be able to talk A&M into coming back. We knew we had some other prospects (to join the Big 12), so everything was still gung-ho."

But Boren's statements, a precursor to OU and others flirting with the Pac-12, stunned Deaton.

If OU, Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas Tech, the others who became involved in trying to engage the Pac-12, left, the "Big 12" would have been down to five.

With a laugh, Deaton said, "I think there was some negative term that we'd been labeled at that time: 'The Forgotten Five,' I think it was."

So when Deaton and Alden met at Faurot Field during the Sept. 3 game between Missouri and Miami (Ohio), Deaton said the gist of the conversation was, "What in God's name are we going to do?"

To Deaton, the options were trying to repopulate the Big 12, joining a different conference with a few or all of the other "Forgotten Five" or finding a new home just for Mizzou.

One point soon was evident, though.

Even when the mass angling for the Pac-12 fell through on Sept. 20 when that league said it wouldn't expand, even as the Big 12 seemed to be enacting reforms that Mizzou would favor, MU simply had lost faith in its future.

"It was clear that every move we were making was a struggle, and an uncertain one, that was sowing potential seeds of dissension from school to school," Deaton said. "It was sort of like you were sitting there saying, 'OK, who's going to be the next one to say they're going here, there or elsewhere because of one of these little glitches that are occurring in the discussion process?'"

Asked about the perception of some that MU had helped destabilize the league in 2010 with its interest in the Big Ten, Deaton called that "a stretch" because the issues within ran much deeper than public comments.

With the spirits of cooperation, commitment and even honesty no longer assured by September in the Big 12, Deaton said, "So for us the question was do we continue to struggle? Do we continue to try to be the good citizens that we think we have tried to be all along, knowing that in spite of our absolute best efforts four institutions or more are willing to just fly off and try out something different?"

"And it was clear, we thought, certainly, it was going to happen again at the next opportunity that arose."
Soon thereafter - the timeline remains fuzzy and not necessarily in the following order - Deaton resigned Oct. 4 as chairman of the Big 12 board after a meeting of the MU system Board of Curators in St. Louis.

"I could not continue," he said. "Up to that point, I had been absolutely committed and doing everything I knew to do to try to hold the Big 12 together."

At that meeting, Deaton also was empowered to explore options for MU and called Florida president Bernie Machen, chairman of the SEC board and a Webster Groves native.

"I called Bernie to ... try to get a sense of how they felt about the University of Missouri and told him that we were considering the possibility of applying," said Deaton, adding that he'd informally had "at least a years-long conversation with (Machen) about what was happening at Florida and the SEC. (And) he knew what was happening in the Big 12 and some other conferences."

In mid-October at the annual meetings of the distinguished Association of American Universities in Washington, Deaton and Machen made a point of sitting together during a group dinner and continued the discussion.

Machen, Deaton said, "made a point of emphasizing that no decision can be made until it's voted on by the members of the SEC, and they can only vote if there's an application in front of them. So there was never a promise made beyond that.

"And yet in talking to him and others, we had a sense that we were viewed as a very favorable candidate."

While Deaton said the impetus for making a change was multiple issues on the table "that weren't going to be resolved," he said the decision was in some ways head over heart and not a "sudden knee-jerk" move.

"You give that up," he said. "You give that up because you're looking 50 to 100 years down the road, you've got to make the kinds of decisions that will lead to strong foundations for this university."
Deaton, Alden discuss MU's move to the SEC

By Joe Walljasper

Since announcing Missouri’s decision to leave the Big 12 for the Southeastern Conference on Nov. 6, MU officials haven’t had much to say on the topic publicly. On Wednesday, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton and Athletic Director Mike Alden agreed to speak with four reporters who had persistently expressed a desire for more information on the move.

What follows is a transcript of a 45-minute question-and-answer session, with a few questions that did not pertain to athletics deleted. The order in which the questions were asked has been altered so the topics flow logically. The final two questions regard the NCAA’s investigation of possible infractions at Miami during Missouri Coach Frank Haith’s tenure there.

The interview began with Deaton being asked about Sept. 2 — the date University of Oklahoma President David Boren said OU wouldn’t be “a wallflower” in conference realignment. That is the day Deaton went from trying to preserve the Big 12 to looking at other options. At that point, Texas A&M had already declared its intentions to leave the Big 12. Boren’s comment preceded Oklahoma seeking a new home in the Pac-12 as part of a package exodus that would have included Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas Tech, but that move was ultimately rejected by the Pac-12.

Deaton: We’d had a (Big 12) board meeting in which everyone was solid, ready to go. That occurred just prior to, I believe, the courting of the Pac-12 — say, a day before, or it could have been a few days before. So the courting of the Pac-12 caught us all by surprise. We knew Texas A&M was gone. I was chair at that time. We were all pulling together. We knew we had some top prospects to bring in to the Big 12. Then to suddenly wake up and hear that four of the institutions were looking at the Pac-12 was quite a surprise to us.

Nevertheless, my role, and I embraced it very heartily at that time, was to try to do everything possible to keep the league going forward. In fact, during that period, David Boren and I flew to Texas A&M, to College Station, to meet with (Texas A&M President) Bowen Loftin to try to talk him into — I believe that was the 28th of August, as I recall. … I was still very solid in thinking we can make this work out and we might even talk A&M into coming back. We knew we had some other prospects. Everything was still very gung-ho. …

But then to see the comments shortly after that (from Boren) that the options are all still open, the remaining five institutions at that time, if you think about it, that make up the Big 12, we were looking at ourselves at that time and saying, “Gosh, what would happen if that really should occur. Are there enough institutions to repopulate the Big 12?”
I think this is the part that the public has really not understood. What we were confronted with as Mike (Alden) and I came together shortly after that — in fact, at the Miami (football) game — what the public needs to realize is at that point the remaining five — I believe there was some negative term we had been labeled, “the Forgotten Five,” I believe it was — what does the public think we were thinking about? We’re saying, “What in God’s name are we going to do?”

We started counting institutions. We had some people, I know, that said maybe the Mountain West is the best we can do. I’m not saying anything negative about the Mountain West, but it wasn’t anything that we were aspiring to. What became clear to us at that point is we’ve got to carefully examine what the future is for the University of Missouri. Does it lie with trying to repopulate the Big 12? Does it lie with trying to join a different conference as a group or individually or in some combination? All those were possible. It was only then, really, even though we had a sense nationally what was happening with conferences, it was only then that we really started doing hard groundwork saying what’s possible for the University of Missouri at that point. And we were deeply concerned about the future of our athletic program.

Q: The tipping point was apparently Sept. 2. How did the process with the SEC get engaged? Who called the SEC and what relationships with the SEC mattered? Did you sit down with (Florida President) Bernie Machen in New York at the (Association of American Universities) dinner? Mike, you had a colleague who used to be the commissioner of your conference when you were at Southwest Texas State. Did any of these things matter?

Deaton: Sure they do. Let me say, Bernie Machen is an individual I’ve worked with for many, many years, as is true of many others in the Big 12, as well as the SEC. It’s remarkable if you’ve worked as long in the academic world as I have that you end up knowing most of the leadership in those institutions. I’d had at least a year’s long conversation with Bernie Machen about what was happening at Florida and the SEC. He knew what was happening in the Big 12 and other conferences. It was a point of conversation in between the various academic issues we were involved with. In fact, I did sit down and have dinner with Bernie and others — we had a larger table — but we made a point of sitting together at the AAU meeting and at that time had a good discussion.

And I had called him, yes. Once we made the decision to look, I called Bernie to determine whether the SEC was willing and try to get a sense of how they felt about the University of Missouri and told him we were considering the possibility of applying for membership.

Q: Was he able to get right back to you on that?

Deaton: He made a point of emphasizing that no decision can be made until it’s voted on by the members of the SEC, and they can only vote if there’s an application in front of them. There was never a promise made beyond that. Yet, in talking to him and others, we had a sense that we were viewed as a very favorable candidate and we were a university that they were very pleased to consider. We knew that because of the academic strengths of the University of Missouri. And a very important factor, as we found out in all the conferences we talked to, the University of Missouri’s AAU status and its history as a prominent university is very high currency. The major BCS conferences are looking for those kind of qualities in the universities they seek to attract.
Alden: The SEC, they were not looking to expand. They were not out soliciting people to be able to join the SEC. With us, with all the relationships we build over the course of time — (SEC Commissioner) Mike Slive’s known me since 1985, when I first met him. Greg Sankey, who is the guy you talked about, is their senior associate commissioner, (executive associate commissioner) Mark Womack and (consultant) Larry Templeton, (Athletic Director) Jeremy Foley at Florida and (Athletic Director) Jeff Long at Arkansas, all those folks, we interact all the time. So I know that after that time you’re talking about, after Sept. 2, Sept. 3, certainly that’s where you might be calling around saying, “Look, do you ever think there might be an opportunity in case this all blows up in the Big 12.”

Q: You alluded to talking to President Machen as far back as a year ago. Was there any sort of discussion or engagement on any level with the SEC as far back as when the Big 12 was already in so much chaos a year back?

Deaton: With many of the BCS conferences, we talk with colleagues. I’m virtually certain colleagues in the SEC said, “One of these days, we’d love to have Missouri in the SEC.” That’s been said to me by many of the leaders in the SEC over the past several years especially, because everyone is always looking down the road. I’ve heard the comment, “Oh, Missouri really ought to be part of the Southeastern Conference.” It’s the kind of comment you would hear, and only in that sense.

Q: In the process of vetting or doing due diligence, you said you were in contact with other conferences, was a specific call ever made to the Big Ten saying, “Do you think about Missouri?”

Deaton: Early on, even earlier in the summer, in AAU meetings, places like that, it was clear that the Big Ten was not expanding. They were not in expansion mode. I had at least one or more of the presidents there tell me, “Oh, we just had a meeting with the whole Big Ten and it’s not something that’s on our radar screen.” That was early information actually. We knew they weren’t in expansion mode, but we knew several other conferences were potentially. The SEC, in fact, was clear they were content with 13 teams. They were not in expansion mode either. But I think when they continued to look and we made the inquiry, then they said, “Well, we could go ahead at this stage.” But it had not been planned.

Q: Is it correct to have the perception of you as quite torn, at least before Sept. 2, and that this was rather grueling for you to try to figure out what to do? And can you just take us through, to whatever degree you can, your call to President Machen that day?

Deaton: I was quite torn about the commitment we had to the Big 12 when I began to see it as very problematic, and that came fairly late because I was gung-ho on moving things in the right direction and had good support from colleagues in doing that. When that began to fragment, I realized I had to do what was best for the University of Missouri. The way was not clear at that point. We had to begin exploring what the options were. I wanted to do that only with our own board’s approval — the Board of Curators of the university. We got that approval. From there it was move ahead as quickly as possible to assemble information. That’s when I would have made
a call to Bernie Machens. He had been observing, of course, what had been going on around the
country.

Q: So, just to clarify, it wasn't like you called him Sept. 2 or 3?

Deaton: We had assembled some information generally that we had had ongoing. We had a
general sense and compiled some information over the last year about different conferences as
there was the upheaval in the Big 12 and we were looking at what was going on in these various
conferences. So we had some information compiled. I don't remember the exact date, but it
would have been after the Board of Curators meeting when I was asked to explore the options.

Q: I was trying to paint a picture in my mind of a furious Brady Deaton calling immediately.

Deaton: No, it's fair to say it's much more deliberative than that. ... The other interesting aspect
is there really were no delays in this process. From a public standpoint, there's always the sense
that, oh my gosh, he should immediately do these things. Well, the reality is you really cannot do
it that way because there are too many people that are part of the decision process and the legal
process. We're very careful to do this the right way. We don't like to backtrack. As you will see
in this case, we did no backtracking. Any preliminary work — and I will not point any fingers
but you can look very quickly around the country at all the backtracking that's been done,
everybody says they're going to do this and going to do that, but six months later are they or not?
It's still up in the air. We don't do things that way. We are very careful.

Once we began that process, it did not take me long personally to make up my mind which way
we should go. I think a lot of people think, and it's understandable, I'm sitting on the decision.
At that point, we're analyzing and comparing information. And once I saw the range of options
here, I said, "If we can go this way, this is the way we should go." But before that's public, of
course, you have a lot of work to do. You don't want to make a decision and have the Board of
Curators override you the next day.

Q: After the Pac-12 decided not to take those four Big 12 schools, was there anything the Big 12
could have done to convince you to stay?

Deaton: Oh, I'm not sure that there was, not sure that there wasn't. What became clear was that
there were a lot of factors on the table that were being examined that weren't going to be
resolved. The Big 12 was in fact undertaking some reform that we had been pushing for — equal
revenue distribution, high school games not being shown on the Longhorn Network — but it was
clear every move we were making was a struggle and an uncertain one that was sewing seeds of
dissension from school to school.

It was sort of like you were sitting in an environment saying, "OK, who's going to be the next
one to say they're going here, there or elsewhere because of one of these little glitches that were
occurring in the discussion process?" I wouldn't want to say "nothing" because it's conceivable
that an environment could have been created that would have said, "Hey, this is absolutely where
we're going. Missouri, you're part of this, you will be, we're all set." It was clear that wasn't
going to occur. For us, the question was, "Do we continue to struggle, do we continue to try to be
the good citizens that we think we have been all along, knowing that in spite of our absolute best efforts, four institutions or more are willing to fly off and try something different?” It was clear, we thought, that it was going to happen again when the next opportunity arose. We had to do what we’ve all said, “Our commitment to the university comes first.”

Shortly after that, we met with our Board (of Curators). Our board discussion of these issues led us to say, “Look, start exploring these alternatives.” At that point, as you know, I resigned as chairman of the board. I could not continue. Up to that point, I had been absolutely committed and doing everything that I knew to do to try to hold the Big 12 together and to grow and expand in a way that was quality and responsible.

Q: What was your reaction when Oklahoma scheduled a press conference right before yours on the night the Pac-12 decided not to expand? And then President Boren gave the impression that everyone in the Big 12 was on board with the granting of media rights, which was contradicted by what you said later that night.

Deaton: Two important parts of your question. One had to do with the press conference timing. I was the chairman of the board and had an obligation, as I told the board, “I’m going to have a press conference.” What was it, 6:30, or something like that? Oklahoma scheduled theirs to be the same time. It was really not intentional. We were delayed here in the work I was doing. I had other issues I had to deal with. I was late getting into the news conference here ....

People have even questioned, should he have even had a press conference, but I think he felt he needed to because they had been out courting the Pac-12 and now he was saying, “Oh, no, we’re back now.” But he scheduled it so it would be the same time as the one here, but because of the delay I had, they just went ahead, and we weren’t communicating at that point. We’d had a board meeting, as I recall, just before that in the day. And then, it was funny, there was some sort of electronic leak here that brought his conference into mine. I actually thought that was kind of funny. I’m sure he did, too. I don’t think he and I have ever discussed that point. We’re good friends, and there was nothing intended in that regard.

The different interpretation is also very explainable. I was sticking to the language that the (Big 12 CEOS) had decided on. ... It had to do with the fact that the board action had to do with the intent to undertake a process. As I recall, I supported that because I knew I was going to undertake that process. (Boren) interpreted it, as probably a good number of them did, because a good number of them had resolved it, we had not. I made it clear to them we had not. But they had. So he was saying, “Oh, we’ve all agreed to go down that pathway.” ...

He worded it that way as a layperson would have said it. I was being very technical, because I needed to be, not only as chair of the board but also because it had been worded that way because we were not there (as far as deciding whether to stay in the Big 12). It had to do with the granting of rights, as I recall, and we knew that our board had not at all made any decision on the granting of rights. For all institutions, that requires board approval. It was a case where the different institutions were at a different level as they agreed upon that process. Dave and I did talk after that and fully realized why the wording would have been different between the two of us. We chatted about that later on.
Q: What is your opinion on granting media rights for a period of years to hold a conference together, and did that idea ever come to a vote prior to when the Big 12 did it in September?

Deaton: The grant of media rights, we use that term in the Big 12 a lot. I know Mike Slive indicated they don’t use it much in the SEC because they don’t think of that, yet they do have to put the bundle together to market. That’s really what they’re talking about in the Big 12, also, although the university only grants rights if the board acts. A lot of formalities built into that. But, no, that’s been on the table all along and various votes have been taken or discussed. In terms of formal actions, I’d have to look at the record.

We knew there was going to have to be a coming together and granting of rights. We had kind of been like the SEC up to this point. But at this point, because of all that was happening, they felt that, “Gosh, we’re going to have to grant these rights for a certain time period and lock it in or we’re never going to keep it together.” So it was an attempt on the part of the Big 12 to try to keep itself together. I’m not negative on that at all necessarily, but the university has to be real clear what it’s doing, where it’s going at that point. In the past, we had all agreed and pledged that, yes, you can broadcast our games and we would have some sort of document that illustrated our agreement to it, but it never went as formal as the official granting of rights.

Alden: I don’t think you see grants of rights discussed in conferences. That’s not a typical topic that you say, “What are we doing in the ACC? Are doing all these grants of rights? What about the Big Ten? What about in the Pac-12? What about in the SEC?” It’s just not a topic that you hear discussed. I think if you look at that, that’s been an issue that centered almost solely around the Big 12.

It’s interesting, even in August, just a few months ago, we get this emergency phone call, which is not unusual, from our commissioner that said, “Hey, you’ve got to fly to Dallas.” I don’t know where I was coming from. I was coming from Lake Tahoe on my vacation. I get this call that says, “Hey, you’ve got to get to Dallas. We’ve got to have this meeting, because we all have to get together and we all have to repledge again.” I think this was the middle of August.

Everybody gets on planes and we all fly to Dallas, Texas, and met at the DFW Hyatt. I remember this exactly. I go schlepping in there. We get into a room and we’re all together. ... Then you’ve got a couple of schools that say, “Ah, I don’t know about that. I don’t know.” It’s like, “What? I thought we were all together here.”

Q: The reaction of some in the Big 12 was: Missouri is leaving because they don’t like the instability of the Big 12, but Missouri contributed to the instability of the Big 12 last year. What’s your response to that?

Deaton: I smile, because there was so much going on the previous year that to pinpoint any given institution and say they contributed to the instability is a stretch. There were two institutions (Nebraska and Colorado) that ended up leaving the Big 12, of course, and you’d have to look at those institutions, and you’d have to look at the reasons that led them to that. The reasons for instability go much deeper than a given incident of even a university leaving.
It's a natural growth process. I'm not pointing any fingers here at all. But you had the coming together of the old Southwest Conference with the Big Six or Big Eight, I guess it was, and the process continues to work. Any time you get that cultural integration occurring — conference integration — you get some dissension occurring, organizational glitches that can create an environment that doesn't have the greatest stability. You're hoping as you do those things — and I'm sure the Big 12 had hoped that this would be, and to some extent it has been. It's brought a bunch of diverse, strong institutions together, very strong competition, and you hope it will be thriving, but it's just that it's been more, you might say, rugged in the Big 12 than it has been in some others like the SEC, which has never had an institution leave its conference. They've had this slow, organic growth process.

Q: Can you say with certainty you will be in the Big 12 in 2012? There is the situation with West Virginia maybe not being able to get out of the Big East and come to the Big 12 for three years, which could have ramifications for you.

Deaton: Our full plans are to go in 2012, and we think West Virginia will be in the Big 12 in 2012. There is the technical possibility — we don't think it's very possible at all — and as you can tell by our actions we're reasonably confident and have some assurances of that.

Q: But if West Virginia can't come to Big 12 next year?

Deaton: We're going to the SEC regardless. We're on our own pathway here. I've had good discussions with the president of West Virginia over time, and I understand where they are and he understands where we are.

Alden: I was in Birmingham yesterday, and in a week we'll be rolling out the 2012 football schedule. So I can assure you that the 14 institutions there working for the last day and a half in Birmingham are all set and everything is set for Mizzou and Texas A&M being part of the SEC in 2012. The SEC will come out with that schedule in the middle of next week.

Deaton: We made an application to the SEC after having phone calls of assurance from the Big 12 commissioner and chair of the board that it was OK to do that from their standpoint. We then, later on, got a call that said, "Oh, well, you know, we're not sure because of this, that and the other because West Virginia might have difficulty." I said to them, "Look, you set things in motion. We set things in motion. We're continuing down this pathway. We feel certainly within our rights to do that within our bylaws."

Q: Where do things stand now with the exit fee and how do you expect that process to go?

Deaton: Let me say we are currently exchanging correspondence on the exit fee, and there will be a process in place, not yet fully determined. We're actually negotiating that now. There's a not a lot I can say about that. Maybe I should have said that up front. That is a question that is on the table, and we'll be most likely negotiating over the next month on that issue with the Big 12.

Q: Does that payment come through a general fund from the athletic department?
Deaton: All exit fees will be paid for by the athletic program. There will be no general-obligation funds, no tax payers’ money or student fees associated with the payment. We’re clear on that, and we know that’s doable. That’s doable under the worst of circumstances. But we’re hoping for good circumstances.

Q: Structurally, now what do you do now that you’ve joined the SEC?

Alden: It’s an amazing amount of work. There’s not a textbook that’s been written that says, “This is how you transition into a new conference.” I know we’ve talked to other people. I think a lot of people think this centers around scheduling. There’s so much more that goes into this as far as travel plans are concerned, hotel reservations, academic needs that the league has, academic reporting that the league has, compliance reporting that the league has, scholarship management, and on and on. There’s a whole cadre of issues that we’re working with.

Now, (associate athletic director) Tim Hickman in our department has been identified as the transition person with the whole team. We have a whole team of people at Mizzou that includes the alumni association, our public-affairs office and others that are working as a team. We really see this transition as being a year-and-a-half transition. While we’re going to be going in July 1, 2012, it’s going to take at least these six months and another 12 months just to get our feet on the ground about this is how we do it, this is how the process works. And then from their end — them being the SEC — Larry Templeton is the person that chairs their transition team. They meet with us, they meet with Texas A&M, to help really on all these communication levels.

Q: What sort of update can you give us on Frank Haith’s situation with the NCAA?

Alden: On the Miami situation, that’s a frustrating deal for everyone concerned. We have been in constant communication with the NCAA and trying to be accessible and willing and willing to work. I know Frank has been available, and everyone has wanted to be as accommodating as we possibly can. ... We have pledged to be working directly with the NCAA, helping them in whatever way we can relative to the University of Miami, and yet the process itself just continues to be a slow and can be a very frustrating process. We don’t have any timetable when the NCAA will do their deal with Miami. We don’t know what the outcome of their work with Miami will be. So, with us, we keep working and keep being supportive and keep doing all the things we can. I know that’s kind of a nonanswer, because there isn’t one, other than, we just continue to keep everybody upset to speed.

Q: Has the NCAA interviewed Haith yet?

Alden: With their process, they sit there and talk with our compliance people. The reason for that is we avail ourselves to them. Mizzou has nothing to do with that. Have they talked with Frank? Yeah, I’m sure they’ve talked with him and spent some time with him over the phone or whatever, and they keep us in the loop on that, but as far as official interviews and all that stuff, shoot, they don’t make us privy to all that kind of stuff.

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Faculty compare past experience of Wolfe, Forsee

Both had business, not academic, jobs.

August Kryger | Tim Wolfe speaks Tuesday at the Reynolds Alumni Center after being introduced as the choice for University of Missouri System president. Wolfe, who begins work Feb. 15, has a background in business, as did his predecessor, Gary Forsee.

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune

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There’s not as much uproar over the hiring of a businessman to lead the University of Missouri System this go-round, but some MU faculty members say they would have preferred the next UM president have an academic background.
The UM Board of Curators hired Tim Wolfe to take the helm of the four-campus system. He will take office Feb. 15 after spending the coming weeks getting familiar with the system.

Like his predecessor, Gary Forsee, Wolfe has a business background. He spent 20 years at IBM and most recently was president of software provider Novell Americas.

"Basically, they should be hiring trained academicians, someone experienced in running large educational institutions," said Eddie Adelstein, associate professor in the Department of Pathology and Anatomical Sciences. "It seems like the Board of Curators is a flawed lot. They have no experience themselves in education, so they hire people like themselves."

An advisory committee made up of faculty representatives expressed concerns about a nonacademic hire to curators during a closed meeting last week, said Bill Wiebold, an agronomy professor and member of that group.

"That viewpoint was expressed by several people, although I think it was tempered by knowing Gary did a good job," he said. "If I had my druthers, I would like to see somebody with university experience, but I’ve been shown the other side works well, too."

Both Forsee and Wolfe were hired at UM after losing top administrative jobs at technology companies. Forsee was fired as CEO of Sprint months earlier, and Wolfe lost his job in a company shake-up after Houston-based Attachmate purchased Novell. Forsee was a Missouri University of Science and Technology graduate; Wolfe is an MU alumnus.

"Really, he may well be Gary Forsee’s son or something like that," said Harry Tyrer, chairman of the MU Faculty Council.

Tyrer said he had a good first impression of Wolfe but added that his not having a background in higher education is a problem.

"The new president will not have gone through the tenure process, will not have gone through the promotion processes, will not have gone through the pain and agony of trying to publish and trying to get grants," Tyrer said. "He will not have experienced all the problems. So that seems to be the glaring missing piece. Having said that, let’s give him a chance."

Victoria Johnson, an associate professor of sociology, worries the university will continue to become more like a corporation on Wolfe’s watch. A corporate mentality, she said, "has decreased the quality and standards of higher education over the last few decades."

Wolfe, during a news conference yesterday, referred to students as “customers,” a label that makes professors cringe. Faculty members have expressed fears in the past that thinking of students as customers puts pressure on instructors to pass or coddle them.

But Johnson said she hopes Wolfe’s family connections to higher education will be helpful.
Wolfe’s father, Joe, was a communications professor at MU from 1967 to 1997, and his mother, Judith, has been a professor of law at the Massachusetts School of Law in Andover for 18 years.

“It is good that his parents were professors, so he has some insights about how the university works,” Johnson said.

Wolfe lacks an advanced degree, but curators were careful to not make that a requirement.

When drafting the job advertisement in March, they shied away from specifying what type of education a successful candidate needed.

Wolfe did participate in Harvard Business School’s Advanced Management Program in 1995, which Sudarshan Loyalka, a curators professor in the MU College of Engineering, considers a plus.

“Obviously, his experience in higher education is limited, but we have to hope that he will be a quick learner and will help the university to greater heights,” Loyalka said.

To do that, Tyrer suggests Wolfe focus on educating Missourians about the importance of the university in hopes of salvaging dwindling state funding.

“Go and talk to the people on campus and off campus,” Tyrer said. “Go talk to those farmers. Go talk to those industrialists. Go talk to those who view themselves as practical individuals. Go talk to the opinion makers. … I’m sure he’s going to start recognizing he has to convince the state of Missouri, not just the legislature. If the legislature were convinced that voters wanted to fund the university, they would do it.”
I chatted on the phone with Tim Wolfe this afternoon as he rode a bus from Columbia to Rolla, just hours after he was named president of the four-campus University of Missouri System. Wolfe, 53, a Mizzou business school alumnus and former IBM and Novell executive, will succeed Gary Forsee as system president this February.

Did the search committee call you?

Joan Gabel, dean of the Trulaske College of Business at the University of Missouri, gave my name to Board of Curators Chairman Warren Erdman, who called me in early August to ask about my interest. I was surprised because in my career I have been a business leader but I haven't been in academia. My initial thoughts were, "Why would anyone be interested in me for that role?" But I did more research into who had been in that role. My predecessor, Gary Forsee, came from a business background as
former Sprint Nextel Corp. chairman and CEO) and had done quite well. Looking at his track record gave me more interest.

Tell me about your business background.

I joined IBM in 1980 right out of business school. I was a sales rep, marketing manager, director and then vice president. I changed jobs every two years. Some of those jobs were in global information technology, software and consulting. After IBM, I joined Novell, a software company with $800 million to $900 million a year in revenue. I was president of the Americas, responsible for over half of the revenue and the geography of U.S. and Canada. We sold Novell to the Attachmate Group, a consortium of private equity firms, for $2.2 billion in April. At no point did I think I was capable of retiring on a permanent basis but my plan was to take some time off. I wanted to spend more time with my kids and wife, going fishing and playing golf. That was May, June and July.

How will your business background help you in your new role?

I've had the great fortune to work with a lot of different companies and executives. There's a six degrees of separation and we can get access. Even if you don't have a personal relationship, you can use your LinkedIn network and can typically find a mutual friend who can initiate an introduction. The wealth of experience, ideas and research in the faculty gives us more opportunity. From higher ed, since we have research in so many different areas, you can have a conversation on a gamut of possibilities.

What are your priorities as University of Missouri president?

I don't start until Feb. 15 so the best thing I can do is learn everything I can and meet face to face with people on the four campuses (including University of Missouri-St. Louis tomorrow). I want to go and absorb as much as possible and then that will start to influence what the priorities will be because I don't have that list of things to go focus on at this particular point in time.

You said in your speech today that you want to focus on economic development to create jobs for graduates. Can you elaborate?

It is a conversation that has to occur between business, political and university system leaders where we collectively talk about the opportunities in the marketplace and what out there in the marketplace needs a solution and based on that what solutions are available and not available, working on research, training or facilities. The state of Missouri is looking for the same opportunities to recruit new companies and jobs. We can help.

You come from a family of academics?

My dad spent 30 years at Columbia teaching in the communications department and my mom teaches law school at Massachusetts School of Law in Andover, Mass. There's been a propensity for our family to stay close to education and value education and how it can help your career. It was instilled in me that higher education was important in my life. I grew up in that environment in Columbia and before that at College Park, Md., where my dad taught at the University of Maryland. If you grow up in a college
town culture, you either like it or don’t like it, and I liked it very much because of the diversity of the town, the theater, sports and restaurants. There is an energy that comes from that. It feels very much like a homecoming to return to Columbia. I met a lot of people today that I have known from my past or we have a connection. My texts and emails have just filled up with people I haven’t talked to in a while and have fond memories of from Columbia.

From where will you be moving?

We live in a small town outside Boston called Walpole, Mass. I’ll be moving in the next 30 days. My children (twin son and daughter, Madison and Tyler) are juniors in high school so they will finish school in Boston and then start college. We have put money aside so they have a choice of where they want to go. I don’t want to influence that based on how much a college costs.
New UM chief shows his knowledge of UMSL

Normandy • The red and gold tie to match the school colors was a nice touch. So were the details the newly minted University of Missouri President Timothy M. Wolfe recited about the St. Louis campus' curriculum and the national rankings various programs have received.

What got the biggest reaction from the University of Missouri-St. Louis crowd, though, was Wolfe's mention of his need to devote time to the long-in-the-works effort to renovate the school's 40-year-old science complex.

And Wolfe got laughs when he promised that the campus visits his 16-year-old twins are making to help decide where to go to college will not include the University of Kansas, Mizzou's biggest rival and his wife's alma mater.

Wolfe, a Mizzou graduate, was out to prove he was right for the job and familiar with the state's public university system that includes 72,000 students. The closed-door process of his hiring has been criticized, and skeptics have questioned whether a relative unknown with no academic experience is best suited to be the University of Missouri system's top leader.

Wolfe, 53, a former software industry executive, said his comments Wednesday were about more than playing up to the audience. He said he would allay his skeptics' concerns by listening to a range of voices.

"If you are genuine and help, ... you overcome the skeptics," Wolfe said in an interview before he was formally introduced Wednesday morning at the UMSL campus to an audience made up largely of faculty and university officials. He made a similar stop Wednesday afternoon at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Wolfe expressed his passion for the new position but declined to talk specifics on ways he planned to shape the university system. Wolfe starts his new job on Feb. 15. He replaces Gary Forsee, who stepped down when his wife became ill.

Wolfe's hiring was announced Tuesday on the university's main campus in Columbia, where Wolfe received a bachelor's degree in personnel management in 1980. His father, Joe, was a communications professor at the university for 30 years. His mother, Judith, is a law professor at the Massachusetts School of Law in Andover. She received her law degree from Mizzou.
Wolfe, who grew up in Columbia, said in an interview that he turned to his parents for advice during his bid for the president's job. He wanted to, among other things, better understand the needs of faculty. He said his parents instilled in him that learning is a "lifelong journey" and "you need to be able to look at the world from all angles."

He says his business experience, which includes a stint as a vice president of IBM, is a strength he brings to the University of Missouri system. With public funds for education shrinking, other avenues have to be sought, including partnerships with corporations in areas of research and development, and in employee training.

"It's an opportunity to look at problems in a different way," Wolfe said. As a businessman, Wolfe said, he has worked with legislators and governors to underscore the importance of job creation and is confident he can broker good relationships in Missouri, where the decision on how to divide public funds is an annual battle.

He said he would have his college-bound children visit all four campuses and tag along with them to get their perspective.

Wolfe talked in general about continuing the momentum of growth and academics but declined to get into specifics.

He said he would not be a part of any final decision on a proposed tuition increase but did say the university did not have enough revenue and "it's putting stress on what we can do."

Wolfe made a direct reference to the need to renovate the Benton-Stadler science complex. He did not elaborate, but the audience cheered loudly. Three times in the last two decades the project has been started, only to be derailed by financial crisis. The most recent effort to rehab the complex stalled when federal stimulus money was taken for other state needs.

Wolfe was received warmly by the crowd, gathered in the lobby of the J.C. Penney Conference Center. Warren Erdman, chairman of the Board of Curators, said "excitement and optimism fills the air."

Only one question was pitched to Wolfe when the floor was opened to the audience. Biology professor Zuleyma Tang-Martinez asked him if he supported domestic partner benefits, something not offered by the University of Missouri system. Tang-Martinez said the lack of benefits hurt recruitment efforts and damaged morale.

"It's definitely on my radar screen," Wolfe said. "We're looking at it." He said the university recognized the need to represent a wide spectrum of society "for all the good reasons." But he said no decision on the policy would come until after he took office.

Wolfe said in an interview that he would like to see the rivalry with Kansas continue, although it's unlikely with Mizzou's move next year to the SEC.
"It's a great tradition," Wolfe said. But he noted that the Kansas camp had not embraced the idea of continuing the border state battles.

If Wolfe turns to sports analogies to support his agenda during his tenure, it should not come as a surprise. In 1975, as quarterback, he led the Rock Bridge High School football team to the 3A state championship.

"That was a defining moment in my life," Wolfe said just a few minutes before taking the podium. "And this is a defining moment."
The Tribune's View
Cigarette tax
Earmarking new revenue?

By Henry J. Waters III
Columbia Daily Tribune
Wednesday, December 14, 2011

Warren Erdman, ending his term as president of the University of Missouri Board of
Curators, turns his attention to increasing the cigarette tax by 73 cents per pack, still far
below the national average.

Erdman joins Rep. Mary Still, who for years has promoted a cigarette tax increase, so far without
success.

I’ve been a skeptic of this particular tax because for many it is an attempt to punish use of a
particular product on behavioral grounds, but many others, like Erdman and Still, see public
revenue gain as the main benefit — an argument bolstered politically by the fact all other states
are ahead of us. For Missouri to remain lowest in the nation at 17 cents a pack seems vaguely out
of step, if not stupid.

Erdman wants to earmark the new revenue mainly for education and public health. Good luck
with that.

When a new tax is raised to supplement items in the general revenue state budget, a question
always arises how much the General Assembly is really adding to the designated pool of
revenue. The best example is money from the state lottery, which is supposed to add to total
money for public education, an effect hard to discern.

Hard-strapped legislators are more likely to reduce education funding they otherwise would have
approved, transforming the “earmarked” money into general revenue money.

Erdman wants to guard against that sort of shifting with language in his initiative requiring
lawmakers, in the felicitous words of our reporter Janese Silvey, “to use the money for
designated purposes on top of general revenues already allocated to those purposes.”
This would be a valiant try, but rhetoric of this type will not confound the inherently fungible nature of legislative appropriations. If Erdman or anyone else can ensure what the aggregate legislative mind otherwise would have done to fund already-existing categories, he will deserve credentials as an oracle able to fathom the hopelessly unfathomable.

Earmarked taxes will be effectively allocated if they go for particular purposes otherwise not part of usual general revenue funding. We have several such mentions in our state constitution, but education and health care are not among them. I would not want to bet my hat and overcoat on how much additional overall funding will show up in these areas even if a tobacco tax increase passes.

Fervent supporters make exhaustive explanations why lottery funding actually does go explicitly for education, but I’ve never been convinced how much more overall education funding, if any, actually results. Bringing in more general state revenue makes sense. Expecting it to end up in carefully designated pockets of otherwise existing funding is not realistic.

But that does not mean raising the cigarette tax is a bad idea. Extra money in the state budget can’t hurt education or health funding, so let us abide but keep in perspective the pending earmarking argument. We are safer and wiser to regard this as general revenue money and go for it on that basis.
Holiday Survival Guide

Don’t burn wrapping paper in the fireplace, and other ways to keep your family healthy

6:26 PM, Dec. 14, 2011

The holiday season can be one of the most joyous times of the year, but it also comes with a few potential pitfalls. Here’s some advice on how to avoid many of them.

STAYING WELL

Exercise: Instead of taking a break from exercise during the holidays, make it a priority. “It’s the most important time to be exercising because our stress levels go up during the holidays,” said Carlos Rivas, fitness director and personal training director for the Baptist East/Milestone Wellness Center.

“Use exercise as your main coping mechanism,” he said, even if you don’t have 30 minutes to an hour to devote to it. For example, you could do a 10-minute workout or walk in the morning, then again after lunch and in the evening.

Get enough sleep: Don’t skimp on shut-eye or it’s likely to backfire on you, Rivas said.

Use a team approach: “Rather than having one person prepare an entire holiday meal, ask family members and guests to bring side dishes, appetizers or drinks,” said Beth Richards, director of the Missouri Arthritis and Osteoporosis Program at the University of Missouri School of Health Professions. “Instead of stressing about decorating the tree or making desserts from scratch, invite family and friends to help and enjoy time spent together.”

PARTIES AND DINNERS

Don’t go hungry: Some people will starve all day because they’re going to a big party at night. “You’re setting yourself up for failure if you go into a big party like that hungry,” said Janet Gilligan, a registered dietitian at University of Kentucky HealthCare.

Think before you indulge: No matter how luscious the dish looks, consider whether it’s really worth it, before you consume it, she said. “Extra calories add up.”

Bring an alternative: If you’re taking a dish to a potluck or another event, consider making it a healthy one, Gilligan said.
In general, when making food, look for ways to slim down your dishes, such as using skim milk instead of whole milk, low-fat versions of cream cheese and sour cream, and less gravy and butter than usual, she said.
Public school teachers learn to spot hints of suicide through MU program

By Yiqian Zhang
December 14, 2011 | 9:03 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA – James Koller has saved a life.

Two years ago, the professor emeritus in the MU College of Education gave a talk about suicide prevention in Whitehorse, capital of Canada's Yukon.

When he finished, a woman came up to talk to him.

"She said, 'Dr. Koller, I was planning to kill myself,'" he recalled.

The woman told him she had been planning suicide for weeks and changed her mind after hearing him talk. With help, Koller said she has fully recovered.

For some, there is no second chance.

According to a 2007 Center for Disease Control report, suicide is the third leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds, accounting for 12 percent of all deaths annually in that age group.

Recognizing the growing need for training in suicide prevention and understanding mental health issues impacting students, the Mental Health Leadership Academy at MU was established five years ago.

It was an outgrowth of the MU Partnership for Educational Renewal, which brings together public schools, campus resources and state education leadership.

The academy has trained teachers, administrators, counselors and other K-12 faculty to recognize the warning signs of suicide, said Dan Lowry, co-director of the program. Columbia's public schools have also participated.

Previous training concentrated on reactions to suicide after it happened, Lowry said.
"We had never had a class on how to identify, deal with and prevent students and even faculty members from taking their lives," he said.

This fall, the academy received the Nicholas Michelli Award for Promoting Social Justice, one of the highest recognitions in education on the national level.

Before its founding, a two-year study conducted through the College of Education looked at mental health issues and their effects on students.

Koller, one of the researchers, collected data and interviewed families of suicide victims. The research found that focusing on suicide prevention is much more important than dealing with the aftermath.

"It is estimated that for every suicide death, there are about 25 attempted suicides," he wrote in the study.

Today, the academy teaches two of the most key aspects of suicide prevention: recognizing the signs of suicide and dealing with the actual attempt.

**Recognizing the signs**

John Bunten's parents were shocked when they heard about their son's suicide attempt.

"They kept asking 'Why didn’t you tell us?'" Bunten said.

The 20-year-old former MU student was wearing a white, short-sleeved soccer shirt and black pants.

Under the shirt, both arms had tattoos. One read "Faith," the other, "Honor."

"They all mean something toward life," he said.

A little more than a year ago, Bunten was lying on a hospital bed.

He tried to commit suicide on Sept. 2, 2010. His parents discovered him and rushed him to the hospital in time to save his life.

Bunten had been struggling with depression for four years before he attempted suicide. He said he had not been communicating enough with his friends and family.
In fact, minutes before his attempt, he shared his plan with a friend, but the friend didn’t believe him.

"I put on such a good, fixed smile, acted so fake toward my family," Bunten said.

There were, however, traceable signs.

Bunten had loved sports and played almost every kind. By his junior year of high school, he had quit basketball. By senior year, he had quit football and track.

"It wasn’t fun anymore. It’s just, ‘Crap, I gotta go to practice,’” he said. "The game wasn’t worth it for me."

An important sign of suicide potential is giving up a hobby or interest or a change in daily behavior, Koller said.

Other warning signs are lack of concern about personal welfare, changes in social patterns and difficulty in concentration.

Years ago, Koller received a set of sports trophies from an old friend, read it as a warning sign and immediately summoned help.

**Dealing with the elephant in the room**

It’s not enough just to recognize the signs. A critical aspect of suicide prevention is being able to address it, Koller said.

Because of guilt or shame, families often keep suicides a secret, he said.

"Most families have individuals whose problems they don’t necessarily want to talk about," Koller said. "We always want to talk about the good stuff, not the bad stuff."

Bunten agreed.

"If suicide awareness were brought up as much as breast cancer awareness, it’ll be prevented much better," he said.

Beth Eiken, who works in the MU School of Medicine, also said it’s vital to get the subject on the table.
Eiken lost her son, Stuart, in 2009.

He was a Rock Bridge High School senior and a member of the football team, but he was struggling mentally.

Eiken described him as "a really quiet person (who) didn’t want other people to know his problems and to burden others with his problems."

He had always been a strong-willed child, which she thought would pull him through a crisis.

She still asks "Why?" from time to time, but she has since educated herself about suicide prevention.

If Eiken had known what she knows now, she believes she could have done a lot more for her son.

"If I could do things differently, I definitely would have provided more support for him," she said. "It’s important to build a strong support system to kids who are suffering ... to create a safety net."

Education is the key, especially for the community at large, she said. It can help reduce the stigma and fear around suicide.

One of the biggest myths is that people who talk about suicide do not actually attempt suicide and talking about it with them will only encourage them, Koller said.

"People don’t want to talk about it. ... (They) think youth in our community take their own lives because they are crazy," Eiken said. "That’s not the case."

One factor could be an untreated disease, such as depression or bipolar disorder. Ninety percent of those who suffer from an untreated mental disorder take their lives, Eiken said. Most people are unaware of that.

Bunten said he didn’t feel comfortable talking about his troubles.

"You feel like you are alone, nobody will understand what you’ll say," he said. "You change into a different person. ... If you can’t even accept yourself, how can others accept you?"

But, he said, "thousands of kids out there understand exactly what I’m going through."
Teachers really are the ones who should be looking for signs, Bunten said.

"The counselors see the students about once a week. Teachers see them every day."

**How suicide prevention training works**

Three years ago, the Parkway School District in Chesterfield had no systematic way to respond to suicides, said Julie Harrison, the coordinator of guidance and counseling at Parkway.

"We were trying to make decisions about things every single time it came up and didn’t have a plan beforehand," she said.

Furthermore, the school district had been hesitant to talk about suicide, Harrison said.

"Nobody wanted to do it, it’s too depressing a topic," she said. "There’s a stigma of dealing with suicide."

Koller was invited to the district for a two-day workshop for counselors, teachers, social workers and officers. After the training, Parkway set up health classes and ways to talk to students about depression as early as middle school, Harrison said. Schools also set up connections to the broader community, making it easier for teens to seek help.

**Other resources at MU**

MU initiated an annual suicide prevention week last year following high-profile cases on college campuses, including at the University of Texas and Rutgers University, according to a previous Missourian report. This year, Suicide Prevention Week took place from Nov. 7 to 11. Events included a keynote speaker, suicide prevention training and a film screening.

"The week highlights a lot of the resources available on campus," said Christy Hutton of the MU Counseling Center staff.

MU also has a nationally recognized suicide prevention training program called Question, Persuade, Refer. The hour-long class is open to students, staff and faculty.

It teaches participants how to recognize suicide warning signs, how to respond and how to refer victims to appropriate resources.

"It helps if you know in advance what to do," Eiken said. "Suicide is 100 percent preventable."
Missouri's early success under Haith could be tempered by investigation

By Matt Beceley
December 14, 2011 | 8:59 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — The Missouri men's basketball team has had a flurry of success early in the season.

The Tigers are 9-0 and ranked No. 10 in the AP Top 25, thanks to consistent shooting from the likes of Marcus Denmon and Kim English and a dominant presence from Ricardo Ratliffe, who is often the lone forward on the court since senior Laurence Bowers tore his ACL before the start of the season.

Missouri's surprising start has overshadowed what could become a distraction to all of Missouri athletics in the coming months — the NCAA investigation into Frank Haith for potential recruiting violations during his tenure at the University of Miami.

The NCAA began its investigation in August when Haith was accused by former Miami booster Nevin Shapiro of knowing about a $10,000 payment Shapiro made to Miami basketball recruit DeQuan Jones in 2008.

The NCAA is not allowed to comment on current, pending or potential investigations, wrote Stacey Osburn, associate director of public and media relations, in an email.

While the NCAA claims on its website that investigations typically take less than a year, more complicated cases can take longer. The investigation into the University of Tennessee's Athletics Department and basketball coach Bruce Pearl lasted 17 months and culminated in Pearl's firing in March 2011.

An NCAA investigation is a multi-step process that can take months:

1. The NCAA receives information from member institutions, anonymous sources or media reports — as in Miami's case with the Yahoo! Sports report.
2. If the NCAA thinks a school or coach has violated regulations, it sends a letter of inquiry to the university’s president or chancellor informing them of a pending investigation by the NCAA.

3. The NCAA initiates its investigation, which includes on- and off-campus interviews with student-athletes, school staff members or other individuals associated with the investigation.

4. The NCAA notifies the university of alleged violations it discovers during the investigation. A notice of alleged violations is normally delivered to the university within six months of the initial letter of inquiry. If the investigation continues for longer than a year, the NCAA Committee on Infractions must review and renew the investigation in order for it to continue.

5. If violations are found, the NCAA and the university agree on penalties or a hearing with the NCAA Committee on Infractions is scheduled.

6. If a hearing is held, the Committee on Infractions releases a report detailing the penalties to be imposed on the school, usually within six to eight weeks after the hearing. The school has the option of appealing the decision through the Infractions Appeals Committee.

Although Haith no longer coaches at Miami, the investigation can have far-reaching effects if the NCAA finds the university guilty of the allegations.

According to the NCAA's website, "If the coach or other individuals are no longer at the school where the infraction occurred but are now working at another institution, the Committee on Infractions may request the current school to take action against the individual, even if the school was not involved in the infraction."

That is not always the case, however. Kentucky coach John Calipari has never had penalties follow him to another coaching job, though he has been the subject of multiple NCAA investigations, according to a previous Missourian article.

Language in Haith's contract cites nine potential causes for termination. The fifth stipulation in the "Termination for Cause" section in Haith's contract includes violations that occurred during employment at another NCAA institution.
GOP debates, both interesting and important, score in TV ratings

By Paul Farhi, Published: December 14

Like the best reality TV shows, it has all the elements.

There's the unscripted dialogue, frequent verbal clashes and the occasional mortifying moment to give viewers something to talk about the next day. There's the diverse and occasionally wacky cast of characters — the would-be front-runner (Mitt Romney), the plain-talkin' challenger (Rick Perry), the come-from-behind guy (Newt Gingrich), the feisty grandpa (Ron Paul), and the plucky female contender (Michele Bachmann). There are underdog figures, too (Rick Santorum and Jon Huntsman), who never seem to get the same amount of airtime as the bigger stars.

The Republican primary debates — 15 full-fledged ones so far, and another Thursday night on Fox News Channel — have turned into one of the fall television season's surprise hits. A record 7.6 million people tuned in Saturday night, barely three weeks before the first caucus in Iowa. The five most popular debates in recent weeks have attracted an average of 5.6 million viewers, a figure that would rank them as the most popular series on cable after pro-football games, and just behind middle-ranked sitcoms such as “Parks and Recreation” on the broadcast networks.

Surely, viewers of all political persuasions are drawn by the consequential nature of the discussion — taxes, the economic crisis, stances on foreign policy — and by a desire to learn who might be best qualified to challenge for the presidency next fall. But this year's debate-athon, which will surely surpass the record of 21 held by Republicans during the 2007-08 cycle, has some bonus features as well.

"There's hype, there's drama, there's uncertainty," said Mitchell McKinney, a communications professor at the University of Missouri who specializes in political debates. "The debates have become like a reality show, like the next version of 'Survivor.'"

Each of the debates has produced a newsworthy (or at least sound-bite-worthy) moment or two. In Saturday's debate, it was Romney offering to bet Perry $10,000 over a disagreement about a passage from Romney's book. Perry had his own mortifying "oops" moment last month when he couldn't remember the name of a third federal agency he would dismantle if elected. Herman Cain, now gone, is likely to be most remembered for repeatedly invoking his "9-9-9" plan during the debates. Or possibly for repeatedly calling CNN moderator Wolf Blitzer "Blitz" during one of his answers.
Even audience reactions have been noteworthy, such as the booing that followed a gay soldier’s question in September about whether the candidates would reinstate the military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.

All of it seems to matter; the debates have been critical in shifting public perceptions of the candidates, leading to an unsettled and suspenseful race — which, of course, amplifies the stakes for the next debate.

Perry’s candidacy ran into big trouble with his debate brain freeze. Gingrich’s rise from near-dead to the top of the polls in recent weeks is largely credited to his debate performances. The fallout from Romney’s proposed bet with Perry last week still isn’t clear, but it couldn’t have helped; Huntsman and Bachmann’s campaigns jumped on it as a sign that Romney is out of touch with average Americans, as did the Democratic National Committee.

“There’s a general uncertainty among Republican voters about who they should turn to to be their messenger and what that message should be,” McKinney said. “There’s lots of volatility here. That’s part of the drama, too.”

It helps, too, that the sponsors of the debates are television networks, and particularly the cable news networks. Under their aegis, the debates have become full-fledged TV productions, with audience-building promotions and discussion shows before the debate and “wrap-up” shows afterward that mimic the hoopla surrounding a big football game.

The debates tend to be loss-leaders for the networks, typically costing upwards of $1 million to produce. That investment can’t be recouped via the limited number of commercials that air during each debate. But sponsoring a debate helps promote the network’s brand among viewers for the long campaign to follow, said Sam Feist, CNN’s Washington bureau chief and the executive producer of the four debates it has sponsored so far.

“The debates have been fascinating to watch this year,” Feist said. “They have been interesting and important at the same time. There are lots of [programs] that are important but not interesting, and some that are interesting but not important. These are both. The country is facing significant challenges, and there are viewers and voters who are trying to decide which of the candidates to vote for. You have independents and Democrats watching, too.”

Feist argues that the debates are a better way than campaign ads for voters to get information about the candidates. The largely unscripted statements and exchanges reveal more about the candidates than 30-second commercials, he says.

The only people who seem less than pleased about the debates are those running TV stations that count on those ads every four years.

The number of debates, and the broad national exposure they’ve provided, have diminished the need for TV commercials in the early primary states, said Ken Goldstein, who heads Campaign Media Advertising Group (CMAG), an Arlington company that tracks political ad spending.
In fact, ad spending in the two early voting states is way down this year, even accounting for the fact that only one party is contesting the nomination this year compared with two in 2007. The Republican candidates and political action committees have spent $3.3 million on TV ads in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids and other Iowa cities so far this year, according to CMAG, vs. $27.4 million at this point during the last campaign.

In New Hampshire, the figure this year is $1.3 million compared with $17.2 million four years ago.

Some candidates haven’t shown up on the air at all. As of Tuesday, Gingrich had yet to run a spot in New Hampshire. Former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty spent more on TV ads in Iowa before dropping out of the race in August than Santorum, Huntsman or Bachmann have through mid-December, according to CMAG.

Dale Woods, president of WHO, the NBC affiliate in Des Moines, said his station saw a slight jump in political ad sales after Saturday’s debate. But with only three weeks before the Iowa caucus, that’s a late start. In particular, Woods says, Gingrich and Romney have been slow to take to the local airwaves. “Romney was much more aggressive last time,” said Woods. “But that could be because he’s concentrating on New Hampshire,” where his prospects are much stronger than in Iowa.

This suggests an underappreciated aspect of the debates: that they keep candidates with limited bankrolls and the lagging poll numbers in the race longer. Relieved of the necessity to keep pace in the advertising arms race, candidates such as Santorum, Bachmann and Huntsman can hang around longer.

Just ask Gingrich. Six months ago, his campaign broke and in disarray, he seemed poised to disappear. Today, he’s still on the island. And he may be there next fall, too.
Today’s column is all about Betty Cook Rottmann and the Trevor family — and friends. The Trevors first.

In case you missed the “Symphony of Toys” story in Sunday’s Ovation section, today is a final reminder of this Sunday’s holiday concert presented by the Missouri Symphony Society and produced by Maestro Kirk Trevor.

The concert, which begins at 3 p.m. at the Missouri Theatre Center for the Arts, brings together the Missouri Symphony Society, the Columbia Handbell Ensemble, the Columbia Suzuki Ensemble and the Symphony Chamber Choir playing a variety of Christmas music from Vivaldi to Irving Berlin, narrated by Paul Pepper and conducted by the charismatic Trevor.

Joining Kirk will be his wife and harpist Maria Duhova and his daughter, Chloe, who has thrilled Columbians with her violin since, as a 16-year-old, she tackled Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto in D — and won.

Kids who leave unwrapped gifts under the Missouri Theatre Christmas tree will get free tickets to the concert. The day is a collaboration with the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots program.

The day also is a showcase for the wisdom of the agreement between the University of Missouri and MOSS. That agreement relieves MOSS from meeting debt service it couldn’t pay and gives MU a much-needed 1,200-seat performance hall, a rent-free home for MOSS and welcome debt relief to the theater’s nervous creditors.

Sunday will be an afternoon of great music and a chance to make a bleak Christmas happier for kids in need and to feel good with the knowledge that, for now at least, the future of the Missouri Theatre is a win-win for all.
Betty Cook Rottmann was a longtime friend. We first met at the Missouri School of Journalism, and we worked together on many projects for the next 50 years.

It was a personal loss for my wife, Dolores, and me when Betty died Oct. 26. Her celebration of life brought a full house to her beloved Unitarian-Universalist Church on Saturday — and left an empty feeling beyond the loss of a friend.

Betty’s children live elsewhere — son Larry in Springfield and daughter Tina near Fayetteville, Ark. The memory of one of Columbia’s true crusaders will soon be forgotten. Too soon, her work for women’s issues and with Columbia Public Schools, the Columbia Public Library, Nora Stewart Nursery School, the North Central Columbia Neighborhood Association, the League of Women Voters, the Boone County Transportation Service Committee, the American Association of University Women, the Columbia Historical Preservation Committee and many others will be lost to history.

So, too, will be the memory of her traveling the state as Amelia Bloomer, a 19th-century women’s rights pioneer.

One of Betty’s projects was the restoration of the century-old Heibel-March building at the corner of Range Line Street and Wilkes Boulevard, now known as “The Corner.” She made sure it was placed on the list of Columbia’s historic places, then worked to get the North Central Neighborhood Association to restore it to become a useful community center.

Bickering among those leading the restoration and later with other groups has left the building as it was a decade ago — without repair and without a future. It seems only Betty really cared.

I have no idea how to pay for this idea, but why can’t our community come together and do two things at once: give the neighborhood a much-needed community center and make the Heibel-March building a monument to Betty Cook Rottmann for the life of caring she has given our city.

Sure, such a place would need to be programmed and maintained once renovated. Betty would work on such problems if she were here. She’s not, but her memorial awaits.

If you would like to join me in keeping her legacy alive in our town, give Ol’ Clark a call. If there’s interest, we’ll get folks together to see if we can do this project as Betty did many of hers — one small bit at a time but relentless till it was finished.