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The Tribune's View

Role and Scope

The eternal quest for reallocation

By Henry J. Waters III

Seasoned observers of the higher education scene will remember "Role and Scope," the contentious plan launched by former University of Missouri President Brice Ratchford to reallocate areas of emphasis to the various campuses in his system.

It was a good idea but brought feverish opposition from partisans who thought the plan did something to de-emphasize their favorites.

From time to time, a new milquetoast version of Role and Scope emerges as new campus managers rediscover the essential good sense of allocating programs to focus on strengths and weed out weaknesses. Just as often, the effort bogs down.

A major reallocation effort during the presidency of Jim Olsen blew up in then-Chancellor Barbara Uehling's face when she tried to implement a plan ordered by the Board of Curators to be implemented by Olsen. By the time the bombs quit bursting, Uehling was left alone trying to perform the duty ordered but abandoned by the board and president.

These political failures do nothing to diminish the wisdom of properly allocating functions and resources throughout the system. Every successful enterprise should do this. Campus leaders fresh from private industry have allocation and reallocation inbred from past experience but learn the hard way how much harder it is in the public, or even the private, university setting.

However, UM President Tim Wolfe is giving it another try. Building on efforts under way when he arrived, Wolfe recently informed curators he wants each campus to be "best in class" by defining "what piece of the marketplace you want to be in." This will require tradeoffs, Wolfe said without being specific.

Meaning in more gentle language this is the same process ordered for Uehling and Co. back when each campus was told to find 15 percent of programs it could do without, the process that caused so much furor.

A later version pushed by successor Chancellor Charles Keisler was more subtle. Keisler sought to fund favored programs more lavishly, leaving others to wither on the vine instead of cutting

them outright. I likened it back then to a wagon train crossing the desert with some pulled by horses given adequate food and others allowed to drop out along the way.

Of course, as you might imagine, Keisler's plan disappeared when he did.

These efforts always are driven by budgetary stress. Exigency, implying a life-threatening shortage of cash, is about the only ready excuse university leaders can use to cut programs. Lacking such a dire message to send, UM and other institutions still complain about perennial underfunding from state legislators, many of whom simply think higher education can get by with less. These narrow minds simply want to reduce spending instead of rewarding institutional efforts to spend more wisely.

This column has reiterated that reallocation would be a good idea regardless of current financial situation merely because it would allow certain areas of emphasis to achieve lofty status otherwise elusive when dollars are spread so thin. Meaningful reallocation would be evidence for legislatures of wise spending. More prominent pillars of excellence would help make the case. Now such progress depends mostly on outside grants of less consistent nature.

The state does make campuses jump through hoops to launch new programs, but unraveling the web of the past is pursued mainly with lip service. Big, comprehensive campuses such as MU suffer from constant pressure to be all things, trying in vain to be above average in all programs — like the people of Lake Wobegone.

No doubt Wolfe and his curators have the right idea but are leery of pushing too fast. Officers of longer standing on the campuses are explaining the need to step carefully. Many gave up long ago. Others want to preserve their current middling status rather than risk changes in funding patterns.

All this is understandable but anathema to the best assignment of resources.

Ratchford was the first over the top into the minefield, teaching his successors what they might be in for. From his grave, Ratchford would counsel caution for the next foray, but given his feisty character, he probably would urge one more try.

HJW III

CAMPUS CHATTER

JANESE SILVEY



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Role & Scope & Wolfe's Advantage

By [Janese Silvey](#)

Walking away from the University of Missouri Board of Curators meeting this week, I asked System President Tim Wolfe whether he'd ever heard of "role and scope."

He said yes and quickly clarified that the [strategic plan](#) he'd just outlined was not the same thing.

Maybe not, but I'm not the only one who drew the comparison. Without any discussion about it with me, Tribune publisher emeritus Hank Waters penned this column today titled, you guessed it, "[Role and Scope](#)."

Waters, of course, has much more historical context than I do. As he explains in his column, former UM President Brice Ratchford attempted to implement campus-specific roles and limit each campus's scope to fit those roles — an effort that failed but has been attempted again and again by eager new UM leaders.

I won't try to rehash Hank's [column](#). Just read it. I'll wait ...

Mary Ratchford-Douglass, daughter of the former president, was nice enough to email (without any prodding or request from me) a 1972 document outlining Ratchford's Role and Scope plan. I compared his plan with the recent materials given to the curators. Here are some excerpts from each.

Role & Scope

Only by making the four campuses a single university and by determining where and to what extent various academic programs can hereafter best be offered will the University of Missouri continue to be a place where teaching, research and extension truly thrive.

The University will be comprehensive and each campus will have some unique university responsibilities, especially at the advanced professional and doctoral levels. Each will have a range of programs but it is not intended that each campus will be comprehensive in scope.

The University of Missouri must strive to meet the expectations and needs of Missouri's citizens and of the scholarly world within budget and philosophic realities. Available funds, staff and facilities must be used in the most efficient manner.

Consideration for students will have a major effect on academic decisions. Programs will be made as accessible to the students as possible. The university intends to eliminate barriers that restrict the students' ability to transfer or move from campus to campus.

Within its designated role, each campus shall propose an academic plan for carrying out its responsibilities."

New Strategic Plan

"The campuses, in collaboration with system administration, will identify specific, strategic areas of opportunity where the campuses can become the very best in the world. These areas of opportunity may be financial (e.g. leader in cost efficiency) or related to the core mission of the campuses (i.e. education, research, economic development). These strategic areas of opportunity will be described in the campus strategic plans and system administration and campus leaders will be accountable for achievement of the targeted outcomes.

In general, system administration will deploy system resources (financial, human or other) where they are likely to have the greatest impact in the least amount of time. System administration will encourage campuses to do the same with campus resources, and will advise campuses on effective resource use.

System administration, in collaboration with the campuses, will identify, develop and diffuse best practices across the campuses. System administration will monitor the campuses' progress toward strategic objectives and hold campus leaders accountable for performance. In addition, system administration will identify new activities it can take on to gain economies of scale or scope across campuses and improve quality or efficiency."

And if you read the list of questions Wolfe is asking, you also might see some comparable suggestions, such as whether campuses target the same customers and how interdependent campuses should be.

There have been more recent attempts to narrow each campus's scope, and, as you read in Waters' column, they failed.

But things have happened in recent years that might make the time ripe for campus-specific plans, and in some ways the campuses themselves have paved the way for the discussion.

First, a little personal history. In 1994, fresh out of Newburg High School and scared to leave the comforts of home, I enrolled at UM-Rolla, which at the time was encouraging English degree-seekers like me to attend. I dropped out after a semester that included general education courses in which professors focused on engineering.

Today, the Rolla campus knows what it is and has the name — Missouri University of Science & Technology — to prove it.

Over on the west side, UM-Kansas City also is coming to terms with its identity as a university that trains workers in Kansas City. Chancellor Leo Morton is exploring the possibility of changing his campus's name to the University of Kansas City to better reflect that.

If that happens, I wouldn't be surprised if UM-St. Louis, which would be the only campus left with the city tag, followed suit in an effort to clear up any misconceptions that it's a branch of MU.

And then there's MU which finalized a strategic plan late last year centered on Mizzou Advantage, the initiative aimed to highlight the campus's strengths: medicine, media, energy, food.

While that sounds like it fits right in with Wolfe's goals, it's also the case that not all MU professors are fans of Mizzou Advantage.

If Wolfe's strategizing process offers alternatives to that plan, some of the flagship campus's most vocal and critical professors would listen.

Combined with a faculty concerned about MU administrators not sharing governance with them, Mizzou Advantage might actually work to Wolfe's advantage.

University of Missouri leaders support tobacco tax

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The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- A November ballot measure to significantly raise Missouri's tobacco tax to increase public education spending is drawing financial support from leaders of the state's flagship university and the other Missouri system campuses.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported Tuesday that the campaign donors in favor of the Proposition B ballot measure include University of Missouri curator Warren Erdman, who contributed \$5,000. His company, Kansas City Southern Railway Co., gave \$25,000.

Other contributors include university system president Tim Wolfe, with a \$1,000 donation; and chancellors from three of the system's four campuses.

The ballot item would raise Missouri's cigarette tax to 90 cents a pack. The 17-cent tax is the lowest nationally; the national average is \$1.46.

The proposal could generate between \$283 million and \$423 million annually, with 50 percent of the additional revenue pegged for public schools and 30 percent to higher education. The remaining 20 percent would go toward smoking prevention and cessation.

The measure is supported by health organizations including the American Cancer Society, the American Lung Association and the American Heart Association.

This will be the third time in a decade that a measure seeking to increase tobacco taxes has appeared on the statewide ballot. In 2002, Missourians defeated a 55-cent increase by roughly 31,000 votes and did the same in 2006, rejecting an 80-cent increase by about 61,000 votes.

Missourians for Health and Education, the ballot measure's backer, reported raising more than \$2.8 million in the third quarter of the campaign, giving the group a campaign total of more than \$4 million.



Ideas abound as panel plans future of UM Press

By Janese Silvey

A 21-member committee is trying to determine what types of books the University of Missouri Press should publish in the future now that the press is staying open for the foreseeable future.

That's one of the new charges of a UM Press Advisory Committee. Originally, the group was formed to help administrators transition the press from the UM System to the MU campus, but that transition has already happened.

The committee met for the first time yesterday and spent about two hours figuring out how to move forward after the university scrapped its plan to close the press. Although some members of the group said the primary concern right now is restoring the press operations, others said the committee should be figuring out how the press should evolve in a changing market.

That includes determining what types of manuscripts the press should be accepting. Right now, many books on the UM Press backlist are biographies and historical in nature. UM President Tim Wolfe and Board of Curators Chairman David Bradley have criticized the press for not publishing more manuscripts from MU authors.

Craig Roberts, a plant sciences professor on the committee, said it seems "odd" that more MU authors aren't on the backlist.

"We're sitting here in content central," he said. "The content is right here at the university, why do we not have it" published through the UM Press? "Other publishing houses, they come in here and poach our authors. Content is slipping through our fingers."

But Michael O'Brien, dean of MU's College of Arts & Science and an author, said he believes it's a strength that the UM Press has a national pool of authors. "I'm not interested in a backyard press, and that's not what it is," he said.

Plus, there are other university presses in Missouri with a more regional focus, said Gary Kremer, director of the Missouri State Historical Society and a committee member.

Right now, content decisions are made by a separate UM Press Committee, which will now be referred to as the editorial board.

The new Press Advisory Committee also plans to study how press operations could be merged with MU's teaching and research missions. Provost Brian Foster envisions a focus on scholarly

communication through Mizzou Advantage's Media of the Future initiative, which would bring together those from MU Libraries, the School of Journalism and the creative writing department. Foster also wants to see a graduate-level program that lets students study the future of scholarly communication.

Foster plans to create a third group that would lend expertise to press staff. That "board of visitors" would include professionals from the book publishing world as well as companies that specialize in delivering online content.

Susan Flader, an MU professor emeritus of history, said she's worried about overwhelming the staff right now with new ideas. "We're loading an awful lot on a few people who are trying to fight for the survival of the press," she said. "Let's make sure it's rebuilt and survives."

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Panel lauds UM Press editor, calls work a 'small miracle'

By Janese Silvey

Back in his editor-in-chief role at the University of Missouri Press, Clair Willcox is managing to calm fears among authors who previously were asking for the rights to their books back.

Since he got his job back Oct. 5, Willcox has contacted 60 people, and "every author and series editor I've talked to has agreed to keep working with us," he told a press advisory committee yesterday.

Willcox was laid off this summer as part of the now-abandoned plan to close the 54-year-old press. UM President Tim Wolfe said in May the press would be phased out starting in July but scrapped those plans after backlash that included dozens of authors who wanted to take their books elsewhere.

In August, Wolfe said the press would remain open but would be transferred from the UM System to the MU campus. Supporters of the press said they wouldn't be happy unless Willcox was rehired.

MU Chancellor Emeritus Richard Wallace — largely credited for Willcox's return — said he had confidence in Willcox's ability to restore the press, "but what you accomplished in a short time is truly remarkable; a small miracle."

Not all damage from the months-long controversy can be undone, though. Longtime Missouri Congressman Ike Skelton's memoir, originally expected to be printed by Missouri's press, now is being published elsewhere.

And "there's no point in pretending" there will be a UM Press catalog in the spring of 2013, Willcox said.

Typically, the press has two seasonal books lists, but staff members are too far behind to acquire enough manuscripts and edit them in time for what would have been the next collection, Willcox said. Right now, he's the only acquisitions editor there: John Brenner, the other editor in charge of acquiring manuscripts for the press, accepted a job at the Missouri State Historical Society in anticipation of the expected closure.

Willcox is making progress on a list for next fall, though. He has three previously accepted manuscripts, two of which had to be released from other presses that accepted them when the UM Press was facing closure. There are another eight to 10 manuscripts in various stages of review, and some previously published books could be reprinted in paperback, he said.

Over the past four years, there typically have been about 15 books per catalog, so "that's a respectable number of books for fall 2013," said Mel George, UM president emeritus, who is chairman of the press advisory committee.

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theman eater

MU professors partner with RJI in Twitter analysis

By Claire Boston

Among the 65.6 million Americans who tuned into the second presidential debate Tuesday night were a team of MU researchers who were as glued to their laptops as they were to the TV.

The researchers, who were working in the Reynolds Journalism Institute's Microsoft Application Development Lab, are studying the use of social media during presidential debates.

As candidates Mitt Romney and Barack Obama gave opening remarks, the team, including professors and graduate students, listened to the candidates but were eagerly waiting to see how viewers would react on Twitter.

Mitchell McKinney and Brian Houston, fellows at the institute and associate professors of communication, are trying to make sense of the chorus of tweets. They are heading a team of graduate student researchers in order to study how debate viewers use Twitter to respond to candidates' performances. The professors and researchers will study all three presidential debates as well as the vice presidential debate.

The professors hope to eventually use the tweets to study how social media usage affects political engagement.

"There seems to be something going on where this capacity to use social media while watching these events is engaging, getting people to pay attention and getting people to participate in a way that we haven't had before," Houston said. "That seems to be quite promising."

The team kept an eye on the computer monitor that displayed Greenwich Mean Time as they listened for 'zingers' that might excite Twitter users. When President Obama brought up Big Bird, a reference to Romney's plan to cut PBS funding, a team member groaned as he waited for another spike in tweets. Romney's Oct. 3 mention of Big Bird brought in 21,124 tweets, making it the most tweeted-about moment of the first debate.

In addition to examining national trends, the research team has partnered with the Dallas Morning News, the Seattle Times and the Florida Times Union in Jacksonville, Fla., to specifically study tweets sent from these areas. Each newspaper has its own hashtag, which it promotes to its readers. The researchers analyze tweets with the newspaper hashtags, compare the regional tweets with national trends and then send reports on regional tweet activity back to each newspaper.

As the debate began, researchers were excited as tweets containing the Dallas hashtag, #DMNdebate, poured in almost immediately. They continued to flow steadily throughout the 90-minute debate. By the end of the night, Dallas had sent 979 tweets.

The partnership with newspapers in Texas, Washington and Florida was deliberately set up so the team could examine how tweets in a Republican-dominated state, a Democrat-dominated state and a swing state might differ. So far, the professors have found that certain topics excite tweeters in certain regions more than others.

During Tuesday's debate, tweeters in Dallas sent the most tweets about gas prices, while nationwide gas prices were the second most tweeted about topic. In Jacksonville, a comment Romney made about China generated the biggest response of the night. Nationwide, Obama's 47 percent remark at the end of the debate excited Twitter users the most, according to the researchers' latest summary of findings.

McKinney said tweets nationwide are sometimes less serious than tweets coming from specific regions.

"Some of the national spikes tend to be more around off-the-cuff moments that may be regarded as humorous," he said. "In the local communities, they tend to stick more to issue discussion."

The researchers are particularly interested in tweets and conversations that focus on campaign issues, but those tweets can be hard to find amid reactionary tweets that dominate the national feed.

"(Reaction tweets) are the easiest thing to see," Houston said. "The challenge is to try to dig deeper and find instances and examples of when people are really talking about policies and proposals related to the debate."

To sift through the millions of tweets sent during each debate, the team uses Topsy and DataSift, two data mining programs that allow users to track and analyze specific terms and hashtags.

At the debate's conclusion, the team gave tweeters three minutes to tweet final thoughts, and then stopped collecting data. Though the programs stopped running, the researchers were just beginning their jobs for the night. They immediately began to search for the terms that made their feeds explode that night: pensions, women and Libya, among many others. Each word that produced a spike was recorded, along with the time that the spike occurred and the number of tweets it produced. The information would be used in the next day's reports.

McKinney and Houston said they were both surprised by the volume of tweets sent at each debate. Nationally, Twitter reported that more than 10 million tweets were sent during the first presidential debate, and more than 7 million were sent in the second.

"The overall levels of activity have been huge," Houston said. "It probably isn't surprising ... but it is impressive nonetheless."