

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Combat vets sue over MU handling of tuition aid

7 hours ago • [BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350](#)

The University of Missouri is being sued by several veterans over the way the school handles a program offering tuition discounts to former combat soldiers.

The lawsuit, filed last week in St. Louis County Court, focuses on the university's interpretation of a state program, created by the Missouri Returning Heroes Education Act. The act limits tuition charges to \$50 per hour for Missouri veterans who served in armed combat after Sept. 1, 2001.

The suit by Alicia Dunn, Adam Chmielik and Benjamin Miller also names the Missouri Coordinating Board for Higher Education.

The lawsuit argues against the way the school applies the combination of financial aid and the Heroes discount to students' bills.

According to the lawsuit, the school first applies a student's gift aid — awards such as Pell Grants, that don't have to be repaid — to the tuition bill. The remaining tuition costs are then discounted to \$50 per credit hour.

The lawsuit, which seeks class action status, contends that gift aid should be divided among all of the costs of attending college — not only tuition.

"Diverting all 'gift aid' funds to pay for tuition damages Missouri combat veterans because it strips them of aid to pay for their entire 'cost of attendance' including room and board, living expenses, books, supplies and transportation," according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit argues that, in effect, the school is collecting a higher tuition rate from veterans than is allowed under the Heroes Act.

A spokeswoman for the university issued a statement saying the school adheres to all requirements related to veterans benefits.

"We respect and value our veteran students and determine their benefits under the statute in a manner consistent with the guidance of (the state)," said Jennifer Hollingshead, director of public relations and marketing for the University of Missouri system.

Kathryn Love, spokeswoman for the Coordinating Board, said that the agency has not yet been able to review the lawsuit but that any litigation would be handled by the attorney general's office.

The same plaintiffs filed a similar suit in February 2011; it was dismissed in December.

Different policies regulate college student contact data

By ALLISON PRANG

Area schools' policies

- Under the "KU Student Records Policy," here is what's considered student directory information: name, address and phone number; permanent address and phone number; email address; year in school; enrollment status; athletes' height and weight; attendance dates; awards and degrees earned; and the most recent former school a student has attended, according to its website.

- According to Kansas State University's "Student Records Policy," here is what's considered to be directory information (noted that it's in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act): name, address and phone number; permanent address and phone number; birthday and birth location; a photograph; college curriculum; enrollment status; year in school; attendance dates; awards; academic honors and degrees earned; most recent former school a student has attended; and the height and weight of athletes.

- **According to the University of Missouri system's website, directory information includes name, address, phone number, email address, major, dates of attendance, year in school, awards and degrees earned, enrollment status, the most recent school a student has attended and whether a student is an athlete.**

If you're a student at a Kansas college or university, you don't need to worry about your school giving your contact information to companies that want to sell you their products or services.

It's illegal.

But if you're a student at a college or university in Missouri, you just might need to be concerned.

Companies and outside organizations frequently request broad lists of directory information from schools

In Missouri there are no prohibitions against using it for marketing aimed at students. Companies and organizations that ask for the information include test preparation, graduation announcement and textbook businesses.

In Kansas, though directory information is still considered a public record, the state Open Records Acts bars people from using it for solicitations.

Directory information traditionally includes items such as a student's name, major, email address, street address and phone number.

But states and schools across the country have different policies governing when directory information can be released and how it can be used.

Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, schools can pick and choose what, if anything, they will stipulate as directory information. Many schools also have online directories where people can search for someone associated with the university and obtain their contact information.

Many college students contacted by The Star didn't know that outside parties could get their directory information. Many also didn't know that, according to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, schools are required to tell them they are allowed to opt out of having it made public to anyone.

At some schools, the issue is dealt with at freshman student orientation and quickly forgotten. Or the notification is simply handled on a website.

Chelsea Jones, a KU sophomore majoring in strategic communications, said she didn't remember the university telling students that opting out was an option.

"I didn't even know that existed," she said of student directory information. "I think it should be kept private. I guess it would be wiser if students knew that it was public."

The situation became more confusing this year when the U.S. Education Department revised the privacy act. Although individual schools have always been allowed to make policies dictating what they consider public directory information, the revision allows schools to stipulate who they give this information to.

In other words, they can now play "favorites," said Frank LoMonte, the director of the Student Press Law Center in Washington.

"What is new as of the most recent regulations," LoMonte said in an email, "is that the schools can selectively disclose directory information to certain recipients and withhold it from others."

According to a news release from the Education Department last spring, it made some revisions to the act to improve schools' power to "safeguard student privacy."

"Schools will be able to implement directory information policies that limit access to student records, preventing marketers or criminals from accessing the data," it stated.

The revision regarding directory information has spurred legal action. The Electronic Privacy and Information Center sued the Education Department in February, contending that the department couldn't act without Congress' approval.

LoMonte said the revision raised the question of whether governmental bodies are allowed to make records public for certain people and keep them from others.

Kansas State University, the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri campuses say they comply with the act and don't plan on changing their policies anytime soon to selectively release information.

Dissecting the laws

According to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, what schools identify as directory information may include the name, address, phone number, birth date and place, major, participation in official sports or activities, athletes' heights and weights, attendance dates, awards and degrees earned and the most recent former school a student has attended.

State open records laws also come into play, and they often vary. The Kansas Open Records Act says that "no person shall knowingly see, give or receive for the purpose of selling or offering for sale any property or service to persons listed therein, any list of names and addresses contained or derived from public records."

KU spokeswoman Jill Jess said KU declined requests on that basis. Jess noted that KU still had a searchable directory on its website, where people could search contact information for individual students and employees, but that there was a disclaimer explaining the policy prohibiting using the information for solicitations.

K-State spokeswoman Erinn Barcomb-Peterson said people requesting directory information were referred to the online directory where, as at KU, people can search for individuals associated with the university by name. She said those who requested bulk lists of directory information were instead directed to the university's online searchable directory.

Missouri Attorney General's Office spokeswoman Nanci Gonder said the Missouri Sunshine Law has no provisions against using directory information for solicitation purposes. But when people from the Attorney General's Office have educated local government officials on the law, using that information for solicitations has been brought up as a concern.

The University of Missouri system usually charges \$150 for each request for bulk lists, Robert Schwartz, the University of Missouri system's custodian of records, said in an email.

Schwartz said that the system's Board of Curators was responsible for determining what is considered student directory information. He said the board's most recent revision to this policy took place in 2009, when the board decided to stop including a student's birthday, place of birth, and athlete's height and weight as public directory information.

Requesting the records

To get an idea of the types of companies are seeking student data, The Kansas City Star obtained all of the open records requests for directory information submitted in 2012 to KU, K-State, and the University of Missouri campuses in Columbia and Kansas City.

The companies and organizations that requested information varied by school, but they included Kaplan Test Prep and Admissions, Freeman Signature Announcements, Blink Textbooks, Dorm Room Movers, Stoney Creek Inn in Columbia, the International Dean's List Society, Legends Place Apartments, a graduate student, Campus Direct, Peak Campus Management and a KU residential hall.

The University of Missouri schools and KU received six requests so far in 2012. K-State received two.

Most of the companies that requested this information did not respond to requests for comment.

John Yeung of Campus Direct declined to comment on why Campus Direct requested students' directory information from KU.

Amy Swofford, assistant manager at Legends Place Apartments under Peak Campus Management, requested student directory information from the KU, but said she was told by the university it was not going to provide her the information.

Opting to opt out

For many schools, students can go into their online student accounts and opt out of having their directory information be made public.

But like many students, KU junior chemical engineering major Brian Yang said he wasn't sure whether he had opted out. He said, however, that he didn't have an issue with having his name and something like his email public, since most people's information is out there already.

MU junior biology major Raven Wright said she was given the rundown on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act when she became a residential life staff member. If students inquire about it, she said, staff members can then explain it.

Though Wright said she also remembered being told about being able to make your information private when she was a freshman, she said she didn't care at the time to opt out of having it made public. She said she didn't know that information was given out to "businesses and stuff."

K-State spokesman Jeff Morris said the school's policy on student data was based on what information is most commonly requested. He said the university's goal was to be as transparent as possible while protecting student privacy. Students are notified that they can opt when they come to orientation.

"It has not been a point of controversy because the students have the ability to opt out," he said.

Alexis Lundy, a junior majoring family and consumer science education at K-State, said she remembered being told about student directory information but never knew she could opt out.

"I didn't even know that was an option to be able to do."

Tom Atkins creates Tiger Town USA brand for city



TIGER TOWN USA

Atkins Inc.

Tom Atkins, chairman of Atkins Investments and a former UM curator, has hired lawyers to copyright his Tiger Town USA logo.

Welcome to Tiger Town USA.

That's the sign Tom Atkins, chairman of Atkins Investments and a former University of Missouri curator, wants to see hanging across Broadway on Boone Hospital Center's pedestrian bridge on Sept. 8 when MU hosts its first Southeastern Conference opponent, the University of Georgia.

But those signs, Atkins hopes, will only be the kickoff for a new city slogan, a brand much like St. Louis is the Gateway City or New Orleans is the Big Easy. Atkins sees "Tiger Town USA" becoming a logo for Columbia, helping outsiders identify it just as MU garners national attention as the newcomer to the SEC and the community's reputation as a hardworking, growing city builds. He has hired lawyers to copyright the logo, and he wants to use it to fund a not-for-profit to fund marketing efforts for Columbia and support the city and its higher education institutions.

"I've been telling a hell of a lot of people what's gonna happen, and every one of them uses the same two words: 'great idea,'" Atkins said.

It's not just a football weekend promotion or a pitch for the University of Missouri, Atkins said. And it doesn't have anything to do with the failed effort, also dubbed Tiger Town, to set up a downtown party

zone on certain game day weekends. It's a slogan Atkins is angling to get the community to adopt beyond this season.

With connections in the local business community, state government and MU, not to mention plenty of financial resources, Atkins' push might have momentum.

"I think it's a great idea," Mayor Bob McDavid said. "I think anything that distinguishes your community is always a good thing. And we are obviously associated and identified with the University of Missouri."

Atkins hopes to enlist the help of local businesses, who can license the logo for use on letterhead or apparel. Any proceeds from the copyright would be put into a not-for-profit that reinvests the money into marketing campaigns or donates to the city's higher education institutions.

"I want people, on their envelopes, to put their name and address, but below that, put Tiger Town USA," Atkins said. "I want them to end their emails with Tiger Town USA."

Atkins said he has spoken with university officials who have indicated the logo would not infringe on any MU copyrights. MU spokesman Christian Basi said the university has phrases such as "Mizzou" and "Missouri Tigers" registered, but there is no problem with an individual copyrighting "Tiger Town USA."

As of yesterday, though, Atkins had not spoken with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, which has a parallel marketing campaign for the city. The CVB recently hired Woodruff Sweitzer and True Media for the push, and it plans to roll out TV commercials next year that will attempt to get Columbia "out in front" of cities in the SEC, CVB Director Amy Schneider said.

"It's going to take our advertising and take our marketing up a step," she said of contracting with Woodruff Sweitzer. "Eventually, the Convention and Visitors Bureau will have to be rebranded, but that's not in the near future."

Still, Atkins is moving ahead with Tiger Town USA, and he said he is willing to work with the city on a brand. While he hopes the logo sticks, he said the city "had to move" to take advantage of the media attention it will garner during MU's inaugural season in the SEC.

"You only get that one chance to make a good first impression," he said. "Our first chance is Sept. 8, and I'm going to maximize everything in my power to make it bigger and better."



Jurors in Apple suit hear Fidler's tablet story

By Janese Silvey

Thursday, August 16, 2012

A Columbia man this week provided testimony that could shatter Apple's claims that Samsung stole its idea for a tablet computer.

Roger Fidler is director for digital publishing at the University of Missouri's Reynolds Journalism Institute. He testified in writing and on video about the idea he pitched nearly 20 years ago for a tablet-size interactive device he believed would one day replace printed newspapers.

Last year, Apple filed a federal lawsuit alleging Samsung violated its intellectual property rights. Apple is claiming at least \$2.5 billion in damage for patent and trade infringement, the San Francisco Chronicle reported this week. In the lawsuit, the company contends that its 2007 iPod touch and 2010 iPad were revolutionary and radical ideas and that Samsung chose to "slavishly copy Apple's innovative technology, distinctive user interfaces and elegant and distinctive product and packaging design."

Fidler unveiled a proposed tablet not unlike the iPad in a video produced in 1994. At the time, he was working at a Knight Ridder lab in Colorado with a team of journalists and designers who were studying the future of newspapers. Knight Ridder wasn't interested in patenting an idea for a tablet, he said, but rather was working with computer companies to try to get it on the market so newspapers would have a new way to deliver content.

"We were eager to get other companies to make it," Fidler told the Tribune. "We wanted to be the content providers. ... We assumed there would be a number of companies making tablets. My role, I felt, was to be an evangelist for the concept, anticipating that such a device would be a logical development as an alternative to ink on paper."

Fidler's video testimony was shown to the jury on Tuesday, the Chronicle reported, and he also provided written comments that were recorded during a deposition in Columbia. Samsung had asked him to testify in person, but Fidler said he did not think it would be appropriate. He and colleagues at MU's Reynolds Journalism Institute have ongoing partnerships with Apple and did not want to jeopardize those relationships.

He also stressed that he merely provided facts.

"I have nothing against Apple," Fidler said. "I'm a fan of Apple products, and all along I've not made any claims to be the inventor of iPad or that my ideas were stolen by Apple. The tablet I created in 1994 and the video we created, it is what it is. It's up to the jury to decide whether or not what we produced in 1994 would have any influence on invalidating the Apple patent."

Asked whether he thinks the idea should have been patented, Fidler said the iPad has unique characteristics but that the patent itself is vague.

"I've seen the patent, and based on the drawings that were included, I think the concept was not a unique concept," he said. "Very little detail was provided in that patent other than providing a shape, a rectangle with round corners, that is flat and appeared to be something relatively thin. That in itself, I think, was not sufficient to justify a patent."



Frontier to offer flights to Orlando

By Andrew Denney

MU MENTION P. 2

Columbia Regional Airport has picked up a second airline and will offer nonstop flights to Orlando, Fla., starting Nov. 20, raising its number of direct destinations to three.

Frontier Airlines will offer 4:15 p.m. Tuesday and 10:25 a.m. Saturday flights to Orlando. The carrier is a new addition for the Columbia airport, which now only has service from Delta Air Lines. Delta offers flights to its international hubs in Atlanta and Memphis, Tenn.

At a news conference this morning, Mayor Bob McDavid said the low rates offered on Frontier's 138-seat jets could help to make Columbia Regional Airport more competitive with airports in Kansas City and St. Louis. An introductory rate of \$79 each way per ticket will be available through Aug. 25, according to a news release from Frontier.

"When you consider the cost of flying, this is a game-changer for the city of Columbia," McDavid said. But he said the city is considering speeding up plans to expand the airport terminal because it currently is not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and is running low on space to handle increasing numbers of passengers.

The city recently added a double-wide trailer to the terminal to increase available space.

"You know, this is a crisis," McDavid said. "We don't want to be the one, single city in the Southeastern Conference that has a black-and-gold double-wide that welcomes you to Columbia."

Public Works Director John Glascock said the airport will coordinate arrival times for the two air carriers to ensure there is adequate space in the terminal for passengers. But he said the terminal will need to be expanded if it is to be able to handle passenger loads from additional flights. "Toss another one on there, it's going to get tough," Glascock said.

At this point last year, Memphis was the only destination offered from Columbia Regional Airport. In the following month, Delta removed a midday flight to the hub, citing rising fuel costs. But after local leaders turned their sights to the airport as a possible engine for economic growth in the region, a flight to the international hub in Atlanta was added. Travelers expressed a preference for Atlanta over Memphis, and as a result, starting Sept. 5, all but one of Delta's daily flights from Columbia will go to Atlanta.

McDavid said the city did not need to make a revenue guarantee to Frontier to attract the new destination. In his proposed budget for fiscal year 2013, Columbia City Manager Mike Matthes wrote that a revenue guarantee of \$3 million could help to double the available service at the airport and that the city, the Boone County government, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, the Jefferson City municipal government and the University of Missouri have expressed a willingness to chip in.

Frontier also announced it would be adding service to Orlando from Shenandoah Valley, Va.