Transparency key for new MU budget chief

By Janese Silvey

The next budget director at the University of Missouri plans to preserve the office's reputation of being transparent and making fiscal information accessible to anyone who wants it.

Rhonda Gibler is replacing Tim Rooney, who as MU budget director is known for giving easy-to-understand financial presentations to faculty and community groups. Rooney is retiring at the end of the year. "The way Tim helped people understand the university's financial situation was admirable and something I want to continue," she said.

Like her predecessor, Gibler has spent the bulk of her career at the university. Her first job was as a teaching assistant while she was pursuing a master's degree. She then worked in accounts payable at the University Bookstore, where she eventually became store manager.

After a short stint with the state, Gibler returned to the university in 1997 as an assistant director of administrative management for MU Extension. She's been tacking on additional duties ever since.

"I've found the university an amazing place to grow and learn as a professional," she said.

Gibler is associate vice provost for extension management, where she's responsible for finances, communications, human resources and other administrative duties.

In a statement, Chancellor Brady Deaton said Gibler's experience with budget issues, including travel policies, financial planning and grants, gives her an edge when she transfers to the campus's top fiscal office. "We are fortunate that she possesses not only the budgetary and management skills but that she also brings vast institutional knowledge that is invaluable for this position," he said.

Raised in rural Missouri with six siblings, Gibler said one of her most notable strengths is the ability to mediate. "I have an analytical mind, and I also love people, so I like to resolve issues," she said.

Gibler has spent the past several weeks with Rooney learning the ropes to make sure the transition is a smooth one.
She also has some ideas of her own but wants to make sure they’re feasible before moving forward. She said her ultimate goal is to leave an impact and "to try to make something better than it was before."

Gibler and her husband, Kevin, have three children.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
Missouri AD: Pinkel will be back for 2013 season

By Dave Matter

After the football program's first losing season in eight years, Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden said Coach Gary Pinkel will be back next season.

"Of course. Absolutely," Alden said Monday, two days after the Tigers' season concluded with a 59-29 loss at Texas A&M, dropping MU to 5-7 and out of the bowl picture for the first time since 2004.

Asked if he ever doubted Pinkel would return for a 13th season at Missouri, Alden answered simply, "No."

Alden said he and Pinkel have talked since Saturday's loss but will wait before having a formal postseason evaluation. Whenever they do discuss the future, Alden will not suggest changes to Pinkel's coaching staff, he said.

"I don't ever do that," Alden said. "My thing is you want to empower your head coaches to do what they do, to run their programs the way that's consistent with our core values. Gary does a great job with that."

Alden said he's not aware of any possible changes to a staff that includes six assistants who have been with Pinkel for 17 years. Seven of Pinkel's nine coaches also worked under him at Toledo, including offensive and defensive coordinators David Yost and Dave Steckel, who were promoted from position coaches after the 2008 season.

Pinkel is scheduled to hold a press conference at 8:30 Tuesday morning to look back on the season and discuss the 2013 season, according to a news release MU issued on Monday.

Pinkel, 90-61, in 12 seasons at MU, led the Tigers to seven consecutive winning seasons and seven straight bowl trips heading into this year, Missouri's first as a member of the Southeastern Conference. Injuries along the offensive line and multiple injuries to quarterback James Franklin helped contribute to a 2-6 record in a brutal league schedule that included games against five teams ranked in the top 10 of the current BCS standings. But it was four-point home losses to Vanderbilt and Syracuse that will be remembered as blown chances to extend the team's bowl streak.

"I have a lot of confidence in Coach Pinkel," Alden said. "I don't have any question about that. Are we disappointed? Yeah. That's absolutely disappointing. We want to be able to get back to
bowl games. We're used to going to bowl games. We're used to winning games. There's been quite a few challenges, and we're disappointed.

"But certainly, with Gary, we're going to do everything we can to keep supporting him and do everything he needs to make sure he has the tools necessary to continue to build the program. We never questioned that."

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Missouri's Pinkel and staff still searching for SEC respect

By Mike Vorel
November 26, 2012 | 9:03 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — On July 17, Gary Pinkel stood alone behind a lectern. He faced a room full of skeptics, their microphones jabbing in at him, their lights reflecting off of the sweat gathering on his forehead.

For the first time — it wouldn’t be the last — they asked him questions about his style, his resume and his team’s ability to compete.

Pinkel, wearing a black suit and a gold and black striped tie, stared straight ahead. The SEC logo, also printed in gold, was stamped all over a blue backdrop that hung directly behind him.

Here, during Pinkel’s first news conference under the SEC spotlight, he made no shocking promises. He didn’t predict his team’s future record, or boast about what his uptempo spread offense would do to unassuming defenses that had rarely faced that style of play.

He sat there, among his critics and future opponents, and acknowledged the challenges ahead. He knew then, just as he knows now, that the only way to turn heads and make believers in this conference is to win.

“The only way you’re going to get respect is winning games, OK? That’s the way it’s going to happen,” Pinkel said. “I’ve got no problem with that. You have to prove yourself.”


After a 5-7 season that resulted in Missouri being left out of postseason play for the first time since 2004, Pinkel and his staff are going back to the drawing board. Pinkel will assess each aspect of the program in offseason evaluations, which will determine whether that staff remains the same next season.
"I look at everybody in our program," Pinkel said Monday on KTGR Radio's "Tiger Talk." "If you can't fit into our program, I'll make a change."

Missouri's coaches were constantly challenged this season, having to adjust to an entirely new cast of opponents and steady injuries to key cogs at quarterback and in the offensive line. Whether those coaches have been under more pressure in the team's first season in the SEC, though, is up to interpretation.

"I think they're under pressure every year. In the SEC and in the Big 12, you have to win. Everybody wants you to win," offensive lineman Elvis Fisher said. "It is a business."

On Saturday night, Pinkel faced another group of skeptics — this time in a cramped interview room next to the equipment shed just outside Kyle Field. After Missouri's season-ending 59-29 loss to fellow Big 12-castoff Texas A&M, he assured the media that while the season had ended, he will continue to go to work.

"On Monday, I go to work and do what I do — focus on the program," Pinkel said. "This isn't the time to talk about the whole season, and not going to a bowl game and everything. I just don't really feel like talking about it right now." He felt a little more like talking Monday night, as Pinkel described the motivation he has to continue winning on a high level.

"When we fall off that (high level), you don't think that destroys me? That's my job — to get us back to a bowl game," Pinkel said. "I'm going to work my tail off to get it." Pinkel will speak again to the media Tuesday morning, when he hosts a news conference wrapping up the 2012 season and looking ahead to next year.

The news conference, contrary to the rumors swirling around Twitter over the past few days, will most likely not result in Pinkel announcing his resignation. He will, however, have to outline a plan on how to turn blowout conference losses into SEC wins.

The pressure that comes with the conference is unrelenting, and losses only bring more speculation. Pinkel and his staff will have an entire offseason to make sure a disappointing 2012 season doesn't carry over into 2013. The wins will come, he says, if Missouri can improve — not change — the way it plays football.

"What we do works, OK?" he said Saturday, leaning forward in his chair and pointing firmly ahead. "I'm not about to change anything now." The style of play doesn't have to change. But if Pinkel wants to gain the respect he mentioned in Hoover, Ala., on July 17, the final record better.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UM Press Advisory Committee discusses series possibility, UM Press workings

By Lizzie Johnson
November 26, 2012 | 5:19 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — An advisory committee for the University of Missouri Press discussed the possibility of a series on scholarly communications Monday.

Scholarly communications are broad, Provost Brian Foster explained after the meeting of the Press Advisory Committee and referred to issues such as plagiarism, copyright issues and privacy acts as discussed in books, journals, manuscripts and symposiums. Focusing on scholarly communications would be a way of tapping into a niche the press is missing, MU Director of Libraries James Cogswell said.

Interest in the idea came at least partly from an MU Libraries series of programs on scholarly communications sponsored from 2003 to 2007. Topics included the rising cost of academic journals, copyright issues, privacy acts and adapting to the digital world.

About 100 to 200 people attended the programs, but the series stopped because of a lack of funding, Cogswell said.

The Press Advisory Committee was formed in September to integrate the press with the academic and research missions of MU. Members also discussed the idea of an international conference on scholarly communications in conjunction with the Reynolds Journalism Institute.

For the majority of the meeting, press Consulting Director Jane Lago and Editor-in-Chief Clair Willcox presented an overview on press history, operating, staffing, budget and publishing prospects. The presentation was followed by discussion of different press constituencies, including scholars in fields the press publishes, and faculty members.

Committee discussion of the press editorial board was tabled until the next meeting, which is likely to be in early 2013.
Fiscal cliff threatens scientific research, experts warn

By Jane Stancill and Renee Schoof

CHAPEL HILL, N.C -- Scientists and inventors such as Joe DeSimone will be keeping an eye on the budget deal-making in Washington over the next month, because if negotiators fail to steer the nation away from the fiscal cliff, automatic spending cuts will chop back federal support for scientific research.

"The lifeblood of this country is research and the economic development that flows from that," said DeSimone, an inventor with his name on more than 130 patents and an entrepreneur who has launched several spinoff companies. "This economy is driven by innovation."

President Barack Obama and congressional Republicans are negotiating to try to head off the so-called fiscal cliff – the end of Bush-era tax cuts and the beginning of automatic spending cuts negotiated during the 2011 debt-ceiling debate. Experts say the cliff could mean a new recession. Scientists say its impact could stunt innovation and the future of science in the United States.

Indeed, federally supported science, research and innovation also has resulted in many of the benefits society takes for granted, such as vaccines and lasers, said Steven Fluharty, senior vice provost for research at the University of Pennsylvania, speaking at a recent briefing on Capitol Hill.

DeSimone, who holds chaired professorships in chemistry at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and chemical engineering at N.C. State University, said the possibilities are so catastrophic that political leaders will have to work out a deal.

"We'll take a big hit if the research side gets hammered," said DeSimone, whose work involves applying lithographic fabrication technology from the computer industry to design new medicines and vaccines.

His lab alone typically receives about $2.5 million annually in federal research funding from institutions such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, compared to about $1.5 million in state and private support.

The automatic spending cuts would reduce federal research and development funds by $57.5 billion over the next five years, a reduction of 8.4 percent, according to a study by the American Association for the Advancement of Science.
The impact could be wide ranging, from cancer research to the development of new energy. It could also reduce the recruitment and training of the next generation of scientists.

California, with its large university system and leading role in defense, energy and space exploration research, is the largest recipient of federal research dollars. It would also lose more than any state—$11.3 billion in the first five years of the cutbacks, according to the study. Other states high on the list for federal research funding include Texas, Pennsylvania, Washington and Florida.

"It would absolutely devastate the American scientific community exactly at a time when other countries are investing tremendously," Alan Lesher, chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and executive publisher of its journal, Science, said at the Capitol Hill briefing.

A report by the group said that even without the automatic cuts, spending caps already have begun to depress federal research and development funding. Estimated federal funding for research is currently at its lowest point since 2002, adjusted for inflation.

In the Research Triangle area of North Carolina, the federal research budget is a huge economic engine. With nearly $546 million in federal research and development funding in 2010, UNC-Chapel Hill ranked ninth in the country. With $514 million, Duke University in Durham, a few miles down the road, was 13th.

Meanwhile, North Carolina State in Raleigh is the only university in the country with two National Science Foundation Engineering Research Centers. Together, the three campuses formed the backbone of Research Triangle Park, home to large biotechnology, pharmaceutical and information technology companies.

But other science hubs around the country also would suffer if Congress and the White House can't agree on a way back from the cliff.

"There is hope..., but at this time we must be prepared in case this hits as scheduled in January."
University of Missouri Vice Chancellor for Research Robert Duncan said in an email to faculty last week.

The university estimates that it could lose about $16.7 million per year in federal research grants, or 8.4 percent of its 2011 federal research awards of $196.6 million.

In the Pacific Northwest, the University of Washington received just over $1 billion in federal research grants in 2011, more than any other public university every year since 1974. Automatic cuts would create problems for faculty members seeking funds to maintain their active research programs, but they'd particularly create difficulties for scientists at the beginning of their careers, Mary Lidstrom, the university's vice provost for research, said in an interview.

Funding difficulties already discourage graduate students from pursuing careers in academia and research, she said, adding "If that situation becomes worse, I think the impact on the future of the country in terms of our innovation workforce will be devastating."

Lidstrom said she and others at the school are concerned that the first funding to get cut would be undergraduate research, an important means of mentoring young people in science, technology, engineering and math. About a quarter of the university's undergraduate students have part-time jobs working on research projects.
The budget cuts also would hit the nation's federal research and development centers. Among them: the Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley and Lawrence Livermore national labs in California; Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Richland, Wash.; Idaho National Laboratory; Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois; and the Center for Nuclear Waste Regulatory Analyses in San Antonio, Texas.

DeSimone said he was cautiously optimistic that fiscal cliff could be averted.

"I think level heads will prevail and this part of the budget will be protected," he said. "That's my hope, anyway."
ST. LOUIS AREA BOOSTS COLLEGE GRADUATION RATE, BUT NOT ENOUGH

NO Mu MENTION

St. Louis is a finalist for school district Race to the Top competition

The U.S. Department of Education announced this afternoon that St. Louis is among 61 finalists for the district Race to the Top competition.

College student from St. Louis dies of injuries after struck by train

RICHMOND, Ind. • Officials say a second student from an eastern Indiana college has died after being hit by a train more than two weeks ago.

Wanda Garner used to make a poster each school year showing a pair of houses. The first, a mansion. The second, a dilapidated wreck.

She would ask the students who walked through her door for counseling: Which one do you want to live in?

It was one of the ways Garner, a counselor for 15 years at Vashon and Beaumont high schools, tries to get through to students who don’t see college as the next logical step in life.

They need to be nudged and guided down a path that will help them, and the communities they live in.

“You have to spoon-feed them, just like you would a baby,” said Garner, who made the switch from teaching to counseling because she felt as if students weren’t always getting the attention they needed.

In that line of thinking, Garner has supporters among the leadership ranks of St. Louis Graduates, a young coalition striving to drastically increase the region’s output of college degrees by 2020.

The group — made up of area nonprofit organizations, businesses and schools — just released its first progress report card since embarking on its mission three years ago. “One Student at a Time” highlights some of the area’s achievements but also makes it clear that total success won’t be easy.

The good: Between 2007 and 2010 — the most recent data available — the metro area had the largest percentage point increase in bachelor’s and associate degrees among the nation’s 35 largest metro areas. As of 2010, 37.8 percent of adults 25 and older have at least an associate degree.
The bad: With just 10 years to go, the region needs to figure out a way to push itself faster to get past the 50 percent goal set by the coalition.

"Even though we did better than everybody else, it was not at a pace that would get us to 50 percent by 2020," said Terry Jones, the report’s author and a professor of political science and public policy administration at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

**CHANGING ATTITUDES**

The coalition is trying to figure out how to create more students like Shawn Williams, one of Garner’s former charges at Vashon and a recent graduate of Missouri State University.

Williams is a first-generation college graduate now working as the family and community specialist at Laclede Elementary, while harboring dreams of one day being a school principal.

While neither of his parents finished college, Williams describes a childhood that pushed him toward higher education.

He was encouraged at home. He remembers teachers in the fourth and fifth grade taking him on college tours. He had a pen pal at St. Louis University. And in high school, he had Wanda Garner.

"I had a good foundation. I was one of the lucky ones," Williams said. "It was literally a natural step from high school to college."

That way of thinking is one of the things that needs to grow for the region to make a serious run at the 2020 goal.

The coalition’s leaders see the potential for some fast improvements if they can spread that culture to some of the school districts where students have college aptitude but not enough support to put it to use.

"I think there’s still some ripe fruit out there for us to pursue," said Jane Donahue, vice president of the Deaconess Foundation and co-chair of St. Louis Graduates.

That, of course, isn’t the only obstacle standing between the region and a 50 percent degree rate.

As college costs rise and financial aid is threatened at both the state and national level, access is a key issue. And for many students, the act of navigating the path from high school to college is a major obstacle, particularly when it comes to understanding the complex financial aid process, Donahue and others say.

**ONE SCHOOL’S EFFORT**

There’s something else working against the region’s larger goal of improving its position among the large metro areas. It’s the fact that everyone else is attempting the same thing, fueled by national efforts by the Lumina Foundation and by President Barack Obama’s goal of seeing 60 percent of the nation’s young people with college degrees by 2020.
In a sense, the St. Louis region has to work at this, simply to avoid falling further behind. Moving from its current No. 22 ranking and into the teens — for residents 25 and older with either an associate or bachelor's degree — means a lot of work.

“You need to run fast to stay even. You need to run faster to get ahead,” said Jones, from UMSL.

Among those pushing to get ahead is Beth Bender, principal of Gateway STEM High School in St. Louis.

Two years ago, Bender attended a workshop where participants spent time analyzing the way counseling is doled out at schools. They looked at how top students — particularly those from affluent or college-experienced families — tend to get advice from school counselors, parents and other mentors. The students at the other end of the spectrum typically only have what they get at school.

“What we realized was that some kids were over-served. Others were being under-served,” said Bender, in her fifth year as Gateway's principal.

So she decided to change the way her school approaches college counseling.

Every other week, she meets with her four counselors to go over the progress of each of the 250 seniors, looking for those who need extra help or special attention. They look at things like ACT tests, college applications and financial aid forms.

They keep a watch out for the kids whose parents aren't taking an interest in their children's college prospects. “We'll put a mark by them to know that this is a parent we have to work around,” she said.

Last year was the first year of the program, so they won't know until later this year or early next year about its effectiveness. The goal, however, is to push the college-bound rate of students from 70 percent to above 80 percent.

“It makes sure that, hopefully, nobody falls through the cracks,” Bender said. “Or at least not as many.”

“I think there's still some ripe fruit out there for us to pursue.”
World Wide Technology founder David Steward of St. Louis will be the featured speaker at the annual Missouri Governor’s Prayer Breakfast in January, Gov. Jay Nixon’s office announced today.

In addition to being a business leader, Steward wrote *Doing Business by the Good Book: Fifty-Two Lessons on Success Straight from the Bible*, which features a foreword written by former President George H.W. Bush. He serves on several councils and committees in the St. Louis area and across the state, including the University of Missouri Board of Curators.

The prayer breakfast, which will be held Jan. 10 in Jefferson City, is an annual inter-faith event started in the 1950s as a way to “seek God’s guidance for the state’s political leaders as they begin the legislative session.” It’s an extension of the National Prayer Breakfast.

More details from Nixon’s office:

- The theme of this year’s breakfast is from Romans 8:31: “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

- In addition to Steward’s appearance, the event will feature prayers, scripture verses and special music.

- Tickets are $30 per seat or $300 per table, and they can be purchased online.

- Proceeds from the prayer breakfast support the Governor’s Student Leadership Forum on Faith and Values.
New suicide prevention program to be headquartered at MU

**Partners in Prevention, an alliance to prevent suicide across Missouri, announced a new suicide-prevention training program will be headquartered at MU.**

Missouri Partners in Prevention took a model of a suicide prevention program that originated at the University of Central Missouri and made it available to every university in Missouri, Partners in Prevention senior coordinator Joan Masters said.

The program was successful on university campuses, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health asked Partners in Prevention to make the program accessible for every citizen of Missouri, Masters said.

The program is designed to assist individuals in recognizing risk factors and warning signs of suicide and responding properly, said Heather Hoeflicker, suicide prevention graduate assistant at the Wellness Resource Center.

“It was found that a surprising number of students reported having suicidal thoughts in the past year,” Hoeflicker said. “And of those students, 53 percent seek help from friends or family as a first option.”

Scott Perkins — project director of the Missouri Institute of Mental Health and Missouri Ask, Listen, Refer funder — said he thinks funding suicide prevention programs is valuable.

“By providing funding for various programs, including MO ALR, we’ve been able to provide training opportunities for tens of thousands of Missourians,” Perkins said. “They are extra sets of eyes that can help spot the warning signs of suicide.”

MO ALR coaches faculty, staff and students how to approach someone who is suspected to be considering suicide. The program covers asking individuals, listening to answers and getting them assistance, Hoeflicker said. MO ALR is relevant to students, she said.

“Suicide prevention is especially important in the college setting, as it is the second leading cause of death for college students,” Hoeflicker said.

The program is ideal because of its simplicity, she said. MO ALR takes place online and requires about 20 minutes to complete.

Feedback for the program has been positive overall, Hoeflicker said.
“Students, faculty and staff overwhelmingly report that they are glad they have taken the program,” she said.

A number of consumers return to the program’s website after completing the program for the first time, Masters said.

The results so far are promising, Hoeflicker said.

“The results are showing what I hope to see,” Hoeflicker said. “Many of the participants are better able to recognize the risk factors and warning signs of suicide, and they feel more comfortable approaching someone who they are concerned about.”

Anyone could help prevent suicide in his or her community, Perkins said.

“It’s not necessary that everyone be a counselor,” Perkins said. “That is not what these types of trainings are about. You don’t need to be an ‘expert’ to help save someone’s life.”
MSA executives wrap up terms in office

The current Missouri Students Association cabinet’s term — one marked by a fight against higher education funding cuts, a newly created One Mizzou Week and a campaign to ban smoking on campus — is in its last month.

Though their terms are ending, the MSA executives are still working during their last month in office.

MSA President Xavier Billingsley said he and Vice President Helena Kooi are leading an online donation campaign called “Click to Donate,” which raises money to buy food for Tiger Pantry.

Billingsley and other executives are continuing to meet with Faculty Council to re-evaluate the current plus/minus grading system. Nick Droege and Zach Beattie, the MSA president-elect and vice president-elect, will have to continue that effort because it is unfinished, Billingsley said.

Billingsley said he also is meeting with Faculty Council to add a diversity course to the MU curriculum.

The MSA executives said they have been reflecting on the accomplishments of their term.

“I’ve been really fortunate, and the team around me has been nothing less than amazing,” Billingsley said. “They’ve really set the bar for those who are going to succeed them.”

One of the year’s highlights was the More for Less campaign, led by Legislative Advocacy Officer Steven Dickherber, Academic Affairs chairman Ben Levin and Director of Student Communications Zach Toombs. With help from MSA members, the three spearheaded the campaign to protest cuts in higher education funding from the state.

The campaign resulted in 6,000 letters sent to Gov. Jay Nixon, 150 students marching in Jefferson City and $100.2 million restored in higher education funding, according to Toombs and previous Maneater articles.

“I think we set a good precedent for the student body in future years,” Toombs said. “I think students, hopefully, are thinking on a bigger scale because of the lobbying effort, and I hope students realize they can have an impact on the state level.”

Proposed cuts in higher education funding will continue despite the success, Toombs said. He thinks the next cabinet members should keep their eyes on the issue.
“The success this spring is something that they’re going to have to repeat and maybe even top if they want to continue having a big student voice on the issue of higher education funding,” he said.

Another success during Billingsley and Kooi’s term was the first One Mizzou Week, which started as one of their campaign promises.

One Mizzou Week began with a reading by Maya Angelou, featured events led by diversity organizations and ended with a concert by Fun.

“Xavier delivered in spades on that one,” Toombs said. “It was exactly what it was intended to be.”

The upcoming smoking ban was another major mark of Billingsley and Kooi’s term.

“(The smoking ban) is something that previous MSA administrations, I think, thought they couldn’t have an impact on,” Toombs said.

2012 also brought the first Homecoming concert, which Kooi said was one of the most successful events hosted by MSA’s Department of Student Activities. Despite the cold weather, 6,000 people attended the Imagine Dragons concert, Kooi said.

Billingsley said he also had numerous other accomplishments during his term. Such accomplishments include creating Tiger Pantry, creating the Bike Share program, registering 5,000 students to vote, increasing event programming and balancing the MSA budget.

But Billingsley and Kooi’s term also had disappointments.

One such disappointment was Billinglsey and Kooi’s campaign goal to change the plus/minus grading system change to a flat grading system.

“We worked diligently on it all year, but, unfortunately, it’s not really (in) our control,” Kooi said.

She said she is confident the system will change in the near future but is disappointed she did not see a change during her and Billingsley’s term.

Another disappointment occurred when original DSA director Gavin Womack resigned.

“That was something we couldn’t really control,” Kooi said. “Having the people in your cabinet change (is) sort of a setback.”

Morgan Adrian took over the position at the beginning of the 2012-13 academic year.

Billingsley, along with other MSA executives, said the year has been great, but it is exciting to leave.
“After you’ve done all you can, you can just go on,” Billingsley said. “And it’s pretty exciting to leave this organization in better hands than ones you got it in.”

Kooi described the end of the year as “surreal.” She said she thinks Droege and Beattie will be just as successful.

Currently, Droege and Beattie are informally training with their predecessors and selecting their cabinet.

Both are knowledgeable about MSA, Droege having served on the MSA cabinet for two years and Beattie having served as an MSA senator on the budget committee.

“They already have so many good ideas and are in a better place than (Xavier and I) were at this time,” Kooi said. “It’s hard to say that they will do better than us, but they are, and they should.”
MU professor makes discoveries in HIV research

In collaboration with researchers around the world, Stefan Sarafianos, associate professor of molecular microbiology and immunology at MU, and his team have made discoveries in HIV research that could lead to more effective treatment.

Working with researchers in Japan, the National Institutes of Health and the University of Pittsburgh, they found a mutation of HIV called 172K that can affect the virus's drug resistance. This information can help doctors better individualize therapies for patients, Sarafianos said.

"It's part of a puzzle," Sarafianos said. "The more information like that you get, the better you can design regimens that are more suitable, more efficient. That's part of our larger studies of trying to understand drug resistance and drug susceptibility of various viruses. This is just the latest of the things that we've been doing."

HIV is constantly mutating, and there are multiple variations of the virus, Sarafianos said. Identifying the type of virus helps doctors figure out which treatment will be most effective for a particular patient.

"Before you start a patient on a certain therapy, you first check what kind of flavor the virus is because not all HIV viruses are the same," Sarafianos said. "So, you want to have a good picture of what exactly the sequence is. When you identify certain mutations that make the virus more or less susceptible to certain drugs, then you can predict what would be the best therapy for that patient."

The discovery of 172K provided two major findings, postdoctoral fellow Lefteris Michailidis said.

"First is that is that you can have a polymorphism, and this can affect your resistance to other drugs," Michailidis said. "Another is that this can affect not only one class of drugs but two different classes of drugs. There are two major classes: nucleoside analogs and drugs that are not NRTIs (nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors). What we show in this paper is that this specific polymorphism can affect resistance to both classes of drugs."

Sarafianos and his team are continuing to work with EFdA, a new treatment for HIV they developed. EFdA targets the HIV enzyme responsible for viral replication. It has a unique chemical structure that is not found in other NRTIs, Michailidis said. EFdA is up to 60,000 times more potent than existing HIV treatments.
"It works with a different mechanism," Michailidis said. "The structure of the drug is so different than the drugs of this class, the previous drugs lack a component. That is very important, the component that this has makes it so potent."

Sarafianos and his team published that EFdA works well in large animal models. Health care company Merck & Co. Inc. entered into a licensing agreement with pharmaceutical company Yamasa Corporation to develop EFdA.

"Now, Merck picked it up, and hopefully it will go into clinical trials, so we are very excited about that," Sarafianos said. "What we're interested in now is what would be the best combination for patients. No drug is good by itself. So we are trying to find the most efficient combinations in terms of resistance and in terms of potency."

The effectiveness of HIV treatment has made significant progress throughout the years, Sarafianos said.

"I think we have a very good panel of drugs that can treat HIV, to the point where it's better to get diagnosed with HIV than (Type 1) diabetes, so to speak," Sarafianos said. "The life expectancy for someone who has (Type 1) diabetes is worse than someone who has just been diagnosed with HIV."

Many of these drugs come with side effects, but eventually the virus develops a resistance to all of them, Sarafianos said. Researchers have to keep developing new drugs, trying to develop a drug that is easy to take and has the least amount of side effects.

"We want these drugs to be something the patient can take in the long term," Sarafianos said. "These are not like antibiotics where you take it for a week. You need to be able to take it for the rest of your life. Even the smallest side effect, it's cumulative. So we want to understand the long-term effects of these drugs and come up with the least possible side effects."

Though there are more than 30 drugs to treat HIV, there is no drug to prevent the virus, Sarafianos said.
Freshman Anurag Chandran didn’t always understand football. When he came to MU from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, he knew almost nothing about the American sport. He had heard of some guy named Tom Brady. He heard there was someone else named Peyton Manning. But Chandran couldn’t make sense of the pastime.

Chandran, who said he now loves football, realized he wasn’t alone.

“I’ve heard of a lot of international students (talking with each other) to learn up (on football),” Chandran said, laughing. “Luckily for me my roommate generously taught me all the rules of the game, so there you go.”

Chandran, an international student, is part of a national trend. A Nov. 12 Institute of International Education press release stated the number of international students at U.S. colleges and universities increased by 6 percent last year. The number of international undergraduates also outnumbered international graduate students for the first time in 12 years.

The data marks the sixth consecutive year an increase in the total number of international students in U.S. higher education has been reported, the release stated. There are 31 percent more international students at U.S. colleges or universities than there were a decade ago.

“The strong increase in international student enrollments shows the continued conviction of international students (and parents) that a U.S. degree is a sound investment in their future careers,” the release said.

There’s a trend of growth in the number of international students at MU as well, International Center director James Scott said.

“MU saw an increase of about 13 percent this fall over 2011,” Scott said. “There is an upward trend that’s continued since 2003-04.”

There are many reasons why MU attracts international students, Scott said.

"MU is a very strong public university," Scott said. "We have a very good reputation in many parts of the world. We also have MU faculty and staff who travel and represent MU. It really helps when prospective students can meet face to face with someone at Mizzou."
There are other mediums that help, too, Scott said. Social media connects current faculty, staff and students with out-of-country students. Alumni chapters get university information to several countries. Recommendations can also bring in prospective students.

“Many international students share their experience at Mizzou with friends and family,” Scott said. “Word-of-mouth recommendations really help.”

The rise in international students is not surprising, Scott said.

“The population of college-age students is mushrooming, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America,” Scott said. “The number of students who want higher education is growing faster (than) university capacity in many countries.”

Chandran said he was surprised at how many international students he found at MU.

“Definitely (I was surprised),” Chandran said. “Especially more of the East Asian countries – definitely more than I expected to see.”

MU was intimidating at first, Chandran said.

It seemed like a huge school, and he knew no one, but the university helped with the transition, Chandran said. During an orientation for international students, he learned “what to do” and “what not to do” as an international student.

Though Chandran has occasionally noticed a culture barrier between himself and other students, he hasn’t had any trouble making friends. He said he likes to hang out with kids from the International Students Association and has also has met a lot of “very friendly” American-born citizens.

Chandran, who’s spent most of his life in a different culture, said he could get used to Columbia.

“I think this is home rather than Dubai now,” Chandran said. “I’m loving it here.”

Scott said he thinks the trend of growth in international student enrollment won’t slow down anytime soon.

“This trend will continue,” Scott said. “Nationally and at Mizzou.”
Don't just sit there — People finding relief from sedentary ways by using standing desks

By Lexie Cartee
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COLUMBIA — Sometimes, Jason Rollins can't just stand there: He has to bust a move.

"You may find me gyrating or dancing to the music — that's what happens when you're standing up," said Rollins, 32, the assistant director for the Office of Web Communications at MU. "When you're sitting down, you might just tap your toe, but when you're standing up, you might just give in to the beat a little bit."

Rollins made his own standing desk during a lunch break last year, and now he often finds himself dancing. He used an old bookshelf and sawed up boards so that the top shelf was tall enough to hold his computer at eye level. Rollins is one of a growing number of Columbia residents who have found benefits in having a standing work space.

"Some days I forget I'm even standing and work all day," he said. "When I'm standing, and I have stuff to do, I stay more focused than I would if I were sitting." Rollins also appreciates the versatility his desk offers: There are no "barriers" to walking in or out of the room and getting to work at the desk. It also made life simpler by freeing up space. After adding the standing desk, he was able to add a futon and recliner to his office.

"If you have a little cube or small office, it's worth thinking about," he said.

Science and support

Even adults who get the recommended 150 minutes of exercise per week are at an increased risk for heart disease if they sit during the day, said John Thyfault, 37, associate professor and director of the Health Activity Center at MU. Thyfault researches how inactivity leads to diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
“And the reason is that we were designed to move,” Thyfault said. “During evolution over millions of years, we had to move on a daily basis to survive. Now we are sitting in a chair where we completely deactivate all of the skeletal muscles of our lower body.”

James Levine, professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., has found that people tend to be more sedentary at work than on leisure days. One of his studies, published in 2009, showed that because most people in high-income countries are employed, workplace physical activity is important to reverse inactivity and obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one-third of adults in the U.S. are obese, which can lead to heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and stroke. As a way to promote activity in the workplace, Levine worked with Steelcase, an office furniture company, to come up with a standing desk design, Thyfault said.

**Standing desks vary in shape and price**

Columbia business Marathon Building Environments sells Steelcase products including Airtouch tables, which are height-adjustable desks that can hold up to 150 pounds, and Walkstations, which are height-adjustable desks with treadmills that can go up to 2 mph. Airtouch tables sell at around $1,000, and Walkstations go for about $3,500.

Lifestyles Furniture, another Columbia retailer, sells standing desks starting at $499. Owner Jerome Rackers said the store began selling standing desks six years ago, but the sales increased in the past two years as the price has come down.

Some choose to build their own standing desk. Josh Oxenhandler, 38, modified a music stand with "$10 of materials and some thinking," he said. Oxenhandler, who is an attorney at Holder Susan Slusher Oxenhandler law firm in Columbia, found himself hunched over the computer screen for hours a day.

"It's not healthy for my back," he said.

Oxenhandler bought his first standing desk more than a year ago. He splurged on it when he moved into his new office. At first, he expected to split his time between sitting and standing, but the only time he lowers his desk these days is when he's showing people how the height adjusts.

"I have experienced a greater degree of energy in terms of doing my job," he said. "It leads to stronger legs, stronger back and stronger ab muscles."
A different work lifestyle

Mark Milanick, professor of medical pharmacology and physiology at MU, gave up driving to work about 10 years ago and now walks. He realized that though he was spending 2 1/2 hours per day walking, that left 14 1/2 hours a day of potential sitting time.

"That is seven times more time sitting," he said while standing at one of the four standing desks in his lab.

The Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology at MU is buying standing desks for its staff. Chris Hardin, faculty administrator for the department, wants to provide desks to all full-time faculty and administrative staff. Hardin said his department should lead the way for the university in having an active lifestyle at work.

"Not only talk the talk, but walk the walk, so to speak," he said. Hardin said the desks are a good investment because, though they can be expensive, they can potentially save in health care costs if employees lead healthier lives.

"I believe it will more than pay for itself over time," he said.

The secret: comfort

Transitioning to a standing desk can be risky if not done correctly, said writer Mark Lukach in an article for thewirecutter.com. Lukach is a former high school teacher who has written for The New York Times. In his article, he advises beginners to start slow by doing only one task a day such as sending emails while standing and increasing the amount of time as it becomes more comfortable.

According to Standupdesks.com, an Amish furniture manufacturer, "there is no science involved in determining what is the correct height a standing desk should be." A general rule is that monitors should be positioned at eye level, and keyboards should be adjusted so forearms are parallel to the ground. Standing in place for hours at a time can be detrimental as well. Thyfault said prolonged standing has been linked to varicose veins but can be alleviated by moving around or walking. Lukach recommends using a floor mat or supportive shoes and placing an object nearby to lean against from time to time.

"The whole idea is to feel comfortable," Oxenhandler said. What keeps you sedentary and how do you stay active? Tell us here.