



## Ex-MU athlete sues over scholarship agreement

By **JANESE SILVEY**

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**A former University of Missouri soccer player is suing the team's head coach and the UM Board of Curators for not fulfilling scholarship promises made to entice her to come to the university.**

Alex Charlebois is accusing Bryan Blitz and university leaders of breaching a contract and negligent misrepresentation in a petition Jefferson City attorney Blake Markus filed this month in Boone County Circuit Court.

She is asking for an award of \$106,650 — the amount of scholarship dollars pledged to her — plus punitive damages.

Blitz outlined the scholarship offer made to Charlebois' family in an email dated Dec. 12, 2008, which is included in court documents. The email shows a chart of expenses for five years' worth of college and indicates she would pay half of expenses her first year, and MU would provide a full ride for the second through fifth years.

The scholarship offer trumped offers she received from other universities, the lawsuit says.

MU paid half of her tuition last school year, as written, but paid only half this school year instead of the full scholarship, according to the lawsuit.

When Charlebois complained about it, Blitz removed her from the team, Markus said.

Charlebois is from Canada and will decide over winter break whether to return to MU.

"The scholarship is the reason why she came here," Markus said. "Without the scholarship, it wouldn't have been possible."

He said the email is the only contract that exists between her and the university.

"That's the really surprising thing," Markus said. "The university never said what the scholarship could be revoked for or whether or not they could just take it away."

And Blitz might have been overstepping his powers when he outlined a proposal that included scholarship dollars for multiple years, Markus said. The NCAA, which governs college sports, until recently didn't allow schools to offer multiyear scholarships; rather, they could only offer one-year, renewable grants. The NCAA board recently voted to allow multiyear scholarships, but that would not have been in place when Blitz sent the email in 2008.

Blitz and MU Athletics Department spokesman Chad Moller declined to comment, acting on advice of the system's general counsel, Moller said.



## Professor pans term limits

Report says short tenures result in a lack of knowledge.

BY DAVID A. LIEB of The Associated Press

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JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri General Assembly has returned to the 1920s. It's a flash to the past that is largely because of term limits.

A recent report by a professor at the University of Missouri found the average tenure of state House and Senate members in the current era of term limits is similar to that of lawmakers who served in 1920s, when state government was much smaller and lawmakers weren't limited in how many times they could seek re-election.

**But the historical twist is not a good thing, concluded David Valentine, associate director of public service at the university's Truman School of Public Affairs.**

Valentine equates legislative tenure with knowledge, meaning today's lawmakers are less informed about the intricate details of state government despite the fact it is much more complex than it was during the Roaring '20s.

He concludes that term limits have negatively affected the ability of lawmakers to tackle tough policy decisions, increased their propensity to view their current office as a stepping stone and weakened the power the General Assembly, among other things.

Term limits have "elevated politics and depressed the value of subject matter knowledge," Valentine said. He added: "I think the results are we do not solve our problems."

The public need look no further than this fall for anecdotal evidence of Valentine's assertion.

Though House and Senate leaders had claimed to have an agreement on an overhaul of Missouri's business incentives and tax breaks, the proposal ultimately floundered and failed to win passage during a special legislative session.

The primary reason is the House and Senate couldn't agree on the specifics and refused to keep negotiating.

Valentine noted some lawmakers felt uncomfortable trying to sift through the complex details of the proposal in a compressed time span. He said the animosity between House and Senate leaders also was indicative of a term limits era in which lawmakers lack the trust and familiarity that develops among longtime colleagues.

Missouri is one of 15 states with legislative term limits.

Voters in 1992 approved caps of about eight years each in the Missouri House of Representatives and Senate. The clock started ticking with the 1994 elections, meaning it wasn't until 2002 that most veteran

House members and some senators were barred from seeking re-election. The deadline hit in 2004 for the remaining senators.

That means Missouri has now cycled through an entire class of term-limited lawmakers — as those elected in 2002 or 2004 have either used up their allotted time or are entering their final year in their chambers.

According to Valentine's research, the average tenure for a senator in 2011 was 2.7 years, which was several times shorter than the nine-year average that existed in 2001 before term limits forced out longtime lawmakers. The average length of service for a House member in 2011 was two years — less than half the 5.4-year average that existed in 2001.

Those figures were comparable to the average length of service for lawmakers during the period of 1921 to 1931.

As Valentine noted, the state budgets in the 1920s were but a fraction of today's \$23 billion budget, and the state at that time had little responsibility for infrastructure, almost no role in social service programs and left economic development entirely to the private sector.

Today, "our society is more complex, our issues are more complex and our government is more complex," said Valentine, who worked in the Senate research office from 1977 until 2001. "You just can't come in off the street and become an effective legislator — and you could in the 19th century."

One of the chief advocates for Missouri's term limits contends Valentine's assessment is wrong because his underlying assumption is flawed.

To equate tenure with knowledge is an insult to the intelligence of many people who win election, said Greg Upchurch, a St. Louis attorney who was chairman of the Missouri Term Limits group that backed the 1992 initiative.

Upchurch acknowledged there is a learning curve to the legislature. But he believes it can be sufficiently addressed within a year or two of service. "How many times do you have to take fifth-grade math before you know your multiplication tables? Do you learn more the second time? Yeah, but do you learn twice as much? No. In fact, at some point, you don't learn anything more," Upchurch said.

Whereas Valentine values the expertise that chamber leaders and committee chairmen can develop through years of legislative service, Upchurch considers it an invitation for political coziness and corruption and a recipe for an expanded government to reach into the lives of its citizens.

Term limits have remained sufficiently popular among the public that lawmakers have been reluctant to embrace measures calling for their repeal.

Valentine said a repeal of term limits is necessary but is not in itself a solution to the legislature's problems. Voters are more cynical and ideological than in the past, he said, and as a result, they are less willing to compromise and more likely to view lawmakers with different opinions as controlled by special interests.

## Missouri looks to ease college transfer rules

### NO MU Mention

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER/The Associated Press

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COLUMBIA — Some higher education leaders in Missouri are seeking to make it easier for students to transfer to another school, reasoning that some college is better than none and that transfer students shouldn't be penalized by being forced to take duplicative classes to get their degrees.

A bill filed by state Sen. David Pearce, R-Warrensburg, calls for the creation of a "core transfer library" of at least 25 entry-level courses in English, math, science and other general education subjects that would be honored for credit at each of Missouri's public colleges and universities.

The bill also requires Missouri's Coordinating Board for Higher Education to adopt a statewide "reverse transfer" policy. That would let students at four-year schools receive associate degrees from community colleges once they've completed a two-year school's requirements — even if they fail to complete the more advanced degree requirements or have to put their college education on hold.

The lawmaker cited federal data showing that fewer than 46 percent of Missouri college students seeking bachelor's degrees earn their diplomas after six years of school. And just 38 percent of the state's workforce has a post-secondary degree — a number Gov. Jay Nixon has said needs to increase to 60 percent during the next decade.

"We need to make sure that the students entering as freshmen end up getting a degree, whether that's a two-year or four-year degree or beyond," Pearce said. "This is a nationwide problem."

Pearce, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, said he was prompted to pursue the changes after attending a national meeting this fall in Austin, Texas, convened by Complete College America, a national nonprofit.

Tom Sugar, the group's senior vice president, said Missouri is among a group of 30 states participating in what he called "the college completion movement," an effort to hold public universities more responsible for their students' academic success.

"Higher education institutions have not been held accountable for this sort of thing ever before," said Sugar, a former chief of staff for U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh who also worked for Bayh when he was governor of Indiana.

"The longer it takes, the more life gets in the way," Sugar said. "Students are on the move. They lead complicated lives and often change institutions more than once. If their credits don't transfer with them, they're just adding more time to their efforts to compete college."

Rusty Monhollon, assistant commissioner for academic affairs at the state Department of Higher Education, called the initiative an "effort to remove to the greatest extent that we possibly can, all the obstacles and roadblocks that inhibit or prohibit students from completing their college degrees."

"If we can save a transfer student nine credit hours, that's \$1,000 or more in tuition," said Monhollon, a former college professor. "That's something worth pursuing. It would have real benefits not only for individual students but for the state." Pearce emphasized that individual schools will retain control over admission decisions.

"There are still standards to get in," he said. "This is not just turning a blind eye to the missions, interests and requirements of universities." Plenty of schools in Missouri and elsewhere already have transfer policies, but a statewide standard would shift the emphasis toward serving students.

"The problem is not one of 'How well does transfer work for the institution?'" Monhollon said. "It works pretty well. It doesn't always work well for students."

The House version of the bill is sponsored by state Rep. Mike Thomson (R-Maryville). Both were filed on Dec. 1, the first day to submit proposed laws for consideration in the legislative session that begins next month.

The college transfer bill is SB455 and HB 1042.



## REDI moves to parking garage office

By **JACOB BARKER**

Columbia Daily Tribune Staff Writer

The Fifth and Walnut parking garage's first tenant will be open for business by the end of the week.

Regional Economic Development Inc., Columbia's public-private economic development agency, is wrapping up work to the interior of the ground-level suites along Walnut Street and should be out of its current offices on Campusview Drive by the end of the week, Director Mike Brooks said.

The Columbia City Council on Monday approved a seven-year lease agreement with REDI that waives rent in lieu of the interior improvements REDI has made to the shell space. Interior improvements to the garage are being financed by a consortium of local banks. REDI will repay the loan using its operating budget, which is supported by investors made up of local businesses and local governments, including the city of Columbia and Boone County. The furniture and equipment for the offices have been funded by more than \$130,000 in donations from local companies, according to a REDI memo.

"We have some really solid investors in REDI, so I'm not really surprised at the show of support for the organization," Brooks said. "Obviously, I'm extremely pleased. It allows us, to be honest with you, to do some things we would not otherwise be able to do."

One of REDI's new resources in the office is a training room with videoconferencing equipment. The room's equipment was funded with \$71,000 from Boone Electric Satellite Systems, an affiliate of Boone Electric Cooperative. **The Small Business and Technology Development Center, part of the University of Missouri Extension and the U.S. Small Business Administration, will use the training center for the classes it hosts geared toward entrepreneurs.** The center also will have an office in REDI's garage space.

Since the garage opened March 1, the retail space along the ground level has remained empty, prompting some to question whether the city should have gotten into the commercial leasing business in the first place. Columbia Sustainability Manager Barbara Buffaloe, who also is in charge of leasing the garage space, said the holdup for REDI's move-in stemmed from the loss of a \$425,000 earmark former U.S. Sen. Kit Bond tried to get into an appropriations bill last year that would have helped finance the remodeling.

Three suites behind REDI's space will be used by the city's parking utility staff and a new business incubator that REDI will manage, she said. There are three remaining suites, and the city has one prospective tenant identified to fill some of that space, Buffaloe said.

REDI initially had talked about using the future incubator space to encourage student entrepreneurs and get them acquainted with the local business community.

"We're still working on how exactly to deploy that space," Brooks said. "But we certainly do want to put a great deal of emphasis on youth entrepreneurship."