The Star’s editorial | State must stop gutting Missouri’s universities

It's a sign of the times that the interim president of the University of Missouri System began his “state of the university” message with a roundup of cost-saving measures.

The four campuses saved $222 million over the last three years through steps such as fewer workers, deferred maintenance and energy savings, Steve Owens told the board of curators during its meeting in Kansas City. The system eliminated 29 degree programs. Its schools spend 21 percent less on administrative expenses than comparable public institutions around the nation.

At the same time, all four campuses are serving increasing numbers of students. Mizzou enrolled 10 percent more freshmen in 2011 than the year before.

“Last year was a remarkably eventful and productive year,” Owens said. “We achieved what we set out to do, and we continued doing more with less.”

Missouri’s public colleges and universities are good at that. State leaders have underfunded the schools for more than a decade. Adjusted for inflation, Missouri’s funding for the operating budget of the University of Missouri system today is at 1984 levels.

Out of necessity, and because of good leadership and smart thinking, Missouri’s leading universities are among the most lean and efficient in the nation.

But Gov. Jay Nixon’s budget for next year calls for a devastating 12.5 percent cut in higher education funding. The governor lectured the schools in his state-of-the-state address to “run smarter, more efficient operations.”

That talk is a transparent attempt to deflect the blame for inevitable tuition increases. The schools should continue searching for ways to save money. But the irresponsible player is the state of Missouri.

Naturally, tuition increases are back on the table. The University of Missouri curators are mulling increases ranging from 9 percent at Missouri Science and Technology in Rolla to 3 percent at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Other public colleges and universities are calculating how much more they can reasonably ask students to pay.
The answer: Not very much. Tuition at many Missouri universities is higher than what families pay in states such as Kansas. Students take on unacceptably high debt loads to go to school. There is no way Missouri’s universities can ask students to make up for the level of cuts that Nixon is proposing.

Nor can they continue to cut their way to balanced budgets. Leaders estimate nearly half the buildings in the University of Missouri system need repairs. Staff and faculty at most publicly supported schools have gone years without raises. The starting salary for a Ph.D. chemistry professor at highly regarded Truman State University in Kirksville is $41,000.

It is past time for Missouri to stop gutting its colleges and universities. Republican and Democratic legislators have expressed concern about Nixon’s proposed cuts. They should find a way to moderate them.

If Nixon and lawmakers are serious about Missouri having “an educated workforce to compete in the global economy,” as they repeatedly proclaim, they will get behind long-term funding solutions for higher education.

An essential first step would be loud and clear support for a ballot initiative to raise Missouri’s lowest-in-the-nation cigarette tax to 90 cents a pack.

The initiative, sponsored by a coalition of health and education groups, earmarks 30 percent of the anticipated $283 million a year in revenues for public colleges and universities, and 50 percent for elementary and secondary schools.

It would be a refreshing shift to see the state’s leaders — especially Nixon — move from blaming the schools for the state’s higher education crisis to endorsing a way out of it.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UM approves fee increases, will vote on tuition increases in late February

By Zach Murdock
February 3, 2012 | 4:27 p.m. CST

KANSAS CITY — More with less was the theme of the UM System Board of Curators’ first meeting of 2012.

The curators met Thursday and Friday at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and reviewed options to help bridge the gap created by Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposed 15.1 percent cut to higher education this year.

The UM System’s governing body discussed proposals to raise tuition and fees at the four UM campuses to help cover the gap. The board did not vote on tuition increases Friday — that is expected to come later this month — but did approve increases to some supplemental fees.

Approved fee increases at MU include a 3.3 percent increase to the information technology fee and supplemental course fee increases to some MU colleges and schools:

- 32.8 percent to the Trulaske College of Business courses
- 18.3 percent to the Missouri School of Journalism courses
- 15.7 percent to the School of Health Professions courses
- 10.4 percent to the College of Engineering courses

The board is deciding how to cope with cuts to higher education that would put the UM System at the same level of state support it received in the mid 1990s.

Interim System President Steve Owens said the system is following the governor’s request to use efficiencies and cost management to help bridge the gap created by declining state support before the board makes any decisions to raise tuition.

After the meeting, Owens said the system has been trying to communicate that it’s already turned to other cost management measures and still faces a budget gap of more than $50 million.
Increasing tuition and required fees won't cover the entire gap left by the cuts to state support. Nikki Krawitz, UM System vice president of finance and administration, said Thursday that if the board accepts the increases as proposed, the system will still have to account for another $54.2 million in its budget.

**State of the University**

In his State of the University address Friday morning, Owens said the system has had great success over the past year in spite of cuts in state support, but he also asked how much longer the system can do more with less.

"The state of the university is that we need bold, new ideas beyond our boundaries," Owens said.

He stressed to the board that the system needs new, more creative ways to find new revenue sources and nudge the system away from its reliance on state funding.

While many colleges and universities nationwide are making cuts — the UM System included — Owens said the focus needs to shift to what he called growth and change ideas: positive ways to find new and more revenue instead of solely initiating more cuts.

During their panel discussion Friday morning, the four UM System chancellors talked about ways that each campus is creating private partnerships and finding ways to increase revenue through research and economic development. MU Chancellor Brady Deaton pointed to the MU Life Science Business Incubator as an example of both.

But Amy Johnson, new student representative to the board, reminded the curators and chancellors that the first mission of the system is to serve its students and teaching mission, not just to create businesses and jobs around the state.

Curator Don Downing voiced a similar concern, acknowledging that while economic development is beneficial for everyone, the system needs to focus on providing for itself considering the continued cuts to state support this year.

**So now what?**

Following the board's meeting Friday, Owens said that if the governor's proposed cuts to higher education are passed as is, tuition increases and workforce reductions for the system are inevitable.
Workforce reductions could include layoffs, Owens said, but also means that some open positions will continue to go unfilled.

On Thursday, several curators voiced their concern that the board needs to find a way to retain the proposed merit-based faculty salary increases in the system's next budget.

To do that, curators said Thursday, the system will need to generate more revenue and continue to make cuts. The board discussed the possibility of cutting some non-academic programs from the system campuses but didn't make any specific recommendations.

"This is really hard to digest, it's hard to accept," Curator Warren Erdman said Thursday. "I think we've got to keep in mind we're not balancing our budget gap in just tuition. Under this proposal, we're not even covering the reduction in state support."

The board will hold a special meeting later in February to vote on a tuition increase proposal, and if the curators approve the proposed increases, the system will have to file a waiver to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to avoid a penalty for increasing in-state tuition above the rate of inflation, a cap imposed by Senate Bill 389.

The board is also without two members after Judith Haggard stepped down Jan. 17 and Craig Van Matre's name was withdrawn from the Senate on Thursday when it became clear senators would not confirm his appointment to the board.

Those positions will need to be filled by appointments made by the governor.

This was the final meeting as interim president for Owens, who will resume his position as general counsel. Tim Wolfe will take over as system president on Feb. 15.
UM curator makes case for faculty pay raises

By Janese Silvey

Friday, February 3, 2012

KANSAS CITY — Even though it adds $24.2 million to an already cash-strapped budget, a University of Missouri System curator wants administrators to find a way to increase faculty salaries next year.

“Faculty are the backbone of the system,” Don Downing said after yesterday’s Board of Curators meeting.

He instructed chancellors to look at cutting nonacademic programs to fund a 3 percent increase in the salary pool included in a preliminary 2013 UM System budget.

Downing stopped short of saying he’ll go along with administrators’ request to increase tuition by an average of 6.5 percent. The board is set to vote on tuition rate increases at a special meeting later this month.

Last year, Downing was one of the most vocal critics of the system’s decision to increase tuition higher than 5 percent — the rate Gov. Jay Nixon requested. This year, Nixon warned universities to cap increases at inflation, even after he proposed cutting state funding to higher education by 12.5 percent.

“Affordability is always important,” Downing told the Tribune. “The cost of higher education is always a concern. On the other hand, we need resources. I’m going to give it a lot of thought over the next couple of weeks.”

It would take an 11 percent average increase in tuition to plug the state cut, and that doesn’t take into consideration salary increases, maintenance and repairs, and other budget needs, said Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration.

“I think that says quite a bit.” Curator Warren Erdman said.

Krawitz and other administrators spent much of yesterday’s five-hour meeting justifying potential tuition increases. In short, state funding has been cut 23 percent over the past several years, forcing campuses to defer building maintenance, freeze salaries for two years and keep positions open. In a public release, the system touted that it saved roughly $75.2 million last
fiscal year by eliminating expenses, restructuring business practices to be more efficient and putting off building repairs.

UM administrators now say 48 percent of buildings on all four campuses are in below-average or poor shape.

“The takeaway is that we are bridging that” funding “gap through operational efficiencies, most unfortunately deferred maintenance, and enrollment growth,” Erdman said. “We can’t defer maintenance forever.”

Although the UM System increased tuition and fees on average 5.5 percent last year, over the past five years, tuition has gone up by an annual rolling average of 2.7 percent, Krawitz said. That includes two years during which Nixon struck a deal with university presidents to freeze tuition rates.

“I’m beginning to wonder if those two years of no tuition increases was a good idea,” Erdman said.

In addition to tuition hikes, including a 7.5 percent increase at MU, curators will consider increases to fees for specific academic programs at a later date. MU’s School of Law, for instance, is asking for an 8 percent increase in its fees, and the College of Veterinary Medicine wants a 10 percent increase.

Curators this morning did approve a slate of charges assessed to all students. At MU, mandatory fees for services such as health care and access to the recreation center are going up an average of 2.9 percent.
State should review the role of each of its universities

Funding for higher education from the state diminishes as the recession continues. so how do we manage? I would suspect that we should explore the problem.

The state of Missouri supports 13 four-year colleges and universities with a population of around 5.2 million citizens. These institutions include the University of Missouri with four campuses, Missouri State University, Southeast Missouri State, Truman State, Northwest Missouri State and University of Central Missouri.

The other four are Missouri Western, Missouri Southern, Lincoln University and Harris-Stowe State.

Of the eight states that border Missouri, only Illinois with a population of 11.2 million people has a system of as many four-year colleges as Missouri has. The future of the state rests on a very well-educated population, so how do we pay? I am aware that much of the budget is supplemented by research grants at the University of Missouri and its three branches. I would suggest that we have a comprehensive review of what each school does and see if courses offered meet the needs of the student population.

We have a system of community colleges and/or trade schools and perhaps we should consider having vocational education start earlier. It is time to rethink how we make provisions for our children and grandchildren. If we fail we could go the way of the Homing pigeon (extinct).
State poised to take Mississippi’s low spot

Saturday, February 4. 2012

Editor, the Tribune: Step aside, Mississippi! Missouri is ready to take your place in those jokes about how poorly educated its people are. If the Missouri General Assembly agrees with Gov. Jay Nixon’s 12.5 percent cut to higher education, our state will likely be dead last in per-capita funding.

After more than a decade of seeing the higher education budget slashed, all of our state colleges and universities need more support from the state.

Regrettably, increasing tuition appears to be the only way to offset this chronic shortage.

**If these cuts remain, the University of Missouri System will receive less state funding than it did in 1996, even though enrollment at the University of Missouri’s four campuses has grown by more than 20,000 students since that time.** In addition, faculty salaries have not increased in years, and many of the university’s buildings are in desperate need of repair. Moreover, the University of Missouri provides more than $23 million in unreimbursed health care each year to Missourians.

All Missourians can be proud that we have the lowest cigarette tax in the nation at 17 cents per pack. As our brightest students leave our state, smokers looking for cheap cigarettes can take their place. That will promote our state’s economy and attract new businesses!

Higher education in Missouri has taken a back seat for decades; our state universities (and our people) are suffering from the consequences.

W. Dudley McCarter

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Editorial short take: Lawmakers cheer DGB; other students get IOU

With all the dysfunction in the Missouri Legislature, one topic — sports — tends to unite the body like no other. You want unanimous support on a resolution? Pass one honoring the Missouri Tigers. Better yet, have the coach and a few players show up in the Capitol.

On Wednesday, all it took to fire up the House was three letters.

D-G-B.

Those are the initials of Dorial Green-Beckham, the Springfield, Mo., high school football player considered the top college recruit in the country.

Within minutes of DGB deciding to attend the University of Missouri and help fill Memorial Stadium on Saturdays, House members of both parties were singing the praises of the 18-year-old who spent his early years in St. Louis.

That’s nice.

But it is ironic that later that day university presidents from all over the state testified about their need to raise tuition as much as 7 percent or more because of proposed 12.5 percent cuts in state aid.

That means that students without a quality 40-yard dash time will have to pay more next year. A lot more.

Those are the 18-year-olds who lawmakers should be worrying about.
Senator blames Nixon for failed appointments

By Rudi Keller

Friday, February 3, 2012

JEFFERSON CITY — The Senate’s top Republican yesterday said Gov. Jay Nixon needs to reach out sooner to lawmakers if he wants smooth sailing for his appointees.

Senate President Pro Tem Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, speaking on a day when three high-profile nominees were rejected and another resigned to avoid a similar fate, said Nixon’s staff is not doing the outreach needed to clear the appointees with sponsoring lawmakers. That problem, he said, was most evidently played out when two nominees for the Northwest Missouri State University Board of Regents were withdrawn by Nixon.

“It is my understanding that many senators who would be sponsoring senators claim that the governor did not contact them to get their endorsement until after the process had already begun or he had made the decision to make these appointments,” Mayer told reporters.

Nixon won approval for the vast majority of his appointees. The Senate confirmed 25 appointments yesterday in a single vote. The same number won approval Jan. 25. But the list of those rejected or withdrawn played more prominently in yesterday’s action, with a total of four withdrawn, including the regents.

The rejected nominees included Columbia attorney Craig Van Matre for a seat on the University of Missouri Board of Curators, former Department of Social Services Director Ron Levy for the Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan Board of Trustees and property appraiser Stephen Sauter for a seat on the Missouri Housing Development Commission. Nixon’s choice for director of the Department of Economic Development, attorney Jason Hall, resigned rather than be rejected.

Along with the regents, Nixon withdrew former Sen. Steve Stoll, a Democrat nominated to the Missouri Public Service Commission, and Joseph Hlunt of St. Louis for the Highways and Transportation Commission.

In a news release yesterday announcing Hall’s resignation, Nixon blamed the Senate for “inaction” on the nomination. After Van Matre’s nomination was killed by a filibuster, his office issued a statement calling him an “eminently qualified and dedicated public servant.”
Van Matre’s nomination was perhaps the most troubled of Nixon’s tenure. It was sunk by an opinion piece from 2007 that suggested Missouri could become an Iran-like theocracy if the GOP plan for overhauling the courts was approved. He first appointed the Columbia resident last year and gave him the job as an interim appointment when that nomination stalled.

“During his time on the Board of Curators and throughout his professional career, Craig Van Matre has served the University of Missouri and our state well,” Nixon said.

Van Matre drew opposition because he advocated for tax credit reform on a state commission appointed in 2010.

For some lawmakers, including Mayer, that work improved his chances of approval. “I think that Mr. Van Matre along with the other members of the Tax Credit Review Commission did good work. I think he was well-qualified to serve on the Board of Curators,” Mayer said.

Mayer was the main impediment to Van Matre’s confirmation last year, when he held it as leverage for Nixon to make an appointment Mayer wanted to the Board of Probation and Parole. Nixon would not make any deal, and the person Mayer favored was not appointed.
Schaefer, Still spar in preview of state senate race

By Rudi Keller

Columbia Daily Tribune

Friday, February 3, 2012

State Sen. Kurt Schaefer and state Rep. Mary Still sparred over what it means to be an effective lawmaker last night as a legislative forum turned into a preview of this year’s Senate race.

Schaefer, R-Columbia, and Still, D-Columbia, will face off later this year in the 19th District state Senate race. They appeared alongside state Reps. Chris Kelly and Stephen Webber, both Columbia Democrats, for a discussion of legislative issues at the Columbia Public Library. The League of Women Voters sponsored the forum.

For Schaefer, who is part of a large Republican majority, being effective means being able to turn ideas into laws. He said the entire delegation works well together and he and Kelly “have passed more bills in the last three years than any other senator-representative combination.”

But Still replied that effectiveness isn’t always measured in what is passed. Sometimes, she said, it is important to make enough noise that issues can’t be ignored. “I am not afraid to stand up to the bullies,” Still said.

Schaefer began the year with $330,000 in the bank for the upcoming campaign. Still had $60,000.

Discussion of legislative issues during the forum focused on the state’s empty treasury. Support for public colleges and universities would be cut 12.5 percent if Gov. Jay Nixon’s budget is adopted.

“There is no money; the state is starving itself; children will not learn,” Webber said, summing the issue up in haiku poetry.

Kelly, a member of the House Budget Committee, agreed, calling the budget picture “horrible.” The reason for the shortfall, he said, is because lawmakers “refused to do our jobs” and tap new sources of revenue, such as a cigarette tax increase.
Still has filed a bill to increase the tax on cigarettes by 73 cents per pack. Kelly is the sponsor of a measure to require Internet retailers to collect sales tax on behalf of the state and local governments.

Schaefer, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said at the forum he has sought to soften cuts to the University of Missouri and will continue to do so. He also said he is unwilling to cut any more money from the Department of Mental Health.

Schaefer also gave reasons why a higher cigarette tax or finding new revenue from Internet sales is not possible. He supports an increase in the cigarette tax, Schaefer said.

Still said an aggressive push could bring results. She said she has, in the past, offered a bill to increase the tax at a rate that would not require a public vote.

Schaefer replied he would support the idea but...
The power of protein

By Jacob Barker

Saturday, February 4, 2012

A husband-and-wife team has taken an enzyme-production method discovered in the lab and, with the help of local advisers, turned it into a company that has the opportunity to make a splash in many industries.

MU mention p. 2

When Brian Thompson walked into Paul Bateson’s office in October 2010, the young scientist wasn’t exactly sure how to start a company. But he knew his process for producing enzymes — specialty chemicals with countless industrial and consumer uses — could be the backbone of a successful one.

“I came in there with a notebook and some chicken scratch and said, ‘I think this would make a good company,’ ” Thompson said.

A little more than a year later, Thompson has convinced many others his idea will be the foundation of a successful company. Private investors have put up cash, the Missouri Technology Corp. awarded him funding and companies already are calling, unsolicited, to see whether the fledgling Elemental Enzymes can design and deliver the enzymes they need.

Thompson is the first to admit he’s more biologist than businessman. But he and his wife and business partner, Katie Thompson, were eager to absorb the advice offered by Bateson, a technology commercialization counselor with the Small Business Technology Development Center.

Bateson said Brian Thompson, who has a postdoctoral degree in veterinary pathobiology, and Katie Thompson, a doctor of biological sciences, came to the center at a stage similar to most scientists looking to commercialize their research: They had a deep understanding of their science and a “rudimentary” knowledge of the business side of a technology venture. But they were willing to put in the effort required to develop a business plan and hone their pitch to investors, soaking up Bateson’s business advice “like sponges.”

“They readily accepted the pluses and minuses of their technology and realized there were some things it could do and some things it wouldn’t, and that is a difference from many science-based entrepreneurs,” Bateson said. “Sometimes they think their idea is the only idea.”
Bateson, who worked in the food industry for 20 years and is familiar with the commercial applicability of enzymes, saw the potential right away.

“When they first came to me and brought their idea, my initial thought was this is a business that could go viral,” he said. “It wasn’t a hunch. I know what enzymes do, and I know that enzymes are expensive. The fact that they had an efficient way to produce enzymes ... the market need is already there.”

In August, the Thompsons set up shop in the University of Missouri Life Science Business Incubator and say Elemental Enzymes could be selling product to end users within months. Elemental Enzymes’ cheap production method could make it a breakthrough company, those familiar with the business say. It’s just a matter of developing the enzymes the market wants. “In some markets, the enzymes are so expensive they don’t even use them,” Brian Thompson said.

Enzymes are proteins that speed up chemical reactions and have a variety of commercial uses. Laundry detergent uses certain enzymes to break down stains on clothes. Food processors and brewers use them to speed up the breakdown of starch into sugar, and paper mills and rubber factories use them in manufacturing.

But enzymes are expensive to produce, and they typically break down within a matter of days. Elemental Enzymes’ process, licensed from MU, can make enzymes for all sorts of applications, and the ones it produces can last as much as 12 times longer than enzymes produced using other methods. Katie Thompson said. At least, that’s what the data point to — some of the enzymes the company has produced since the Thompsons began working in the incubator lab in August are still viable.

Brian Thompson discovered the process around 2008 while working with MU veterinary pathobiology Professor George Stewart and Chung-ho Lin, an assistant research professor in the MU School of Natural Resources. He was studying bacterial structures for his postdoctoral degree when they discovered they could alter bacteria to produce the enzymes they wanted. With their process, the enzymes produced could be easily harvested and lasted longer than others.

“No one really has the knowledge of how this works, except for a few very select people,” Brian Thompson said.

Using a mixture of salts and sugars — different bacteria like different kinds — they can grow a new batch of bacteria every day and harvest the enzymes. “Not to make it seem too simple, but it is pretty straightforward,” he said.

Although they are only two people working out of a small lab right now, bacteria can multiply so rapidly that their operation could be quickly and cheaply scaled to produce high volumes of whatever enzymes they want, and those enzymes could be harvested using a process that’s not as labor-intensive as others.
"With enough cash flow, it wouldn't take us very much time to upgrade to a larger production facility," Brian Thompson said.

With its platform technology, the number of potential end markets the company could sell to is huge. One the Thompsons already are looking at is environmental cleanup. Because enzymes are specific in the substances they react with, they are an attractive solution to neutralize hazardous waste.

"If you put it out there, you wouldn't damage anything else," Katie Thompson said. "It would be very environmentally friendly because it's only working on one thing."

The team is in the process of developing enzymes that react with, for instance, mercury and chromium. Enzymes have been produced before to break down mercury and chromium. but because of their instability, they tend to break down before they finish reacting with the toxic elements. That has stymied their use in environmental cleanup, Katie Thompson said. Other companies treat sites with the bacteria that produce the needed enzyme, but that hasn't worked well, either.

"If there's too much mercury in the soil, even the bacteria dies," Brian Thompson said. "We're not putting anything alive in the soil."

About one-third to one-half of harmful chemicals can be neutralized using enzymes, Brian Thompson said, giving Elemental Enzymes a vast number of potential markets and customers. And because the company's enzymes last longer, they can be used to treat soil or water over time. The team is even planning on releasing a consumer product — a small flotation device containing a mercury-neutralizing enzyme that people could use to safely treat their ponds and lakes.

Enzymes for environmental cleanup would need approval from the Environmental Protection Agency, so their introduction in the marketplace is likely further off than other enzymes. Other potential customers, though, already are contacting Elemental Enzymes, asking the company whether it can develop the ones they need.

"We can make so many different kinds of enzymes, right now we're just listening to what our customers want," Brian Thompson said.

The company has identified some markets it sees with growth potential. Ethanol production, for instance, uses enzymes when turning corn into fuel. And detergent could be a huge market if Elemental Enzymes can show it can produce the chemicals those manufacturers need more cheaply than their current suppliers.

"If you can get into laundry detergents, the margins are small, but it's the No. 1 seller of enzymes," Brian Thompson said.
The interest that has developed already around the company is taxing its limited resources. Brian Thompson said they’ll need to add staff soon to handle customers while he and Katie Thompson finish developing the enzyme products. There still is a fair amount of research the team has to complete to identify the needed enzyme, make sure it’s not already patented and develop a procedure to make it using their special method. “Once we know that, we can just pump them out,” Brian Thompson said.

The next step for the company is raising more capital so it can add staff and begin looking at a production facility. Jake Halliday, CEO of the Missouri Innovation Center, which runs the MU Life Science Business Incubator, said the incubator team is preparing the Thompsons for a pitch to Columbia’s local angel investment group, Centennial Investors. Their technology’s many potential markets, easy scalability and the novel production method makes it an “exciting prospect,” he said.

“I’m also tremendously impressed that this husband-and-wife team, at this early stage in their careers, has chosen to put it all on the line,” Halliday said. “They’ve put their capital in and are working full time on their venture. And that sets them apart.”

Brian Thompson, though a trained microbiologist, said he always has been interested in starting a business. In fact, as an undergraduate, he started majoring in entrepreneurship before getting sucked into biology. “I never lost my desire to do the small-business side,” he said.

However, he doesn’t see himself running the company in 20 years. Eventually, it will outgrow them, he said, and he’s not averse to selling it after it becomes self-sustaining. But, in the meantime, there’s still research to be done, and if they can get product developed and selling by the summer, he doesn’t think scaled-up production is far off.

“Who knows?” he said. “Maybe in five years, we’ll be able to compete with the big boys.”
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: MU student struck by vehicle at campus crosswalk

By Andrew Wagaman
February 3, 2012 | 8:56 p.m. CST

A 23-year-old MU student was struck by a car at about 6:45 p.m. Friday near the intersection of Rollins Street and Virginia Avenue. | Andrew Mitchell

COLUMBIA -- An MU student was hit by a car around 6:45 p.m. Friday at the intersection of Rollins Street and Virginia Avenue.

Andrew Harter, 23*, was taken to University Hospital on Friday night, MU Police Capt. Brian Weimer said.

Harter was still in the hospital in fair condition Sunday afternoon.

Weimer said a car was driving west on Rollins when it struck the man at a crosswalk. The driver, MU student Stephanie Shelly, 18*, was given a court summons for colliding with a pedestrian.

— Marysa Greenawalt contributed to this report.
MU-KU is ESPN's center of attention

Posted: Saturday, February 4, 2012

While Kansas' men's basketball team charges into Columbia, Mo., today, perhaps for the final time, ESPN's "College GameDay" rolls in for the first time.

"GameDay" serves as a lead-in to ESPN's all-day coverage of college basketball, and much like the football version of the program that made its first trip to MU in October 2010 before the Tigers' upset of No. 1 Oklahoma, a raucous setting is expected today as students and fans will be in Mizzou Arena to provide a boisterous backdrop for the program.

"I've been looking forward to it since the beginning of the season," Rece Davis, in his eighth season as the show's host, said this week. "I've never been to Columbia, so this should be a lot of fun."

The show begins at 9 a.m. on ESPNU, then moves to ESPN at 10 o'clock for another hour. Davis will be joined on the set, which will be on the Mizzou Arena floor, by analysts Jay Bilas, Digger Phelps and Hubert Davis. They will provide features and news about the game, including a piece on MU guard Kim English and some of the obstacles he has overcome.

"I couldn't talk when I was younger because of a speech impediment that — that haunted me," English says in the segment that is to air in the 10 a.m. hour. "I couldn't hold a sentence — I couldn't hold a conversation unless I was 100 percent comfortable around you."

"GameDay" also is to reflect on the MU-KU rivalry and conference realignment tied to the Tigers' pending move from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference. The show also previews other key games and college basketball storylines around the country.

"It's difficult to get fans from different regions to get excited about games outside their region, so we have to find the balance," Davis said. "It's a balancing act we go through every week."

The crew returns on ESPN at 7 p.m. to review the afternoon action from around the nation and set the stage for the MU-KU game, which starts at 8. Dan Sulman has the play-by-play assignment and Dick Vitale fills the analyst role.

The student element inside the arena for "GameDay" adds energy to the production, which sets it apart from a studio program. And the first trip for the program to an arena is the best situation, show producer Tom Engle said.
"People always ask, ‘Where’s your favorite place to go?’ he said. "The answers always is, "A place we haven’t been before."

A large crowd is expected at Mizzou.

"Part of the excitement is never knowing how many people will be there," Engle said. "It could be a thousand, it could be 15,000. That anticipation of the buildup always is fun, to see what the turnout is. Usually when we’re there for the first time, they come out in droves so we’re hoping that’s the case."

He said the fact that it will be the show’s initial trip for basketball to Mizzou, plus the fact the game pairs two highly ranked teams, should make for a standout day.

"It’s the biggest game of the weekend, but not the only game," Engle said, referring to juggling to include the right mix of material about the MU-KU contest with other college basketball coverage. "We don’t want to lose the crowd, but we do need to serve the fans at home."

But when the focus is elsewhere, it shouldn’t be long until the attention returns to fans in Mizzou Arena.

"There will be cutaways to the crowd throughout the show," Engle said. "When you have a captive audience like that, you need to keep them entertained."

If the "GameDay" appearance at MU for football is any indication, there should be plenty of enthusiasm in the basketball setting. That football show pulled an estimated 18,000 revelers to Francis Quadrangle, which ESPN says is the largest crowd that show has ever drawn.

"It was awesome, one of the best scenes of the year," said Engle, who also works on the football version of "GameDay."

And on Friday students already were camping out to get in Mizzou Arena, which is to open at 7 a.m. That would be good for the show, which has drawn some smaller-than-usual crowds this season.

"I think it will be an electric atmosphere there," Engle said.

That would please those on the set.

"When there’s a little more juice in the crowd it helps," Davis said. "It’s very satisfying to get students believing in their program. I’m not going to deny there is a lot of adrenaline and energy being in front of a crowd that’s enthusiastic."
Columbia buzzes for what could be KU’s last visit

By TEREZ A. PAYLOR|Posted on Fri, Feb. 03, 2012 11:35 PM

COLUMBIA -- The day before the big game, Chris Seiffert lies on his back inside a tent, watching a television show on his buddy’s laptop. A steady drizzle falls, and the wind whips his shelter on the grass in front of Mizzou Arena.

The junior financial planning major at the University of Missouri feels cold and uncomfortable. He and two friends are lying on several blankets, but they can already feel the mud start to seep through.

But to Seiffert, a 20-year-old St. Louis native, the temporary discomfort is worth it. As basketball games go, tonight’s is as big as they come. It’s only the third time Kansas and Missouri have faced each other as top 10 teams in their 106-year hardwood rivalry — and it could be the last time the Jayhawks play basketball in Columbia.

“It’s a small price to pay,” Seiffert said. “It (stinks). It’s cold. It’s wet. We are definitely all for it.”

Waiting in the mud for the best seats wasn’t the only way MU fans were gearing up for tonight’s game.

• Members of the Antlers fan group got ready for their last chance to taunt their archrival at home by eating at KFC — Tigers devouring chicken, get it?

• Freshmen chatted about their first KU game, eager to pack what would be four years of hatred into one night.

• ESPN prepared for another large crowd for its live “College GameDay” broadcast from 9 to 11 this morning at Mizzou Arena, where thousands of fans are expected to cheer and wave signs — a warmup for the game, which tips off at 8 p.m.

Eric Hollenbach, the president of the Antlers, didn’t want to lessen the impact but hinted that one sign — of which he is particularly proud — features a Photoshopped picture of KU point guard Tyshawn Taylor wearing a dress, while another mocks Jayhawk traditions.
"I just found out that their Rock Chalk chant was based off limestone, and the closest limestone to Lawrence is 150 miles away," said Hollenbach, a senior communications and Spanish major from O'Fallon, Ill. "So basically they have a mythical bird bringing them limestone from a place that's not even close to Lawrence."

For freshmen, this could be the first and last time they get to root against Kansas at Mizzou Arena while they're in college. KU officials maintain they will not play nonconference games against MU, which leaves the Big 12 for the Southeastern Conference in July.

If that stance doesn’t change, then KU fans’ last crack at Missouri in Lawrence will come Feb. 25, when the teams play at Allen Fieldhouse.

"I may never be able to see Kansas and Missouri play in a game like this again," said Matt Suppes, a 19-year-old freshman English major and lifelong Missouri fan from Lee’s Summit. "This game is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

On Thursday night — more than 48 hours before tipoff — Suppes stood between a pair of tents at Mizzou Arena, holding a spot for his buddies on a cool night. But the weather turned downright ugly Friday, with a constant rain and chill that made for an uncomfortable experience they hoped would be rewarded.

Those waiting in line already had tickets, but seating in the Zou Crew section is first-come, first-served, and with ESPN in town, the seats closest to the floor are prime real estate.

"No one wants to hear the story about you camping out three days in 70-degree weather," said 19-year old freshman Matt Cassidy, a mechanical engineering student from Peoria, Ill. "But fighting the elements and the cold and rain? It's a better story."

Joey Greenstein — a sponsorship coordinator with the Zou Crew — said there were at least 50 tents nestled in front of the arena as of 5 p.m. Friday. MU coach Frank Haith brought doughnuts to the fans in the morning.

"Last year there might have been 20 tents out here at gametime," Greenstein said.

Tom Engle, ESPN’s "College GameDay" producer, remembers the last time the show came to town. On Oct. 23, 2010, an estimated 18,000 people swarmed the Francis Quadrangle in the morning, then joined a sellout crowd at Memorial Stadium that night as the football team toppled the No. 1-ranked Oklahoma Sooners.

"Tremendous," said Engle, who was working on the broadcast that day. "Probably one of the best all-time gameday atmospheres we've had."

Mizzou Arena doesn’t hold that many people, but Engle expects MU’s basketball fans to rival that display in terms of passion and enthusiasm.
Based on what he has seen in Columbia this week — Engle noted Friday that this is the first time all season he has seen students camp out in tents the day before their show — today’s setting could be special.

“Hopefully,” Engle said, “that’s a sign of good things to come in the morning.”

Students are confident it will. School spirit, it seems, really couldn’t be running any higher, and Seiffert and his buddies are perhaps the best example of this. Unable to contain their excitement for the game, they decided to erect a tent outside the arena at 12:30 Thursday morning to ensure the best seats for the ESPN show and the game. They were the first to do so.

“Sure enough, the next morning there were three tents lined up behind us,” Seiffert said. “And it will definitely be worth it come 10 o’clock tomorrow evening, when the game is over and we have won.”
Border War Notebook | Governor’s Joplin Habitat Challenge

First half

• Key play: Marcus Denmon awoke from a recent shooting slump, erupting for 16 points in the first half. His last basket came at the expense of KU senior Conner Teahan, as Denmon stripped him of the ball and went coast-to-coast for a layup that gave Missouri a 39-32 lead.

• Key stat: Missouri took a five-point lead into the break, and some of that had to do with its ability to stay out of foul trouble. Kansas had accrued 10 fouls by halftime, compared to four for Missouri, which has a short bench and couldn’t afford to have its best players limited by fouls.

Second half

• Key play: With Missouri leading by one and Kansas needing a bucket with 10 seconds left, Jayhawks guard Tyshawn Taylor drove the lane, only to be called for a charge. Missouri guard Mike Dixon followed with a pair of free throws that put Missouri ahead for good.

• Key stat: Despite a lack of inside scoring, Missouri’s guards Denmon (29 points), Kim English (18) and Dixon (15) combined to score 62 of their team’s 74 points.

Joplin project

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon announced his latest project before the game, and the resilient city of Joplin stands to benefit.

The project is called the 2012 Governor’s Joplin Habitat Challenge, and the goal is to build 35 more houses in seven Joplin neighborhoods this summer. The governor is teaming up with Habitat for Humanity and seven major athletic organizations — including the Royals, Chiefs and the University of Missouri — to benefit the city, which is still recovering after a devastating tornado last May.

Nixon said each participating organization will sponsor one of the seven neighborhoods. Professional contractors will oversee construction, while the athletic organizations — which also includes the Rams, Cardinals, Blues and Kansas Speedway — will provide visibility, encouragement and support for the projects.
“Players, coaches, alumni, broadcasters and others from each organization will visit the neighborhoods on several occasions this year to work alongside volunteers and assist in the construction of these homes, including helping with framing, siding, painting and landscaping,” Nixon said.

Nixon said the state will provide $3.6 million in community development block grants in order to build these 35 homes. Now, he added, it’s your turn. People can go to MO.gov to make monetary contributions or sign up to volunteer with their favorite team.

“What we really need is for the people of Missouri to get involved,” Nixon said.

• Before the game, Missouri mascot Truman the Tiger repelled from the ceiling to a round of applause. The tradition was a staple at the Hearnes Center, where MU used to play basketball.

• A number of former football players who currently play in the NFL were recognized at midcourt during the first half. Danario Alexander, Tim Barnes, Blaine Gabbert, Andrew Gachkar, Martin Rucker, Kevin Rutland, Sean Weatherspoon and Jeremy Maclin were all in the house.
The Tribune's View

Sports

The week that is

By Henry J. Waters III

Saturday, February 4, 2012

I am not sure whether war was declared in Iran or Rick Santorum was elected president of the United States. This week my news receptors are overloaded with sports.

This is the week of the Super Bowl and the historic basketball game in our town between the Tigers and Jayhawks and, almost topping everything, the announcement by a high school football athlete that he would come to the University of Missouri to study and play, perhaps in that order.

At a moment like this, one wonders anew about the emphasis on sports. The hoopla over the decision by Springfield high school football player Dorial Green-Beckham far exceeded anything that would have attended the arrival on campus of a world-class faculty member whose work might change the world. But sports engage the primal public in a unique way. We can find heroes without terribly complicated judgments. The games and players are measurable by numbers, and we can watch mere humans perform extraordinary physical feats. We can let our emotions soar and tank in mere moments with little important consequence. After a game, we can whoop it up ’midst crowds, demonstrations we never would conduct in celebration of an important accomplishment in a lab or classroom.

Withal, I must say DGB, as our new player already is dubbed, gave my heart a boost with his behavior during and after his announcement. He and his family were off the radar screen during the frenzied run-up to the final decision. After it was over, Green-Beckham said, “It’s a big relief. I’m real excited now, just to finish this whole recruiting process and continue on with my life.” Very classy.

An experience like this is threatening to a young person who might easily lose psychological balance. How can anyone live up to such expectations? At 6 feet 6 inches, Dorial Green-Beckham is literally an instant Big Man on Campus, but being an instant hero before performing a single commendable act is something else. His reaction so far is nice to behold.
Meanwhile, in the rarefied world of college football, particularly in the neighborhood known as the SEC, snagging the nation’s No. 1 is a big deal. MU coaches look forward to polishing and using DGB’s physical gifts. So far it seems the young man has strong mental and emotional skills as well. He will need them.
ANALYSIS: Secretive hire for UM president vs. transparent search for law dean

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER/The Associated Press
February 5, 2012 | 5:03 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Pepperdine University professor Robert Pushaw Jr. wants to be the next dean of MU’s law school — and he doesn’t care who knows.

The Yale Law School graduate, who spent eight years teaching in Columbia before moving west, is one of five dean finalists publicly named by the MU law school. Those candidates will each spend two days on campus getting grilled by students, professors, law school secretaries and others. Once they return home, written evaluations of their performances are posted online for all to see.

"If other people want to hire you as a professor or a dean, that's actually considered a feather in the cap of your home institution," Pushaw said. "It's really just par for the course."

Contrast that outlook with the recently concluded hunt for the University of Missouri System's next president, a secret search that culminated in December with the hiring of Timothy Wolfe, a little-known, out-of-work software executive whose name wasn't announced by university leaders until the day he was hired. The 53-year-old MU graduate, a former president of Novell Americas whose father taught at the university, takes office next week.

Confidential executive searches are increasingly becoming the rule rather than exception on public college campuses, even as open government advocates and other observers bemoan such secrecy at taxpayer-supported institutions.

"The law school search really demonstrates the power of this institution to attract high-caliber candidates in a very public search," said Charles Davis, an associate professor of journalism at MU and former executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition. "There are institutions all over the country that run public searches, and they work fine. None of them have dropped off and fallen into the ocean, last I checked."
Some states, notably Florida, legally require public colleges and universities to disclose finalists' names in chancellor and presidential searches. That's not the case in Missouri, which leaves it up to schools and their governing boards.

At Missouri State University in Springfield, the Board of Governors chose to identify four finalists in the 2010 presidential search that led to the hiring of James Cofer, who risked the backlash at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, where he was president while angling for the MSU job.

The UM System has approached things differently in recent years. The 2007 search that culminated with the hiring of Gary Forsee as president was also confidential, but that didn't keep the names of several finalists — including former U.S. Rep. Kenny Hulshof, a Columbia Republican, and New Jersey businessman Terry Sutter, who declined the job — from leaking out. Forsee was hired in a second round of that search but stepped down one year ago to care for his ill wife.

Forsee, a former Sprint Nextel chief executive, was out of work when he was hired by the UM System. So was Wolfe, whose software company was bought by a competitor in April. Candidate confidentiality was nonetheless imperative, said curator Warren Erdman.

"It's not the ultimate choice you worry about as much as it is those who were not chosen," he said. "Almost all of the candidates insisted on confidentiality. Most of them were gainfully employed elsewhere and wouldn't even participate if their identity were to be made public."

UM whittled down its applicant pool of roughly 100 prospects to four finalists before selecting Wolfe. Erdman and other curators declined to discuss details about the other finalists' backgrounds or qualifications. Only Wolfe was interviewed by a 20-member advisory panel of professors, students, campus workers, and alumni from the four Missouri system campuses, essentially making that group a glorified rubber stamp.

Jan Greenwood, the search consultant whose firm helped UM hire Wolfe, acknowledged that public searches for university leaders are fast becoming an endangered species. Her industry is rife with tales of retaliation, whether it be spurned donors revoking promised contributions or angry lawmakers putting the kibosh on money for new campus construction once word of a sitting president's outside dalliances reaches home.

Even deans and provosts — lower-level academic leaders presumably immune from the whims of retaliatory firing — have lost their jobs for daring to seek work elsewhere, according to Greenwood.
"When a person has been a candidate for another institution, it's hard to go back home and convince people you're very enthusiastic about their campus," she said.

That doesn't appear to be a problem at the MU School of Law, which has hosted Pushaw and two other candidates with two more to follow later this month. The five-person short list includes two women and two minority candidates.

"Transparency here helps the process," Davis said. "It broadens the pool of applicants. It allows all of the diverse constituencies on campus to be heard from in the search, instead of, 'We'll be in this closed door, and when we find our person we'll let you know,' which is a very insular process."

Pushaw, for one, said he favors open inquiries at public campuses, including presidential searches.

"At a state university, it should be as open as possible," he said. "People have a right to know what's going on."

As for Wolfe's take on the topic? The new president said in a written statement Sunday that he was "supportive and understanding" of the confidential search process.

"While I was not currently working at the time of the presidential search, other candidates were, and I can fully appreciate their need to have their names kept in confidence," Wolfe said. "To have done otherwise could have affected the quality of the candidate pool."

*Alan Scher Zagier is a member of the AP’s national education reporting team. He has covered higher education in Missouri since 2005. Follow him on Twitter @azagier.*
Appointment of Missouri curator is pulled

By MARÅ ROSE WILLIAMS

A Columbia attorney’s appointment to the University of Missouri Board of Curators was withdrawn in the face of opposition by state legislators, some of whom remembered a newspaper opinion piece in which he criticized Republicans.

Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, had named Craig Van Matre to the board three times before GOP senators, who had until Thursday to confirm, killed the appointment by studied inaction.

Van Matre’s name and photo were gone from the University of Missouri System website Friday.

That leaves two openings on the nine-member board. Judith Haggard resigned earlier this year.

Van Matre had filled the seat left vacant by 9th District curator Bo Frasier and had participated in the recent hiring of the new University of Missouri System president.

He was not available for comment Friday at the offices of Van Matre, Harrison, Hollis, Pitzer & Taylor.

He originally was appointed to the board in January 2011 and then again in June and October. The first two times, his name never made it to a vote of the full Senate.

Then on Thursday, when several legislators objected to Van Matre’s confirmation and others vowed to filibuster, Sen. Kurt Schaefer, a Columbia Republican, withdrew the nomination, calling the opposition an “insurmountable hill.”

Comments that Van Matre made five years ago in a Columbia Daily Tribune editorial criticizing Republican lawmakers were cited as having influenced opposition.
Teaching others how to live
Professor documents cancer battle in online videos.

Jeff Roberson/AP

David Oliver, left, hugs his wife, Debra Parker Oliver, after receiving encouraging test results at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center. David Oliver has built a career teaching medical school students and hospital workers how to care for dying patients. Now, after the University of Missouri research professor was diagnosed with cancer in September and broke the news to colleagues by video on the Internet, he is applying those lessons to his own life.

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER The Associated Press

Sunday, February 5, 2012

At first, David Oliver ignored the bump on his neck that he noticed while shaving. The University of Missouri medical school professor assumed it was calcified scar tissue from a previous surgery.
But the growth didn’t go away, and his sore back grew more painful. A doctor’s diagnosis confirmed the worst: He had a form of upper throat cancer called nasal pharyngeal carcinoma. It had spread to his lymph nodes and bones.

Then Oliver, who has spent a career teaching medical students and hospital workers how to care for dying patients, took an unusual step. He made a video to break the news to colleagues. And when the clip spread far beyond Columbia, Oliver undertook a bigger mission: documenting his treatment in regular videos and promoting an unusually public conversation on medicine and mortality.

“If there was ever a time to be a good teacher, this is it,” he said. “I’ve got a chance.”

Oliver, a 69-year-old specialist on aging and a former health care executive, at first struggled to absorb the diagnosis in September. His cancer is considered treatable but not curable.

He wanted to avoid the inevitable stares from colleagues at MU’s medical school, even those whose jobs often required them to confront terminal illness. He knew there would be whispers in the hallway and uncertainty about how — or even whether — to discuss the disease.

Oliver’s initial video was meant to “put them at ease when they saw me. I’m still David,” he said. “I might have five years. I might have six months. But I want you to be comfortable.”

The video quickly spread after Oliver’s five adult children shared the three-minute clip with Facebook friends, who in turn shared it with their own friends. A short time later, he started a video blog and a YouTube page.

For his followers, the updates alone weren’t enough. Questions soon followed.

A viewer from Japan, his stepdaughter’s former study abroad teacher, wanted advice on how to comfort his own friend with cancer. Medical students probed for suggestions about patient care. A college professor in Florida asked permission to use the video in class.

A former Vietnam War protester who four decades ago entered the then-nascent field of gerontology, Oliver spent decades sharing lessons on how to die. Now, buoyed by the power of social media, he was showing others how to live.

Anyone who expected to feel sorry for Oliver was quickly disabused of that notion after watching his first diary entry. A die-hard Missouri Tigers fan, Oliver made sure to highlight the two “puke buckets” he planned to obtain for chemotherapy and radiation treatments: one emblazoned with the rival Kansas Jayhawks logo, the other bearing an Oklahoma Sooner, another foe.

Beyond the humor, Oliver realized his illness provided a chance to help prepare patients and their loved ones, to trade whispers for matter-of-fact observations, to push the conversation from the shadows into the virtual public square.
The second video installment featured Oliver getting his head shaved, his full crop of grayish-blond hair falling to the salon floor before the chemo drugs took their toll.

By the third video, his bald head was gleaming. Oliver stood behind a dozen pill bottles containing a wide range of drugs — from the steroid dexamethasone to morphine. He talked about dealing with “chemo brain,” the persistent mental fog that trails the otherwise lucid professor post-treatment.

In mid-December, a noticeably subdued Oliver appeared on camera to chronicle the 21 days between his three chemotherapy treatments to that point. He talked about the highs of the first few days, fueled by energy-boosting steroids that made him feel “ready to run a triathlon.” Then comes the crash, Oliver explained, five days of agony marked by dizziness, diarrhea, constipation, mouth sores, confusion, tingling, hand cramps, rashes and disorientation.

“It’s a trick,” he said about the initial euphoria. “The Kryptonite comes. Superman is dead on the fifth day.”

Ever the professor, he used a bar graph to illustrate his three-week cycles.

Four months of treatment have also given Oliver a window into modern health care from the patient’s perspective. He hasn’t liked all that he has seen, particularly the limited interaction between doctors and nurses. He makes sure his caregivers also are watching his video dispatches.

“I’m in a position to be extremely critical while they’re giving me treatment,” Oliver said. “They consider me an advocate. They want me to help with their patient training.”

Oliver, a former executive at Heartland Health System in St. Joseph, knows he can engage with his doctors on a level of familiarity that most patients cannot. That’s another motivation for his videos: to help level the playing field.

“I’m not intimidated by physicians. I realize they are people like everybody else,” he said. “They make mistakes like everybody else. ... This is my opportunity to talk about these flaws and disappointments.”

As the disease lingers, he and his wife of 16 years, Debra Parker Oliver, also must plan for life after his death.

A few short months ago, that talk consisted mostly of retirement, visits with the grandchildren and their next ocean cruise. Now it means stressful sessions with financial advisers and making plans for his memorial service.

“I am not afraid to die,” Oliver said. “I am a gerontologist. I know that none of us get out of this alive.”
His wife, an associate professor and former hospice worker who also works in the family and community medicine department, is less certain.

“Maybe he’s not afraid to die, but he’s afraid of dying,” she said, her husband by her side. “The idea of this man being confined to a bed, maybe not being able to speak, is much more scary than what you are willing to admit.”

On a recent visit to Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, the couple received some encouraging news: A scan showed no visible lesions, meaning all were less than 1 centimeter in length. He will return later this month for two final rounds of chemotherapy followed by three months of freedom from medical procedures before getting another scan.

Best of all, the good news buys him time.

Time for a long-awaited cruise to Istanbul and Rome. Maybe time to travel to the NCAA basketball tournament in March to watch his beloved Tigers as the team seeks its first Final Four berth.

The cancer is “still there. It will grow back,” he said. “Eventually it will grow back and kill me.”

No one knows how much time remains. If it’s more than a year, he added, “we can produce a lot more videos.”
TV, video games appeal to kids with autism disorders

By Janese Silvey

Saturday, February 4, 2012

Children with autism spectrum disorders, or ASD, tend to be fascinated by screen-based, nonsocial technology such as television and video games, a University of Missouri researcher has found.

It’s the first large-scale study to explore the issue, though parents and clinicians often have observed the trend, said Micah Mazurek, assistant professor in the School of Health Professions and the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

Mazurek found that 64 percent of teens with ASD spend most of their free time watching TV and playing video or computer games, rates that were much higher than among those with other types of disabilities.

On the flip side, adolescents with ASD were less likely to use email or social media.

Data were compiled from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2, a group of more than 1,000 adolescents enrolled in special education. The study includes youths with ASD, learning and intellectual disabilities, and speech and language impairments.

Previous studies have shown that excessively watching television or playing video games in typically developing children is detrimental to schoolwork, social engagement, behavior and health.

The study was co-authored by researchers from Washington University and SRI International.

It is published in the current issue of the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.

The research was funded by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health and the Organization for Autism Research.
Wayne Anderson wants to talk about sex. And why not? As a therapist, researcher and psychology instructor at the University of Missouri, Anderson has made his living for the past 50 years doing just that.

Now, he has put the results of those years of study into a book, “The Changing Face of Sex” (AKA-Publishing, 2012).

In it, Anderson traces the evolution of sexual mores, starting with the repressed Victorian age and ending at the much freer present day.

Along the way, he explores such topics as the need for sex education, the evolution and spread of sexually transmitted diseases, the brain chemistry of love, behavioral differences between men and women, marriage and divorce, dual-career couples, monogamy, pregnancy, homosexuality, rape and how the practice of psychotherapy can be expanded to include sexuality.

Anderson has been asking students in his human sexuality class questions about sexuality since 1969, and he uses their written responses throughout the book.

Although much of the content in the book reflects attitudinal trends on campus, Anderson said the book is written for a general readership.

“I think there’s an inherent interest that people have in sexuality, but it still is not something that you see so much of. If you read Cosmopolitan, which people evidently buy for the sex, it’s the same thing month after month. It doesn’t get into the background of this. I get into the evolution of sexual behavior, the historical things that had to be overcome,” Anderson said.

Anderson anticipates mixed reactions to the book.

“Some people are appalled at where we are. I have moments where my students talk about sex casually. My feeling is ‘Is that right? I might be partially to blame for this.’ ” Anderson said.

However, Anderson said some of the change he documents in his book is positive.
“There is some pride involved, also, in terms that rape victims are treated better, and homosexuals have a much better place in the world,” Anderson said.

Anderson’s book will be available in hardcover and softcover editions through traditional booksellers such as amazon.com and Barnes & Noble. Additionally, the book will be available for tablet devices.