



## Veterans United to fund new course at MU

*Firm hopes to add IT workers.*

By Jacob Barker

Saturday, December 22, 2012

**A creative fundraising arrangement with the University of Missouri's College of Engineering could begin to address a shortage of skilled information technology and computer programming workers for one local company.**

An agreement in the works between the engineering school and Veterans United Home Loans would have the booming mortgage company fund a new class in the college's computer science department that teaches skills it thinks are valuable. In return, the business will have the chance to give guest lectures, mentor students and recruit from the limited supply of computer science graduates.

The class, Production Software Development Methodologies, emphasizes programming in a collaborative environment, said Gary Lee, Chief Technology Officer at Veterans United Home Loans. That's important for programmers working in team environments. Too often, he said, they never have to work together while they're in college. "It's more like teaching a particular programming style and methodology," Lee said.

The class already had been developed, and some students had been interested in the past, but the university has not recently dedicated funding for it, Lee said. If the agreement is finalized as expected, the new class could be offered as soon as fall 2013. Professor Dong Xu, the chairman of the computer science department, lauded the arrangement.

"It will not only provide funding to supplement our budget, but also ... better prepare our students for industry jobs," he wrote in an email. "Through such a relationship, companies can give guest lectures, supply course projects, and provide input for the curricular development. I welcome more companies to participate."

Local companies have alluded to a shortage of IT and programming talent for the past couple of years. IBM's 2010 decision to locate a service center in town brought the issue to the attention of many, but the continued growth of other local industries also has strained the IT workforce supply.

Veterans United Home Loans specializes in mortgages guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, so graduates considering employment there might be more likely to come from a finance background, Lee said. But with a strong online presence and loan processing platform, it needs skilled

programmers. The arrangement with the university could give the company its own pipeline of MU graduates. "This is at least part of the answer," to the community-wide shortage, Lee said.

Greg Cecil, the director of development and corporate relations for the College of Engineering, said the arrangement is unique to the engineering school. However, other universities have used similar tactics, and he said he thinks it's "the wave of the future."

"Anything like that where we can get support from companies is really, really important," Cecil said. "I think it's going to be more important going forward as funding sources are reduced."

Companies often send representatives to give guest lectures, but it's on a more ad hoc basis. Cecil said it has long been a goal of his to get companies to support the college in return for some benefit. Although some provide money for scholarships, supporting a particular class allows a company to more closely see their money at work, he said.

"Being involved with a class for a full semester really allows a company to get to know students and students get to know them and what they do and what they're all about," he said.

The arrangement amounts to more of a support than a sponsorship, Cecil said. What if another company, though, offers to provide a guest lecture about pertinent material? Cecil said he's not sure how that would be handled. "We would hope that other people would want to support their own project," he said.

Delta Systems owner Steve Powell has lost a programmer to Veterans United. Overall, he thinks anything that expands the workforce is beneficial. "I think it's helpful for our entire community because we need that churn," he said.

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## DNR not yet decided on penalty for acid spill

By Jacob Barker

Sunday, December 23, 2012

**The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has yet to decide whether to issue a penalty against the University of Missouri after a maintenance worker accidentally dumped about 25 gallons of sulfuric acid into a stormwater drain that flowed into a Flat Branch tributary.**

On Sept. 21, DNR, Columbia Public Works and MU Environmental Health and Safety workers scrambled to contain the acid spill in an unnamed tributary of Flat Branch that flows through the Grasslands subdivision. Records obtained from DNR through an open records request show that the spill was contained, and MU has instituted changes to some of its policies to prevent a future incident.

However, DNR and Missouri Department of Conservation reports indicate some wildlife was killed by the acid. More than 300 aquatic worms, 57 crayfish, 150 macroinvertebrates and 32 fish, mostly minnows, were killed. There were no lingering effects beyond the day of the spill, records indicate. A dam was placed in the tributary to prevent contaminants from reaching Flat Branch, and the city pumped water into the stream to dilute it.

"While there was clearly an initial error made regarding the disposal of the sulfuric acid, the University with help from the City, made good efforts in containing and cleaning up the release," Eric Sappington, an Environmental Emergency Response responder with DNR, wrote in an internal report.

The spill originated when MU was decommissioning a water treatment system in Memorial Union that used sulfuric acid to clean pipes and water. MU campus facilities workers mixed the acid with water and prepared to dump it down a drain that they thought connected with the city's sanitary sewer system. However, it was a storm drain, and the water flowed into the creek. Even if they had dumped it down the sanitary sewer, it wouldn't have been allowed. A DNR report references a conversation with David Sorrell, Columbia's sewer utility manager, who said the dumping would have violated the city's code. Acidity must be within a certain range, and the sulfuric acid was outside of that range.

In addition to other violations, DNR cited MU for not properly training the employees in charge of disposing of the old water tanks containing sulfuric acid. Environmental Health and Safety Associate Director Todd Houts said in an email that MU has now marked all stormwater drains and is "continuing to train and educate staff on proper handling procedures for disposal of any material."

It also instituted a new authorization form that must be approved by Environmental Health and Safety before any material is put into a storm or sanitary sewer. In its formal response to DNR, MU asks that no formal sanctions be issued. "MU believes that this isolated incident is not indicative of the effectiveness of our overall program," wrote Maureen Kotlas, director of Environmental Health and Safety at MU.

## Schools face proposed changes to gun rules

By Rudi Keller

Saturday, December 22, 2012

A proposal to allow teachers and school administrators to carry concealed weapons on campus raises safety and local control issues for Columbia Public Schools Superintendent Chris Belcher **but brought a neutral response from University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe.**

Belcher said the proposal, one of the first bills filed in Missouri as a reaction to the slaughter at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, would take away the discretion the district now has on the issue.

Belcher said he doesn't want to lose local control over the decision to allow or ban concealed guns. At Rock Bridge and Hickman high schools, rumors of potential violence led officials to take extraordinary security measures yesterday, including limiting the doors that were unlocked and barring students from leaving campus during class hours.

Belcher said he is comfortable if the school board would allow former police officers hired for school security to carry weapons. That is not currently allowed but has been discussed, he said.

"I have been fighting for 30 years for local control, and I think those decisions are decisions best made by communities, by the elected officials on the school board," he said.

Under Missouri law, a person with a permit to carry a concealed weapon is barred from doing so on a college or school campus without permission from the college governing body, a school official or the school board. The bill filed by Rep. Mike Kelley, R-Lamar, would allow teachers and administrators to carry concealed weapons without seeking permission. The bill is intended to kick off a debate on school security, Kelley said.

Bills being filed now will be considered after lawmakers convene Jan. 9.

"I know there will be a lot of different ideas coming to the table, and we need to find the best way to make Missouri schools safer," Kelley said. "We need to ask what we need to do to secure our classrooms."

**In a prepared statement sent by email, Wolfe did not offer an opinion on the wisdom of the bill. "The tragedy of last week's events at Sandy Hook Elementary School are unimaginable, and it is only to be expected that in the coming weeks and months there will be numerous thoughts and proposals at both the state and federal levels on how to stem violence in our schools and college campuses," Wolfe said. "As president of the University of Missouri System, I will continue to be attuned and engaged in those discussions as they develop."**

Wolfe's predecessor, Gary Forsee, was strongly against the idea of concealed weapons on campus in 2009 after the Missouri House voted to allow anyone with a concealed carry permit to have their weapon on college campuses.

Forsee directly challenged the idea that more guns equaled greater security. "Concealed weapons also would expose our university law enforcement officers to increased risk of injury and force them to worry about the increased presence of handguns when responding to serious incidents on campus," Forsee said at the time. "Missouri's college students should be allowed to learn and exchange ideas in an environment free from the threat of concealed guns."

Since 2003, Missouri has allowed people to carry concealed weapons if they complete eight hours of training, are not convicted felons and meet other requirements. Over time, lawmakers have cut back on the restrictions that can be imposed.

Lawmakers and legislative staff, for example, are allowed to carry concealed weapons in the Capitol, but visitors are not. A large number of lawmakers are always armed, Kelley said. "You have also seen no misuse of those protective measures by members of Missouri General Assembly. I would expect the same from teachers, the most educated and trusted people in the state."

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## Meal frequency may hold clue in obesity

By Janese Silvey

Saturday, December 22, 2012

**University of Missouri research indicates women, especially overweight women, should eat three large meals a day — and avoid the all-day snacking once thought to trigger metabolism.**

Tim Heden, a doctoral student in MU's Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology, studied how meal frequency impacts blood sugar and blood fat levels.

In the study, eight obese women over two 12-hour periods consumed 1,500 calories. Some consumed three 500-calorie liquid meals, while others had six 250-calorie liquid meals. Women who consumed the three larger meals had significantly lower fat in their blood.

"Our data suggests that, for obese women, eating fewer, bigger meals may be more advantageous metabolically compared to eating smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day," Heden said in a statement. "Over time, consistently eating fewer, larger meals each day could lower the women's blood-fat levels and thereby lower their risk of developing heart disease."

In recent years, health care practitioners and media outlets have advocated eating several small meals throughout the day.

"However, when we examined the literature, we didn't find many studies examining or supporting this popular claim," he said. "This lack of research led to our study, which is one of the first to examine how meal frequency affects insulin and blood-fat levels in obese women during an entire day of eating."

With multiple meals all day, there's also a greater potential to overeat, said Jill Kanaley, a professor in the Department of Nutrition and Exercise Physiology who co-authored the study.

"Some people are good at making efforts to eat healthy snacks; however, most people aren't, and they end up taking in too many calories," she said. "The more times you sit down to eat, the more calories you're probably going to take in."

The study is expected to be published in the journal *Obesity*.

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## Donors pledge \$6.4 million for Missouri athletics scholarships

By unho yi

December 21, 2012 | 12:11 p.m. CST

**COLUMBIA — The MU Athletics Department announced Friday that it has received a \$6.4 million gift from donors.**

According to a news release, the donors — who wished to remain anonymous — have pledged the donation to the Tiger Scholarship Fund over the next 10 years, beginning in 2013.

"We are so thankful for this generous gift, and the difference it will make at Mizzou," Athletics Director Mike Alden said in the release. "This transformational commitment allows us to continue our growth and to be a leader in the Southeastern Conference and nationally."

The Tiger Fund's senior director of development, T.J. Leon, had primary responsibility for soliciting the donation, the release said.

"The belief our donors have in Mizzou and our student-athletes is energizing," Leon said. "As we continue our transition into the SEC, facility improvements and scholarship endowments are crucial, and these donors would like to play an active role in us reaching our goals."

*Supervising editor is Zach Murdock.*



## **Anonymous donor gives \$6.4 million to MU athletic department**

BY THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Published December 21, 2012 at 9:59 a.m.

The Missouri athletic department announced a \$6.4 million gift from an anonymous donor today. The donation to the Tiger Scholarship Fund will be given over the next 10 years, beginning in 2013.

"We are so thankful for this generous gift and the difference it will make at Mizzou," Athletic Director Mike Alden said in a statement. "This transformational commitment allows us to continue our growth and to be a leader in the Southeastern Conference and nationally. This gift allows us to enhance our facilities and amenities for fans and student-athletes alike, as well as support our scholarship efforts for our men and women."

T.J. Leon, a former MU football player who is now a senior director of development, had primary responsibility for solicitation of the gift.

"As we continue our transition into the SEC, facility improvements and scholarship endowments are crucial, and these donors would like to play an active role in us reaching our goals," Leon said.

The recent gift continues a big year for donations to the athletic department. In June, a \$30 million donation — the largest to the athletic department and second-largest ever to the university — was given by the anonymous donors of the Kansas City Sports Trust.

That gift gave a jump-start to a \$200 million facility improvement plan that will be implemented over the next decade.



## ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

# Who gets custody of the Facebook profile after a divorce?

By Aisha Sultan [asultan@post-dispatch.com](mailto:asultan@post-dispatch.com) 314-340-8300  
Posted: 12/21/2012 5:00 AM

### MU MENTION P. 2

Stacy Thibodeaux was furious when she discovered pictures of her children on her ex-husband's online dating profile soon after they divorced.

"I went through the roof," Thibodeaux, 45, of St. Peters, remembers. She confronted her ex, saying it wasn't appropriate to have their young children's images on Match.com.

She says he simply blocked her from viewing his profile.

Thibodeaux, who has now been divorced for nearly five years and has recently remarried, said she realized she could not control what her ex-husband did with their children's pictures. But, had it occurred to her during the divorce, it may have been helpful to have established some ground rules about their children's digital exposure as part of the custody agreement, she said.

That idea of managing a child's online footprint is becoming part of the conversations during a divorce and even after custody settlements as social networks become nearly ubiquitous ways of sharing information about one's life and family.

"Social media has become a very big issue in all aspects of divorce," said Alton Abramowitz, president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers. His firm counsels clients to shut down their social media profiles as soon as they begin considering a divorce. Parents who post questionable pictures that may potentially embarrass a child later might find those same pictures and status updates used against them in court. It speaks to poor parental judgment, he said.

"Even married people can post things about their kids that the other person may not be happy about," Thibodeaux said. "It's harder when you're divorced because you're already at odds with one another."

St. Louis-area attorney Josh Daniels faced a scenario with a client whose ex-wife wanted to prohibit him from sharing any information about their children on social networks. Daniels said that barring special circumstances, he would argue against such a blanket rule.

"In our highly mobile world, it is sometimes the best way to share photographs and information about children with family members and friends who do not live in the area. That being said, a party should be careful to take all possible precautions in order to avoid messages and images from falling into the hands of someone who was not designated to receive them," he explained, in an email.

There's certainly room for compromise, says Stephanie Williams, clinical director with Kids in the Middle, a nonprofit education and support group in St. Louis for families going through a divorce.

She suggested parents consider parameters, such as different privacy settings to control who could see certain types of information, and work toward an agreement on the type of content that can be shared and what is off-limits.

"It's really about understanding what the concerns are behind it," she said.

That's the approach that Meredith Friedman, of Creve Coeur, took when she and husband separated five years ago. Her children were 7 and 8 years old at the time, and their father had strong concerns about their online privacy.

"We decided together not to put our kids on Facebook," she said. He convinced her that it was more of a security issue. Now that their children are older, they do include some family pictures on their pages.

But, in many cases, Facebook ends up causing more grief for divorced co-parents than good, Williams said. She has seen instances in which one parent might trash the other on Facebook, which will eventually make its way back to the former spouse, or even worse, their child.

"If you shouldn't say it in front of your child, why would you put it on Facebook?" she asked. That should be avoided at all costs, she advised.

**"Social media is just one more thing that angry ex-spouses can fight about," said Larry Ganong, professor of human development and family studies at the University of Missouri at Columbia. His research found that technology can be useful when couples fail to get along because text messages and emails may be edited before sending. It's a way to share facts and manage schedules without getting into accusations and name-calling, he said. But the danger lies in trying to strike a balance between cooperative tech and hostile behavior.**

"One of the things that can be hard for divorcing parents to grasp is that you no longer have any control over the other parent," he explained. Unless there is evidence of abuse or neglect, each parent is free to parent as he or she wishes. Parents may continue to fight after a divorce if they are reluctant to relinquish the effort to control the other person's parenting behavior, Ganong said. He suggests including the use of social media in a parenting plan, a legal document required by Missouri for divorcing parents. Illinois has no such required document.

A snapshot of a Facebook conversation demonstrates just how wrong such communication can become. It was posted last year on happyplace.com, a site that curates funny online videos, posts and pics. The screen shot redacts the full name of the parents involved: A mother posting on a profile she has created for her unborn baby and man, presumably the child's father.

The mom-posting-as-fetus announces in a status update that she plans to party with her friends next Halloween when she is born. The presumed father-to-be comments on this update, addressing the fetus, identified as a girl: "April, no offense, but your mom is a (expletive) nut. There's a reason we're not friends on Facebook anymore and don't talk anymore. I am excited to have you in my life, and I think you will be the best daughter ever if you are mine, but this is (expletive) ridiculous." He asks the mother to take the page down asserting his hypothetical parental rights, arguing that he should have a say in whether the yet-to-be-born April gets a party profile on Facebook.

The mother, in turn, responds in the voice of the unborn baby: "If you would step up and own up to getting my mom pregnant and take full responsibility then we wouldn't be in this situation!" The mother/fetus writes that she needs a Facebook page, so that she's "born into the world with good friends."

"I refuse to argue with my unborn child via Facebook," the possible father responds. "I am contacting child services."

While this exchange may or may not be real, it's not outside the realm of possibility in the digital age of co-parenting.

"Facebook is such a weird thing," Ganong said. "It's a permanent record of what (parents have) communicated, and it could come back to haunt them."