



Research touted as integral to growth

By JANESE SILVEY

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

On the same day The New York Times opined in 1903 that flying machines might be possible in a million to 10 million years, Orville Wright wrote in his diary: "We started assembly today."

That's the kind of visionary thinking Columbia and the University of Missouri need to have to secure the state's spot in a rapidly changing global economy, Tom Skalak, vice president for research at the University of Virginia, told a group of community leaders this morning.

"We need to start assembly today," he said.

Skalak and MU Vice Chancellor of Research Rob Duncan are on a two-day tour of Missouri touting the benefits of building a knowledge-based economy through university research and innovation.

The meetings started yesterday in St. Louis and are expected to conclude in Kansas City this evening.

A growing worldwide population that will continue to have increased food and energy needs poses complicated challenges, Skalak said. Couple that with the fact businesses have scaled back on their own research at the same time technological advances are occurring at a faster-than-ever rate, and that means universities with broad research and development capabilities have a critical role to play.

"The only way our grandchildren are going to have jobs in 20 or 30 years is if we get innovation out into the market," Skalak said.

He challenged business and education leaders to be open-minded and not squelch innovative ideas and urged investors to buy into those ideas at earlier stages, even before they are ready to be pitched to traditional venture capitalists.

Missouri needs more of the latter investors, too, Duncan said. He referred to one company born out of an MU lab, Organovo, which grows tissues from human cells, that is based in San Diego because investors tend to keep their money close.

During the breakfast meeting at the Hampton Inn & Suites, Duncan also outlined what MU already is doing. The university has \$485 million in external awards and continues to see increases in licensing

options and revenues. And MU recently received a \$5.5 million gift from the Sidney Kimmel Foundation to study new types of energy production.

“Future prosperity depends on a commitment to big discoveries,” he said.

Duncan joked that he is happy the rail and wagon train lobbyists weren’t strong enough in 1903 to thwart the creation of airplanes.

“I guarantee airplanes have killed more people than nuclear reactors,” he quipped.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Into what dark hole will the University of Missouri Press budget go?

By Sharon Kinney Hanson

June 5, 2012 | 5:53 p.m. CDT

As a taxpayer and financial contributor to MU (my graduate school alma mater), I'm completely dismayed by its administrators' redirection of a budget that barely sustained the University of Missouri Press.

This administration also lets The Missouri Review, our literary journal, limp along on a minuscule budget dependent primarily on funds from the Missouri Arts Council. The staff of both are paid less than their value, so why do they do this work? Because they understand the role of public education and the importance of academic excellence.

If this administration lets the press die, I cannot continue to support MU. Here's why:

The press was operated in the black not long ago and since 1958 it has spawned the work of thousands of scholars and academicians: indispensable thinkers, writers, teachers. In recent years, administrators cut the budget of other academic programs — for example, The State Historical Society of Missouri — which resulted in the elimination of professional staff.

Now, with the forthcoming "revisioning," which in truth is the demise of our academic press, this administration again will further Columbia's unemployed numbers. But historical society, Missouri Review and University of Missouri Press employees can't afford attorneys to protect their jobs much less negotiate salaries like some employees in the system. The press' total budget wouldn't pay the salary of one coach or one administrator making these decisions. Lest we forget, taxpayers funded a new stadium, a new tennis facility and a mascot mosaic — all requiring operation and maintenance budgets. Some considered an outlay of mascot funds to care for and feed and parade a live tiger here and there, but loud roaring opposing this idea led to common sense.

A university press is a key academic component of university life. And \$400,000 is a pittance sum compared to what's shelled out on various athletic staff or programs. With the demise of

the press in 2013, MU's reputation as an academic university must be questioned and MU will establish an image as primarily a sports school.

I want to know into what dark hole will the press' \$400,000 fall, and why can't our state university support a university press?

Sharon Kinney Hanson received her master's in education from MU and is a Columbia resident. She has been a member of the Missouri Arts Council's ad hoc literature committee. Questions? Contact Opinion editor Elizabeth Conner.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Closing of press product of the wrong model for university

By Joseph Carroll

June 6, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

An open letter to University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe:

I served two terms on the faculty review board at the University of Missouri Press. Closing the press sends a signal that the University of Missouri no longer wishes to make a claim to valuing scholarship.

In policy decisions on my own campus and in the wider University of Missouri System, I see two contrasting models of the university at work. In one model, the university is a seat of learning, dedicated to sustaining higher culture in the state. In this model, students participate in the community of minds created within the university. In the other model, the university is a factory designed to produce degrees. The students are customers purchasing those degrees. The citizens of Missouri are shareholders of the company. In this model, the aim of the university is to turn a profit in the short term.

The decision to close the press looks like a product of this latter model. Even in business terms, I think the model unwise. The goal of short-term profits runs counter to profit in the longer term: Sustaining a cultural climate that is inviting to educated people — the kind of people who create industries and technologies. Those people, vital to the economic health of the state, do not wish their children to grow up in a cultural backwater. They would look down on a university that has a football team but no university press.

Every university president has a legacy. Closing the university press would likely stand out as historically the single most significant decision that you, as president, will have made. Inevitably, in the minds of most people, that decision will be closely associated with the idea that you are a businessman with no background in research. People will almost necessarily suppose that you have an impoverished understanding of the mission of a university. They might well suspect that you failed to understand the magnitude of this one decision. They

might infer that it was a blunder attributable to a failure of imagination. I think that would be the right conclusion to draw.

Closing the press will do irreparable harm to the cultural climate of Missouri. Please don't do this.

Joseph Carroll is a curators professor in the English Department at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Education digest

Posted: Wednesday, June 6, 2012 12:00 am | [\(Loading...\) comments.](#)

MISSOURI SCHOOLS • Twenty-nine Missouri school districts have received the 2012 "What Parents Want Award" from SchoolMatch, an Internet site that rates school quality. Schools are chosen for the award based on qualities parents desire for their child's school. Those factors include performance, competitive teacher salaries, above average per-pupil expenditures and small class sizes, among others. The information is gathered through a nationwide survey of parents. The state winners include 13 districts from the St. Louis region. They are: Brentwood, Clayton, Ferguson-Florissant, Hazelwood, Kirkwood, Ladue, Lindbergh, Parkway, Pattonville, Rockwood, St. Charles, University City, and Webster Groves.

ROSSMAN SCHOOL > School earns geography honors • The Rossman School recently earned first place nationwide in the 2011-12 National Geography Challenge in the fourth grade and fifth grade divisions. The sixth- grade team earned third place. In the challenge, the scores of the top 10 students are combined to determine the team score. The fourth-grade class recorded five perfect scores and a team average of 98 percent. The National Geography Challenge is administered by the National Social Studies League, and is sponsored by the National Council for Geographic Education. The challenge provides standardized testing for children in grades 2-12. The written exam tests general knowledge of geography, map skills, interpreting charts and graphs and reading comprehension. The private elementary school in Creve Coeur reports that these were the second and third national championships for the school in this competition. The school won its first national title in the 2007-08 school year.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA > Grant supports engineer education in Iraq • **The University of Missouri College of Engineering has recently received a grant from the U.S. Department of State to assist engineers and engineering students in Iraq.** Professors will work with Iraq's University of Technology through a partnership with the International Research & Exchanges Board's University Linkage Program. A team of MU researchers will fly to Erbil in northern Iraq this month to conduct a three-day seminar. In late summer, a group of Iraqi engineering faculty will visit MU for further collaboration. MU is one of eight American universities to participate in the program.

CHESTERFIELD DAY SCHOOL > Students support program for military families • As part of a year-long project, the Chesterfield Day School sixth grade class recently presented a check for \$3,215 to support Operation Homefront. The nonprofit organization provides emergency financial and other assistance to the families of U.S. service members and wounded warriors. Students raised the funds through bake sales and other fundraising activities. Most of the money was raised through the sixth-grade play "Mulan Jr."

University of Missouri to host global climate change conference

COLUMBIA -- Scientists and policy makers from across the country and overseas are expected at a three-day University of Missouri conference on global climate change beginning Wednesday.

The conference is supported by Mizzou Advantage, an initiative that seeks to promote applied research in strategic areas including sustainable energy, food science and health and medicine.

The speakers' roster includes a World Bank consultant, a scientist from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and several Missouri researchers.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Transit of Venus enthralles spectators at MU's Laws Observatory

By Claire Porter

June 5, 2012 | 10:44 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — It might have been hard to see, but it happened nonetheless.

As the sun blazed in the blue sky over MU, something strange was happening: Venus was slowly inching across the sun's path, creating a tiny blemish in its flaming glow.

Venus is farther away from the earth than the moon, so its silhouette as it crosses the sun is much smaller than the one created during a solar eclipse — much too small to be seen with the naked eye.

Additionally, if viewed without protection, the sun's rays can damage viewers' eyes.

The Central Missouri Astronomical Association and MU astronomers set up telescopes and binoculars fitted with filters at Laws Observatory so visitors could safely see the tiny dot crawl across the sun for the last time until 2117.

The transit of Venus wasn't visually stunning, but it still drew hordes of spectators to the observatory.

Angela Speck, professor and director of MU's astronomy program, stood at the doorway to the rooftop of the Physics Building and handed out solar glasses, another safe viewing technique the observatory offered. She estimated about 500 people visited the rooftop Tuesday evening.

Val Germann and two other members of the astronomical association staffed telescopes in the parking lot behind the observatory. Germann estimated that there were a few thousand people there.

Exact numbers aside, the turnout was huge. The line for the observatory telescope snaked down three flights of stairs. Some lines for the outside telescopes had a 20-minute wait. Even

the binoculars and three telescopes positioned on the rooftop had lines that spanned its width.

Sonny and Becky Bradshaw didn't mind the wait, despite the heat. They said they came because it was the only time they could see the transit in their lifetimes.

"We're seeing it just because it's cool and rare," Sonny Bradshaw said.

"I would have felt like I missed out if I didn't come," Becky Bradshaw said.

Neither Bradshaw expected to see anything spectacular when they finally reached the telescopes, a feeling that was common for a lot of people.

"I know what I'm expecting to see," Angela Bunge, an MU student, said. "I watched the one from 2004 online."

Even seven-year-old Elizabeth Martin knew what she would see.

"I'm excited to see the sun," she said. "I'm going to see some black dots."

Despite low expectations, visitors were still excited to see the transit.

The Appleton family packed 15 people in a van and drove from Fulton just to come to the observatory's public viewing, said Tom Mahaney, who was with them.

Natalie Appleton, 8, Nathaniel Appleton, 7, Michael Appleton, 11, Joel Appleton, 3, and Suzannah Appleton, 10, looked through all three telescopes in the parking lot to see the transit.

They all said it was cool to see. Suzannah said she liked it because it was the last time to see it in 105 years. Michael said he was able to see sunspots through the telescope.

Joel described the size of Venus in the telescope by smashing his forefinger and thumb together and grinning.

"Tiny," he said.

Other observers were more precise in their descriptions. Karen Zipp said she saw a big orange ball with a black dot at about the 7 o'clock position when she looked through the telescope.

She, like Bunge, had seen the transit online, but wanted to see it in person.

"It was nice to see and think of what it really is, Zipp said. "I'm a Christian, and I believe God created Heaven, earth and the planets, and he speaks through it. Venus going in front of the sun is him speaking through this."

One spectator even came prepared with his own equipment. Paden Gentry, an MU student, bought a pair of welder's goggles for the event. He taped an extra number 10 lens on top because his goggles' lenses weren't the NASA-recommended number 14. Using his binoculars, he could just make out Venus on the fuzzy green ball glowing in the lenses.

"If you stare at it long enough, you can see a little dot," Gentry said.

Although he could see the transit through his homemade contraption, he wanted to look through a telescope to see a bigger, clearer version.

As Gentry and other visitors cycled through the different telescopes, the crowds died down, and the sun began to sink towards the horizon.

A hot air balloon floated gently over the observatory as the remaining spectators watched the sun set through their solar glasses.

By 8:15 p.m., just 15 minutes before sunset, sherbet-colored clouds drifted along the horizon, obscuring the sun and the rest of the transit.

As the breeze picked up and the temperatures dropped, astronomers and photographers packed up their equipment, and the remnants of the crowd trickled down the stairs, hanging onto a moment that won't come again in their lifetimes.

Supervising editor is Ann Elise Taylor.