Planned Shutdown of U. of Missouri Press Underscores Shift in Traditional Publishing

By Jennifer Howard

The University of Missouri will soon be without a university press. The university announced last week that it would phase out its press, beginning in July. The news was made public in a larger statement about the university's shifting strategic priorities.

Such announcements about other university presses have often spurred protests and attempts to save them, but so far at least, the news about the Missouri press has been greeted quietly.

One close observer of scholarly publishing, Peter Brantley of the Internet Archive, noted in a blog post for Publishers Weekly that "the impact of such closures is mediated by how the academic community handles the larger transformations in publishing." He wrote that while closing university presses might lead to "a diminution of the number of outlets for scholarly work, it could just as easily be a more positive bellwether for a healthy shift in emphasis from one model of scholarly publishing to another."

The Missouri statement suggests that the university is shifting its emphasis away from traditional publishing. Although the Missouri legislature did not cut its budget for higher education this year, Timothy M. Wolfe, the university system's president, said it was essential "to be good stewards of public funds, to use those funds to achieve our strategic priorities, and to re-evaluate those activities that are not central to our core mission."

According to the statement, the university wants to focus on "exploring dramatically new models for scholarly communication, building on its strengths in journalism, library science, information technology, the libraries, and its broad emphasis on media of the future." It will train students "to prepare for careers in scholarly communication in the new-media world." The statement also invokes "a new business model" under which publications "could include much more than text, such as simulations, audio, and other elements."
Hughes, Twain, and Truman

Established in 1958, the Missouri press concentrates on the kind of monographs that traditionally have been university presses' bread and butter. The press publishes about 30 books a year in a variety of subject areas, including regional and military history. It's home to the collected works of Langston Hughes and to series like "Mark Twain & His Circle" and "Give 'Em Hell Harry" (on its native son Harry S. Truman), and on Missouri history and biography.

"Similar to other industries, scholarly publishing is dramatically changing due to emerging technology, making traditional publishing very challenging," a university spokeswoman, Jennifer Hollingshead, said in the statement.

In an interview, she held out no hope of a reprieve for the press. "As you can expect," she said, "this was a big decision for the university, and one we didn't take lightly."

Several consultants over the past few years have advised the press on how to cut costs, according to Ms. Hollingshead. "They made some changes in business practices, but ultimately it wasn't enough," she said. The press currently gets a $400,000 yearly subsidy from the university. That will cease on June 30, when the university's fiscal year ends.

No timetable has been set for winding down the press's operations. The press employs about 10 people, who learned about the closure last week, Ms. Hollingshead said. The Chronicle was unable to reach the press's interim director, Dwight Browne, by e-mail or telephone on Friday.

Threats to Other Presses

The news from Missouri may still be too fresh, but there hasn't yet been the kind of outcry that erupted in 2009, when Louisiana State University Press's then-shaky financial status almost got it shut down. "There's been maybe a handful of calls from concerned folks," Ms. Hollingshead said. "But I think, for the most part, people understand that in the budget situation that we're in, tough changes were required."

With budgets tight everywhere, university presses are no strangers to threats of closure. In 1998 the University of Arkansas tried to shut down its press; in 2010, Southern Methodist University Press suspended its press's operations, although its provost said last year that the university plans to reconstitute the publishing operation in some form.

Financial challenges don't always spell doom for university presses. Several have had their death sentences commuted, either because supporters campaigned for them or because they were able to come up with more-sustainable business plans.

In several instances, the Association of American University Presses has sent other press directors and personnel to help figure out how a financially challenged press might be saved. Douglas Armato, director of the University of Minnesota Press, has often been part of those consultations.
"Many of us in the AAUP have been involved in advising universities when their presses have run into financial or managerial problems," he said by e-mail, "and I can't think of a time when that process hasn't resulted in bringing a publishing operation back from the brink."

"The digital environment is not the first challenge university presses have faced and emerged from stronger than when we went in," he went on. "I'm a little concerned that this decision at Missouri sounds as if it was made in isolation and perhaps hastily as well."

In its 50-year run, the Missouri press has published much notable work, "including great books on the state's history and culture," Mr. Armato said. "Missouri is an awfully significant university, and an awfully large state, to be without a press."
Opposition to Closure of U. of Missouri Press

When the University of Missouri System announced on Thursday that it was shutting down the University of Missouri Press, initial response was muted. Employees of the press did not return calls, and the university said that it could not identify the faculty advisory committee for the press. The university said that it couldn't continue to subsidize the press, which currently receives about $400,000 annually.

Over the holiday weekend, however, opposition started to materialize. A Facebook page -- Save the University of Missouri Press -- appeared Monday. One post there: "As an alumnus of the University of Missouri, I am disappointed and angry to learn that you have decided to close the University of Missouri Press. Where are your priorities? What has happened to the school’s standing as the state’s flagship university? Is the institution to be known more and more only for its athletic programs? Will Truman State become known as Missouri’s university most interested in academics?" (Truman State has a university press.)

Letters to the editor are also appearing in local publications, questioning why a $400,000 subsidy would be out of the question at a university that pays its head football coach $2.7 million.
Press closure by university shocks many

*UM not required to involve faculty.*

By JANESE SILVEY

Friday, May 25, 2012

The director of a national organization of university presses said he was shocked yesterday when he learned the University of Missouri System plans to shut down its press.

UM Press is a member of the Association of American University Presses, but Executive Director Peter Givler said he first learned about its closure from a Tribune story. "I had no idea this was coming," he said.

Neither did the 10 UM Press staff members, the editor in chief said yesterday after UM President Tim Wolfe announced his decision.

The 54-year-old campus publishing house does not make money and relies on $400,000 a year from the system, UM officials said. Wolfe said the closing is part of a plan that prioritizes how the university spends money.

MU Provost Brian Foster said a campus committee has been formed to study ways to use technology to promote scholarly communication now published through UM Press. But that committee has not met since January and was talking about ways to collaborate with other departments, not closing down the press, said John Budd, a committee member and professor in the School of Information Science and Learning Technologies.

"We were talking about re-envisioning the way the press might work in today's world of scholarly communication," he said.

Budd said in earlier conversations there was mention of closing the press only as a last resort.

"I think it diminishes the university's standing within its peer community," he said of the decision to close the press. "I hope this wasn't based purely on financial or fiscal grounds. The UM System and MU in particular needs to be cognizant of its responsibilities as a research university."

Rice University attempted a digital scholarly publishing operation, but it closed in 2010 after four years. Otherwise, few universities have looked toward closing their presses to offset economic woes.
"I can tell you this is not a national trend," Givler said. "The university press community in this country has been very stable."

Many get subsidies from their universities, he said.

In 2005, UM Press book sales reached nearly $1.5 million after publishing 65 books, according to Tribune archives. But it's averaged about 30 titles a year since opening in 1958, UM spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said.

Because UM Press is under the helm of the system, closing it without faculty involvement doesn't appear to violate any rules.

"Certainly it's not an educational department," Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer said. "But it provides a service, a means of being able to publish specialty books for faculty, so that's a loss in itself."

Tyrer said he understands the argument that technology has changed the way information is published and consumed and that he is not surprised UM Press has fallen victim to those changes.

"There are so many other outlets people can find, places where they can go ahead and publish," he said. "I don't know of any individual who publishes who sees that as their only place to publish and get their material out."

Other Missouri universities continue to operate presses, including Truman State, Webster and Southeast Missouri State universities. Truman State University Press Director Nancy Rediger said she is keeping an eye on UM's situation and was surprised by the news.

"I'm very sorry that the press is going to close," she said. "There are big changes going on in scholarly publishing right now."

Rediger thinks the closure might send more regional authors to Truman's publishing shop.

"That certainly could be one result," she said.
Closure of Press attracts national attention

Campus Chatter

By JANISE SILVEY

Posted May 25, 2012 at 8:12 p.m.

The reaction to yesterday's news of the University of Missouri Press closing because new system President Tim Wolfe wants to prove he's a good steward of money has been interesting and not unlike the reaction to March's news of NSEI being shut down.

Locals aren't up in arms. People who are more familiar with the implications of the decision are. And the protests and observations are coming from around the country.

Consider this open letter to Wolfe from Bruce Miller of Miller Trade Book Marketing, Inc., out of Chicago. He posted it on his Facebook page:

Bruce Joshua Miller ... 5.25.12 Tim Wolfe president University of Missouri Columbia, MO

Dear Mr. Wolfe-

I was shocked to learn that one of your first actions as president of the University of Missouri is to shutter the University of Missouri Press. While I cannot claim to be a disinterested observer of this development, because I represent the press to the trade in the Midwestern states outside of Missouri, I would be as shocked as I am now even if I did not represent them.

Building a university press, or any publishing company for that matter, is a formidable task, and the University of Missouri Press has built a national reputation. Not only has this press documented the history of the state and its residents through a varied list of books, but the various subject areas covered by the back list are impressive indeed.

The recently released, BLUE HIGHWAYS REVISITED and "IF ONLY YOU WERE WHITE," a biography of Leroy "Satchel" Paige, are but two examples. I urge you to review the subject areas listed on the press website, and here is the link to make it easy for you:
http://press.umsystem.edu/catalog/BrowseSubjects.aspx
While I do not know the intimate details of the press budget, I do know that with the proper support this press would have a good chance of holding its own. Rather than trying to think of ways to bolster this valuable cultural asset, built painstakingly over a period of 54 years, you have chosen to destroy it.

I urge you to reconsider your decision. You might think it a simple matter of reforming your budget, but in fact you have added your name to the list of anti-intellectuals, philistines and buffoons worthy of caricature by H.L. Mencken. I have already heard people in the university press community worrying that their presses might be "Wolfed."

Sincerely, Bruce Joshua Miller
Miller Trade Book Marketing, Inc.
Chicago, IL

Great. Now our university president is a slogan. I can hear future university employees: “Dude, you totally got Wolfed.”

I’m still trying to better understand what the closure of UM Press means to Missouri residents. That’s where talking to the 10 employees who are impacted would come in handy. But they lack that little significant label known as “tenure,” so they’re not as able to talk to press as, say, NSEI faculty.

But I do know this. People are paying attention. Do a Twitter search for Missouri Press and dozens of tweets will pop up, including one from @sylverlining (Syliva Rodrigue) who calls out Wolfe and says “Wrong answer, @UMPrez.”

Here’s what Joe Heumann tweets: U of Missouri Press closed down by state seeking to save money so it can continue to fund football/basketball @ expense of silly words&books

although I’ll correct the tweet and remind people it wasn’t a state decision, but rather a UM System one.

Others link to national coverage of the situation. Here are a few:

The LA Times blog cites the press’s history of publishing books on world history, African American studies and regional studies of America’s heartland.

Johns Hopkins University Press blogged about it, saying a “sad farewell” to the press and noting that the $400,000 UM gives the press is a “tiny portion” of the system’s $2.5 billion budget. Oh, and JHU also points out that it’s less than the system puts into athletic programs. “But, as UM System President Tim Wolfe’s office said in a statement yesterday, a new set of focused priorities have forced UM’s hand; book publishing is apparently not part of the system’s ‘core mission.’ ”

Even the Chronicle of Higher Education reported on the news, in which Douglas Armato, director of University of Minnesota Press, said “Missouri is an awfully significantly university, and an awfully large state, to be without a press.”

Dale Singer of the St. Louis Beacon also took an in-depth look at the situation, quoting James Giglio, the author of books on Stan Musial and Thomas Eagleton, as saying he’s “very distributed by this.”
"I don't know of any state – there may be one or two – with a flagship university that doesn't have a press," Giglio told Singer.

Wolfe has made a tough decision in light of challenging budget times. But UM Press survived 2008-2011, which were no doubt more challenging (furloughs were being discussed at one point).

Maybe Wolfe thought the university would score brownie points with non-academics who don't understand why the press is important.

If he really wants to make hard decisions, though, he might look elsewhere, say in his own shop?

Because you know what else equals $400,000 a year? Two of the UM System's eight vice presidents.
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: University of Missouri Press is essential to publishing community

By Ned Stuckey-French
May 25, 2012 | 4:59 p.m. CDT

My father grew up on a small farm in northwest Missouri. After serving in the Army Air Corps during World War II, he was able to use the GI Bill to complete his bachelor’s degree at MU, stay on to get a master’s degree and eventually become a professor of agricultural economics.

I wish he had been alive last year when the University of Missouri Press published my first book, "The American Essay in the American Century." He would have been proud.

Today, however, he would be outraged to hear his alma mater is shutting down its press. He published with university presses and knew how essential their work is to scholars, teachers and students. He also knew how important the Press’ many books on Missouri writers, culture, landscape, and heritage are to his home state.

My father was a lifelong Mizzou football fan, but I know he would question the priorities of a university system that shuts down its press to save (according to the University’s press release) a $400,000 annual subsidy while paying its head football coach $2.7 million each year.

The University says it plans to institute a “new business model” of “scholarly communication” in which “[m]uch editorial work would be done by students.” I direct a publishing and editing program at Florida State University and know how important publishing internships are to our students, but I believe a model based on unpaid student interns is an insult to the 10 professional staff members who were given their notice.

Ned Stuckey-French is book review editor of Fourth Genre and director of the program in publishing and editing, department of English, at Florida State University.
MU has way to go to gain NSEI's trust

Olive branch is first in drawn-out battle.

By TRUMAN STORVICK

Sunday, May 27, 2012

Tribune reporter Janese Silvey has done excellent work detailing the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute's struggle to survive under University of Missouri management. Her May 19 account on Page 1A provides the lead sentence: "The dean of the University of Missouri's College of Engineering extended an olive branch to nuclear engineering faculty yesterday." This is really the first administration admission in a 15-year battle between the NSEI faculty and administration to maintain the nuclear graduate program. During this period in 2007, the NSEI program was listed first among nuclear programs in the United States for faculty scholarly productivity. Let me share my observations and opinion of this story.

The year I joined the College of Engineering faculty, a small book titled "Technology and the Academics" by Eric Ashby (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1959) appeared. Reading this book alerted me to the consequences and outcome for an academic program fighting a management discontinuance threat using the academic history extending back more than 500 years. Ashby offers this advice: "Men with tidy minds are bound to ask whether universities could not be run more efficiently if their efforts were coordinated and planned from above. The short answer is that a university is a society, not a public service or an industry. Its vitality depends on the maximum opportunity for initiative being distributed among the maximum number of members of the society. You cannot issue directives for scholarship and you cannot devise assembly lines for research. Conformity, orthodoxy, the party line, is out of place in the academic world. Fortunately they are out of place in the scientific world too. The scientific revolution, far from superannuating the traditional system of university government, has made its preservation more important than ever. If a university, under some illusion of efficiency, yielded up its cherished mode of government, if it became an institution managed by an oligarchy instead of a society managed by its members, it would fail to survive."

Having joined the College of Engineering faculty in 1959, I am pleased to have participated in the development of our nuclear engineering program for graduate study. Faculty and students in the program must have command of advanced mathematics, physics, chemistry, material science, nuclear physics and more. For the NSEI program to attain top ranking without support and encouragement from the university administration speaks of the true quality and dedication the NSEI faculty members apply.
to their program. Expect them to be justifiably cautious as they examine the "narrow window of opportunity" offered now by the university administration. This will take time because it will be difficult to evaluate the dean’s offer and to re-establish the broken trust experienced over its decade-long history.

_Truman Storvick is a professor emeritus of engineering at the University of Missouri._
New smartphone app will tell you how healthy you are just by taking a picture of your TONGUE

Taking a snap of your tongue with a mobile phone could soon instantly tell you how healthy you are.

Researchers believe the images could reveal important information about a patient's health - and even give them early warning of serious illness.

A team at the University of Missouri is developing a system that can analyse pictures using a 5,000-year-old Chinese principle.

It is based on the flow and balance of positive and negative energies in the body, and uses the tongue as a key to the physical health, or zheng, of a person.

'Our software helps bridge Eastern and Western medicine, since an imbalance in zheng could serve as a warning to go see a doctor.

'Within a year, our ultimate goal is to create an application for smartphones that will allow anyone to take a photo of their tongue and learn the status of their zheng.'

The software analyses images based on the tongue's color and coating to distinguish between tongues showing signs of 'hot' or 'cold' zheng.

Shades of red and yellow are associated with hot zheng, whereas a white coating on the tongue is a sign of cold zheng.

'Hot and cold zheng doesn't refer directly to body temperature,' said Xu, 'Rather, it refers to a suite of symptoms associated with the state of the body as a whole.'

For the study, 263 gastritis patients and 48 healthy volunteers had their tongues analysed. The gastritis patients were classified by whether they showed infection by a certain bacteria, known as Helicobacter pylori, as well as the intensity of their gastritis symptoms.

In addition, most of the gastritis patients had been previously classified with either hot or cold zheng.
This allowed the researchers to verify the accuracy of the software's analysis. 'Our software was able to classify people based on their zheng status,' said study co-author Ye Duan, associate professor of computer science at MU.

'As we continue to work on the software we hope to improve its ability,' Duan said. 'Eventually everyone will be able to use this tool at home using webcams or smartphone applications. That will allow them to monitor their zheng and get an early warning about possible ailments.'
Tongue Analysis Software Uses Ancient Chinese Medicine to Warn of Disease

For 5,000 years, the Chinese have used a system of medicine based on the flow and balance of positive and negative energies in the body. In this system, the appearance of the tongue is one of the measures used to classify the overall physical status of the body, or zheng. Now, University of Missouri researchers have developed computer software that combines the ancient practices and modern medicine by providing an automated system for analyzing images of the tongue.

"Knowing your zheng classification can serve as a pre-screening tool and help with preventive medicine," said Dong Xu, chair of MU's computer science department in the College of Engineering and study co-author. "Our software helps bridge Eastern and Western medicine, since an imbalance in zheng could serve as a warning to go see a doctor. Within a year, our ultimate goal is to create an application for smartphones that will allow anyone to take a photo of their tongue and learn the status of their zheng."

The software analyzes images based on the tongue's color and coating to distinguish between tongues showing signs of "hot" or "cold" zheng. Shades of red and yellow are associated with hot zheng, whereas a white coating on the tongue is a sign of cold zheng.

"Hot and cold zheng doesn't refer directly to body temperature," said Xu, who is also on the faculty of the Bond Life Sciences Center. "Rather, it refers to a suite of symptoms associated with the state of the body as a whole."

For example, a person with cold zheng may feel chills and coolness in the limbs and show a pale flushing of face. Their voice may have a high pitch. Other symptoms of cold sheng are clear urine and loose stool. They also may prefer hot foods and drinks and desire warm environments.

In Chinese traditional medicine both hot and cold zheng can be symptoms of gastritis, an inflammation of the stomach lining frequently caused by bacterial infection.

For the study, 263 gastritis patients and 48 healthy volunteers had their tongues analyzed. The gastritis patients were classified by whether they showed infection by a certain bacteria, known as Helicobacter pylori, as well as the intensity of their gastritis symptoms. In addition, most of the gastritis patients had been previously classified with either hot or cold zheng. This allowed the researchers to verify the accuracy of the software's analysis.

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"As we continue to work on the software we hope to improve its ability," Duan said. "Eventually everyone will be able to use this tool at home using webcams or smartphone applications. That will allow them to monitor their zheng and get an early warning about possible ailments."

The study "Automated Tongue Feature Extraction for ZHENG Classification in Traditional Chinese Medicine" was accepted for publication in the journal *Evidence Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*. The study's first author was doctoral student Ratchadaporn Kanawong and the second author was post-doctoral researcher Tayo Obafemi-Ajayi.
Researchers give Chinese theories a modern twist

By JANÈSE SILVEY

Saturday, May 26, 2012

University of Missouri researchers are using modern-day technology to apply ancient Chinese medical theories.

Faculty members from the College of Engineering are developing computer software that flags health problems by analyzing uploaded photographs of a person's tongue.

Analyses are based on the concept that a tongue's color, coating and other characteristics can determine a person's overall health status, known as "zheng."

"It is a general evaluation of health status," said Dong Xu, chairman of the computer science department.

"There could be something wrong if you see an abnormal pattern of the tongue."

The tongue screening is one of several tools in ancient Chinese medicine that analyze a person's overall health, he said.

It is not aimed at pinpointing a specific disease but instead would be used to tell people whether they should see a doctor or adopt healthier habits.

The application for computers, smartphones and tablets is still in development and would analyze images of a tongue's color and coating to show signs of "hot" or "cold" zheng. Red and yellow tongue tones, for instance, would be associated with hot zheng while a white coat indicates a cold zheng.

That's not referring to body temperature, but rather a suite of symptoms associated with the body as a whole, said Xu, who also is on the faculty at the Bond Life Sciences Center.

A person with a cold zheng might experience chills in the arms and legs. Both hot and cold zheng could indicate gastrological problems.

In a recent study, Xu and co-author Ye Duan analyzed the tongues of 263 gastritis patients and 48 healthy volunteers.
Those with gastritis, an inflammation of the stomach lining, were classified by the intensity of their symptoms and whether they showed a certain bacterial infection.

In addition, most of the gastritis patients were classified as having either a hot or cold zheng, which allowed the researchers to verify the accuracy of the software's analysis.

"Our software was able to classify people based on their zheng status," said Duan, an associate professor of computer science.

"As we continue to work on the software, we hope to improve its ability," Duan said in a statement. "Eventually everyone will be able to use this tool at home using webcams or smartphone applications. That will allow them to monitor their zheng and get an early warning about possible ailments."

The study was accepted for publication in the journal "Evidence Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine."

Xu said it is too early to say whether the application will be free.
New religion news site to launch in Columbia

Officials with a religion news website plan to start a new service in Columbia this summer.

Religion News Service, headquartered at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, will start a community-based Faith and Values site for Columbia, The Columbia Daily Tribune reported. The Columbia site, which could possibly start by July, will be RNS's third community site.

Debra Mason, director of Religion News Service, said she envisions an interactive forum where various religious groups exchange ideas about current topics. A Faith and Values website online in Spokane, Wash., recently took on subjects including arranged marriages, socialism, abortion and gay rights.

"What we hope is that we can figure out a way to marry the social networks that pre-exist, and the faith institutions, with mainstream media and figure out a way to engage the faith-based community and make sure they are engaged with the public discourse on religion in broad ways," Mason said.

In addition to political, cultural and faith news, the website also will support local bloggers. Church and religious groups can submit news releases, calendar events and obituaries and reader comments are allowed.

RNS hopes to fill the gaps left in religion coverage because newsrooms have cut religion reporters to save money.

The Rev. Steven Swope, pastor of the Columbia United Church of Christ, said coverage of faith and religious groups has changed over the years. He said he welcomes the addition of the Faith and Values site. "So many issues affect people's daily lives are related to beliefs," he said.
MU Introduces New Degree Aimed at Positive Coaching

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP)— The University of Missouri is starting a new online master’s degree program aimed at taking the bullying out of coaching.

Former head track and field coach Rick McGuire says screaming and yelling is bully behavior and shouldn’t be used by coaches. McGuire hopes to spread that message through the new positive coaching degree. Courses will include sports psychology, athletic administration and strength conditioning. But the 30-hour program also will help coaches manage people without using negative behavior.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that McGuire hopes to see plenty of school coaches from Missouri sign up. He says the program is a good way for coaches who also teach to add to their education while studying something they’re interested in.

The master’s program, announced earlier this month, starts June 4.
For first time, MU student angel investors risk $30,000 on medical startup

By Tony Puricelli
May 25, 2012 | 5:25 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — In spring 2010, undergraduates Kyle Cleeton and Ryan Wenk were told that their idea to start the Student Angel Capital Program at MU would not likely receive grant money. That didn't matter, the program's faculty adviser, W.D. Allen, told them; the process would still be a good lesson in applying for a grant.

So when Allen got a call that summer saying they had won one from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, it caught all three by surprise. After that, the angel investment program took flight.

"Everyone on campus has been amazed with the speed at which all of this has taken place," said Allen, an assistant professor of finance.

The Student Angel Capital Program is a student-managed angel investment fund designed to teach undergraduate and graduate students from a variety of programs at MU about venture capital investments. The interdisciplinary program housed in the Trulaske College of Business is one of a number of university initiatives focused on innovation and experiential learning.

Allen said one of the key components of the class is having students with knowledge in several disciplines, which helps the group tackle problems from all sides. Last semester, the class included students in engineering, psychology, journalism and agriculture. This past semester, for the first time, the class invested $30,000 in a medical startup company in Columbia.

The class takes off

Cleeton and Wenk got the idea for the program after a trip to Wall Street in 2008 through the Cornell Leadership Program. They met with several investors in New York City and were inspired to try their own hand at angel investing.
The term refers to an individual or entity that invests money in business startups typically in exchange for convertible debt or an equity stake in the company. After a year of conversations with private investors from around Missouri, Cleeton and Wenk formed the venture capital investment club at MU with Allen as a faculty adviser.

"The first question out of my mouth was, 'How much time will this take?'" Allen said jokingly. "Oh nothing. Don't worry about it,' they said."

Cleeton recalled the scene the same way: "And we told him, 'You won't have to do a thing.'"

They began applying for grant money so they could do more than evaluate startup proposals; they wanted to invest.

"The intent was to create an organization where students could come out of the classroom and actually apply what they're learning and see if this is what they want to do as their career," Cleeton said. Eventually, a private donation and the Kauffman Foundation grant in spring 2010 lifted the angel investment program up off the ground.

In fall 2010, before the program became an official MU class, five students met in Allen's office on the third floor of Cornell Hall. Three folding chairs still sit in the corner of his office as a reminder of those early efforts.

"At that point, we were behaving just like entrepreneurs," Allen recalled. The students spent the majority of their time finding funding and navigating through university hoops to make the investment program into an official class. It began in the spring of 2011, minus Wenk and Cleeton, who had both graduated.

"When we started looking into the program, we were told there would be a four to five year timeline," Cleeton said. "Given the support from the business school and various members of the university and the business community, we were able to pull the program together in two to three years."

The quick turnaround is a testament to the dedication of the students involved, said Ben Carrier, a former student president of the Student Angel Capital Program. In early 2011, the class became a full member of Centennial Investors, an angel-investing network started by Columbia Chamber of Commerce. Before that, they worked to build up credibility by researching companies and meeting investors.
"It really helped us get into the whole entrepreneurial community within Columbia," said John Field, one of the program's current co-presidents.

**Students become investors**

Usually an angel investor is an individual, Carrier said. In this case, the class as a whole performs as one investor in the angel network.

Students collaborate to perform due diligence on a number of potential investment deals with local startups, spending months researching each candidate's possible impact including its potential market, finances and technology, Field said. Each company is weighed independently.

After a prescreening process, the businesses make a short presentation to the class with time for questions afterward to make sure both parties are on the same page. Twelve businesses presented this year. The students then vote to perform due diligence on some companies, and a back-and-forth follow-up process typically takes a few months. No investment was made in the first two semesters of the class.

This year, in considering the medical startup, EternoGen, the students consulted plastic surgeons, venture capitalists and research labs to gain third-party perspectives on the company's viability. The medical research and development company is creating soft-tissue filler for cosmetic, orthopedic and cardiovascular medical procedures. It was ultimately a unanimous decision among the 15 classmates to purchase the $30,000 equity stake.

"Overall, we were pleased with their responses to our questions and decided the market was right for this technology," Field said.

In all, EternoGen has received roughly $500,000 from investors to get started, including $200,000 from the University of Missouri System's Enterprise Investment Program. The student fund's $30,000 investment was part of $200,000 invested overall by Centennial Investors. For its contribution, the Student Angel Capital Program is now an equity partner in EternoGen. Class members will continue to attend company meetings each month.

Field said he and his classmates would like to see 20-to-40-times return on their investment in five to seven years. That's a range of about $600,000 to $1.2 million.

**Setting up for long-term investments**
From here on out, Allen said, the class would like to invest in roughly one new company each semester from a list of 30 to 40 potential deals. EternoGen was among 20 or so startups being considered. The overall goal is to create a self-sustaining fund for the class to continue investing for years to come. The class is sitting on a $600,000 venture capital fund, a modest size for an angel investor but enough to make a start. Any profits earned will go back into the fund to be used for future investments.

Cleeton said he expects the successes and failures to balance out. Allen said he has "drawn some lines in the sand" for the class: It is intended to be entirely educational; the money should only be utilized for funding high-growth entrepreneurial efforts; and Allen will not accept money with strings attached. The key to the class is student-driven learning, not making a profit.

"Everyone knows up front this isn’t about a grade," Allen said. "It’s about building a better person out of yourself."

Students can and have taken the class multiple times, sometimes for credit and sometimes not, just to remain involved with the fund and gain more real-world experience. Members such as Cleeton and Wenk remain tied to the fund, offering advice from time to time.

This carryover is important to Allen, who said he doesn’t want to be the sole source of continuity in the class. Cleeton estimated investments might not see any significant results for three to seven years.

Now a research analyst in New York City, Cleeton said his experiences founding the investment fund and working with professionals gave him more opportunities after graduation than students with only theoretical knowledge and a grade point average to discuss in job interviews.

"That’s a very different conversation you can have with recruiters, and it opens up doors that would not normally be opened," Cleeton said.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
Students may weigh dreams vs. dollars in career choice

BY TIM BARKER tbarker@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8350 | Posted: Sunday, May 27, 2012

There's a simple bit of advice high school graduates often hear when deciding where to go to college and what to study when they get there: Pick something you love and follow your dream. Do that, and everything will work out.

Sounds great, except it isn't always true.

We can look at the growing mountain of student loan debt and rapidly rising default rates to see that these words have the potential to lead students into financial turmoil. Not every dream has a job attached to it.

And at a time when colleges and universities are under pressure to produce a ready workforce, this fact is pumping up the long-running ideological debate between those who see college as a vehicle to open the minds of young people and those who see it as a training ground for young capitalists.

It's a conflict that resonates with Etinosa Ogbevoen, 18, of Olivette. The recent graduate of Ladue Horton Watkins High School will soon begin her college career at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Her heart tells her she wants to help people. She envisions a career in nonprofits. And she'd love to study psychology.

Yet she plans to major in business administration, following the advice of friends and advisers who have steered her away from the popular social science often associated with lower-paying jobs. It's clear, however, that she's not completely sold on the plan. At the very least, she wants a psychology minor.

"I don't want to be older and struggling with a low-wage job," Ogbevoen said. "But I also want to do something I want to do."

MAKING DREAMS PAY
It's a challenge facing an army of college-bound men and women. For most, it will be their first major life decision, one in which ideals and dreams will run up against the economics of a world in which student debt recently topped the $1 trillion mark and default rates are nearing 9 percent.

One of the problems, critics say, is that students don't have enough information and guidance to help them avoid financially crippling mistakes.
High school advisers worry about getting students into college, where a new batch of advisers push them toward graduation. Career guidance takes a back seat, said Anthony Carnevale, director of the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. Carnevale, who studies the relationship between college degrees and pay levels, would like to see mandatory classes on every campus dedicated to career planning. And he's less than thrilled with the idea of telling students to chase dreams.

"I think that's irresponsible. It's not fair to them," said Carnevale, co-author of a 2011 report "What's it Worth? The Economic Value of College Majors."

The report slices and dices a wide range of data regarding more than 170 college majors. It includes a look at some of the best and worst bachelor's degrees, in terms of median annual pay.

Not surprisingly, the upper ranks are dominated by a host of engineering disciplines, including petroleum engineering ($120,000), chemical engineering ($86,000) and mechanical engineering ($80,000). At the lower end of the spectrum are things such as counseling/psychology ($29,000), early childhood education ($36,000) and studio arts ($40,000).

Carnevale and others stop far short of suggesting that students should shun these lower-paying degrees. They just require more planning, both by the student and the school, he said.

There's nothing wrong with studying art. But, he said, "The school should be working with you to figure out how you are going to make art pay."

GUIDANCE ISSUES
Like virtually every other aspect of higher education, the quality and quantity of career guidance varies from campus to campus.

The University of Missouri, like many schools, offers a host of career centers — one shared by the entire campus and others situated within colleges on campuses. Mizzou's main office serves more than 8,000 students a year, through seminars, workshops and adviser sessions. They've started offering a $15 test, StrengthsQuest, that helps students identify skills and abilities that could translate into careers. And they offer a one-credit-hour career exploration class, which is taken by about 200 students a year.

Still, the school has to worry about more than simply churning out workers aiming for high-paying jobs, said Jim Spain, Mizzou's vice provost for undergraduate studies.

"We do provide folks with technical skills for specific jobs," he said. "At the same time, we have a broader responsibility to prepare our students to be citizens."

Others say it's a mistake to measure graduate success by salaries only.

"Really, you can follow your passion or you can follow the dollar signs. If they meld into one, that's great," said Bill Witbrodt, director of student financial services at Washington University.

A purely pragmatic approach to college degrees is the sort of thing that sets some educators on edge. Telling a student to prepare for a specific job, they say, can be just as detrimental as telling them to chase a dream.
"You have no idea if the job will be there when you get out, let alone 10 years later," said Sandy Baum, an independent higher education policy analyst and consultant. Baum and others urge students to find a balance between pragmatism and idealism, and to follow a plan based on what they want their lives to look like after graduation. Often, those lower-salaried bachelor's degrees — particularly things such as psychology — can be significantly enhanced through a master's degree or doctorate.

"Everybody has to realize that the days of getting a degree and being done are over," said Linda Hagedorn, associate dean of undergraduate programs at Iowa State University and professor in the school's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. "The reality for our bachelor degrees is that most of them do not prepare people for work. They educate you."

Still, there is evidence suggesting that students are increasingly looking at college as a gateway to employment.

Each year, the Cooperative Institutional Research Program at the University of California-Los Angeles conducts a survey of hundreds of thousands of incoming freshmen around the nation. The questions vary each year, but the survey offers insights into the motivations of college students.

A decade ago, about 70 percent of freshmen listed "to be able to get a better job" as a key reason for attending college. Last year, that number hit an all-time high of nearly 86 percent.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT
The same survey also suggests students are more aware of the price of college. Of those surveyed, 40.6 percent of freshmen listed cost as a major factor in their choice of schools, up from 31 percent when the question was first asked in 2004.

It's a group that will be joined by Rachel McCormick, 17, of Maryland Heights, a soon-to-be Pattonville High School graduate.

She's bound for the Missouri University of Science and Technology, which edged out New York University largely based on price. Over four years, she figures it would have cost at least $40,000 more to attend the East Coast school.

"I didn't want my parents to be in debt for my education," McCormick said. "The total was really daunting."

This awareness is due, at least in part, to the advice grads such as McCormick receive from longtime college adviser Julie Kampschroeder.

She urges students at Pattonville to consider both the cost of a degree and its earnings potential when they make college decisions. It's become a favorite topic of hers, this concept of "return on investment," or ROI.

"Honestly, I wouldn't even have used those three letters a year ago," Kampschroeder said. "But when you have a trillion dollars in student loan debt, you have to start changing the way you think."
Experts say remedial college classes need fixing

BY HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH/THF ASSOCIATED PRESS

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Each year, an estimated 1.7 million U.S. college students are steered to remedial classes to catch them up and prepare them for regular coursework. But a growing body of research shows the courses are eating up time and money, often leading not to degrees but student loan hangovers.

The expense of remedial courses, which typically cost students the same as regular classes but don't fulfill degree requirements, run about $3 billion annually, according to new research by Complete College America, a Washington-based national nonprofit working to increase the number of students with a college degree.

The group said the classes are largely failing the nation's higher education system at a time when student-loan debt has become a presidential campaign issue. Meanwhile, lawmakers in at least two states have pushed through changes and numerous institutions are redesigning the courses.

"Simply putting (students) in three levels of remedial math is really taking their money and time with no hope of success," said Stan Jones, president of Complete College America.

The group’s research shows just 1 in 10 remedial students graduate from community colleges within three years, and a little more than a third complete bachelor’s degrees in six years. Yet the classes are widespread, with more than 50 percent of students entering two-year colleges and nearly 20 percent of those entering four-year universities put in at least one remedial course, the report said.
"At the end of the day if we could say that we are getting more students to graduate, particularly those coming into college without the requisite skills, the investment we have now is worth it," said Bruce Vandal, director of postsecondary education for the Denver-based Education Commission of the States, a nonpartisan group that researches education policy. "I think the fact that we aren't getting that result is why legislators and policymakers are up in arms and rightfully so."

The research comes as the cost of a college education continues to grow. The College Board said last fall that the average in-state tuition and fees at four-year public colleges rose an additional $631, or about 8 percent, compared with a year ago. The annual cost of a full credit load has passed $8,000 — an all-time high.

Legislation passed earlier this month in Kansas prohibits four-year universities from using state funds to provide remedial courses.

Beth Gulley, an associate English professor who teaches remedial writing at the 22,000-student Johnson County Community College in northeast Kansas, acknowledges the remediation statistics are "pretty dismal." But she noted it sometimes takes students longer to graduate than the span of time the statistics track.

"I think there is lots of hope," she said.

Take her assistant Brandon True, who dropped a remedial math class twice before completing it and College Algebra. Now 23, he is taking a calculus-heavy class for aspiring video game designers and preparing to transfer to a four-year institution.

"I was terrified," he recalled of his earlier math struggles. Because of those initial struggles problems, he feels like he truly understands the remedial writing students he helps. "I think they choke. It's scary."

Research shows placement exams routinely misplace students in remedial courses, and colleges would do so far less often if they also examined high school transcripts, said Davis Jenkins, a senior researcher at the Community College Research Center at Teachers College at Columbia University in New York.

True knows the limitations of placement exams firsthand. He went from being identified as needing remedial writing help the first time he took the test to qualifying for the gifted writing program the second time.
The classes are being rethought as well. Jenkins recommends doing away with the one-size-fits-all college algebra requirement and having math classes tailored to a few broad areas of study. For instance, those studying history, law or psychology might take a math class focused more on statistics.

"It just kills their desire for learning," Jenkins said, noting that some students are being placed in classes that make them basically redo middle school pre-algebra. "There really is a stigma, so it is clear that we need to rethink it."

The Complete College America report also said research shows half or more of remedial students would be better off being placed in required classes and having the schools building in extra help, such as tutors or more frequent class meetings.

The report said institutions that have used those approaches have seen their unprepared students succeed at the same rates as their college-ready peers. Legislation passed earlier this month in Connecticut allows underprepared students to take full-credit, college-level courses with built-in supports, such as extended instruction, extra tutoring and mandatory labs.

"We're failing these students if we don't change," said Democratic state Rep. Roberta Willis, co-chairwoman of Joint Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee in Connecticut.

Such an approach worked well for Jessica Grubb, 22, of the Round Rock, Texas, near Austin. After years of struggling, the Texas State University special education major knocked out her math requirement during a summer class that met from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. five days a week. She now works as a math tutor.

"This program has literally changed my life," she said, adding that figuring out a tip at a restaurant used to make her panic. "It gives people a second chance."
Mizzou alumni group enjoys membership boost

By JAN ESE SILVEY

Saturday, May 26, 2012

Membership to the University of Missouri’s official alumni group spiked this year thanks, in part, to a centennial homecoming celebration and MU’s move to the Southeastern Conference.

The Mizzou Alumni Association recorded 44,415 members as of May 18, up about 2,000, or 5 percent, over last year. Since 2007, membership has swelled by more than 25 percent.

"I think it says a lot about the mood of our alumni base and how they feel about our university," said Todd McCubbin, executive director of the alumni association. "We've seen that through survey work and anecdotally, too. There's a real passion for this place."

The association manned a major calling campaign this past fall asking alumni to support the university as part of the 100th anniversary of Homecoming.

And MU's move from the Big 12 to the SEC "definitely" helped the association's numbers, McCubbin said. Some alumni did not renew memberships because of the conference realignment, but that number was fewer than 100, he said. Offsetting those are the new alumni chapters "popping up down there left and right."

Since the November announcement, eight new alumni chapters have formed in the Southeast region, with existing chapters in those states adding new members.

"We have yet to see the full effect of that, especially from Southeastern alumni," McCubbin said.

Some Missouri chapters also could see a boost in interest from MU’s SEC move, including the Southwest Missouri Alumni Association in Joplin.

"We're excited for what that brings in terms of new rivalries," said chapter President Rachel Greene. "Hopefully we'll have Arkansas as a rival. We're an hour and a half from Fayetteville."

Being a member of the Mizzou Alumni Association is mostly touted as a way to support the university in a comprehensive way. Dues pay for the Mizzou Alumni Magazine, which goes to all alumni, as well as student scholarships and research. Members don't have to be alumni — about 3,000 are MU supporters, McCubbin said.
Greene said her association ensures that MU is represented in that part of the state, but mostly, she likes giving back, especially in the form of scholarships.

"It's a great way to give back to the university," she said.

When a tornado struck her hometown last year, the university returned the favor. Athletic teams, alumni, administrators and students showed extraordinary support in rebuilding efforts, she said.

"In terms of the past year, I couldn't be more proud," Greene said. "It was a great feeling to see Mizzou down here helping Joplin. ... One Mizzou really showcased the flagship university of the state."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Farmers, and their crops, struggle with unseasonably dry May

By Megan LaManna
May 25, 2012 | 5:05 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An unseasonably dry May is worrying Missouri farmers. The 1.16 inches of rain so far in May puts Columbia 2.73 inches short of the average of 3.89 inches through Friday.

Bill Wiebold, an agronomist with MU Extension, said the dry spell comes as farmers have planted their crops and need moisture to get the growing season off to a good start.

Higher evaporation rates driven by hotter temperatures and low humidity are contributing to low moisture levels in the soil, said Tim Reinbott, superintendent at MU’s Bradford Research and Extension Center.

"It’s unusual to have such a high demand for water this early," Wiebold said on Wednesday. "The point I want to make is, it’s serious and will get more serious as time goes on."

Showers and storms brought temporary relief to areas west of Columbia on Friday morning with localized rainfall totals of 2 inches or more, but only trace amounts fell in the Columbia area, according to Doppler radar. Reinbott said Friday morning’s scant rainfall didn’t make a difference overall.

Record highs in the 90s forecast for Saturday and Sunday won’t help. The National Weather Service was forecasting chances of rain Monday and during the middle of next week. "We don’t need scattered showers. What we need is a good general rain," Reinbott said. Light rains after farmers plant in dry soil can provide enough water for seeds to sprout, Reinbott said, but if the moisture evaporates too quickly after germination the young plants will die.

The latest weekly drought monitor map, issued Thursday by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, showed "abnormally dry" conditions — the least severe level of drought — expanding from southeast Missouri toward the central part of the state.