Mizzou expands online degrees with $2.5M boost

Sunday, February 10, 2013
By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER ~ The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- The state's largest bricks-and-mortar college wants to make it easier for students to earn degrees without leaving home.

The University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia on Friday announced a $2.5 million expansion of its online degree programs, including master's degrees in public health and public affairs and a bachelor's degree in educational studies.

Mizzou has long offered classes to those unable to come to Columbia. Its distance learning program is more than a century old, and MU High School, created in 1999, has become a nationally known online option for self-paced homeschoolers, child actors and precocious athletes such as world champion skier Lindsey Vonn.

But the demand for more options from working adults, far-flung professionals and even traditional undergraduates living on campus calls for increased online offerings, according to university administrators.

"Technology continues to revolutionize teaching and learning," said College of Education Dean Daniel Clay, who noted that one-third of higher education students nationwide took at least one online course last year. "The question is not if technology is going to change education, and if it's going to be important. It's a [question of] how important."

The university is modifying its online admissions requirements to no longer require students seeking undergraduate degrees to first obtain 60 hours of transfer credits or an associate's degree, Provost Brian Foster said.

Sixteen new online areas of study will be created, including graduate programs that provide certificates in geospatial intelligence, energy efficiency and nonprofit management. The
expansion includes 25 new undergraduate online classes; more undergraduate degree programs that will be available online; and adding a dozen more online graduate programs that will offer either degrees or certificates to nearly 80.

Another expansion of online offerings is planned for 2014.

The move comes soon after Gov. Jay Nixon unveiled plans to team with the not-for-profit Western Governors University to broaden Missouri residents' access to online higher education with a state-sanctioned WGU Missouri campus.

University of Missouri leaders emphasized that the timing of Friday's rollout was coincidental to the governor's disclosure in his late January State of the State address, but said both the Mizzou and WGU efforts acknowledge the vast need to increase access to higher education.

"From Kennett to Kansas City and St Joseph to St Louis, to Sikeston, every corner of our state deserves the opportunity to access the kind of quality education we offer here at MU," Clay said. "This is not a choice we have to make. That choice has been made for us."
MU to add new online degrees

16 new offerings are in the works.

By Karyn Spory

Friday, February 8, 2013 at 2:00 pm

An investment of $2.5 million will allow the University of Missouri to launch 16 new online degrees and program certificates over the next year, university officials announced Friday morning.

"This is an initiative of the system and of the University of Missouri to expand to those individuals who can obtain a University of Missouri degree and then be more qualified to enter into the workforce, as well as continue and strengthen the job market as it continues to evolve," Chancellor Brady Deaton said.

He said the initiative is meant to strengthen the quality and quantity of educational offerings for those who might not be able to relocate to Columbia or are already in a career.

"We want to facilitate that in every way possible," Deaton said.

The startup money came from reserves Mizzou Online accumulated and reallocated, said Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies.

The university also will offer a number of stand-alone undergraduate classes in an online format.

"This means that Mizzou will be able to serve first-time freshmen and those who come to the university online program with very few transfer credits and the ability to do online bachelor's degrees," Provost Brian Foster said.

Daniel Clay, dean of the College of Education, said even students living on campus are seeking online options.

"Technology continues to revolutionize teaching," he said. "A third of all higher-education students in the United States last year took an online course."

Clay said as the number of people looking to continue their education grows, the university must provide technology-enhanced experiences.
"The question is not if technology is going to change education and if online learning is going to be an important part of the future, but how important and how we will embrace technology in its current and rapidly evolving form," Clay said. "We know with great certainty that online learning, when done correctly, has student learning outcomes that are just as good as and even sometimes better than face-to-face classes."

The university will begin accepting applications soon. Several of the online programs will begin next fall, and the rest will begin in 2014.

The new offerings will include a doctorate in nursing leadership and entrepreneurship from the Sinclair School of Nursing.

The College of Education will offer an online Bachelor of Science in education studies as well as graduate certificates in education quality management and college teaching. The College of Arts and Science will offer an undergraduate or graduate certificate in geospatial intelligence, and the graduate school will offer a master's in public health.

More information about these and other new programs is available at online.missouri.edu/NewProgramInitiative.

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Posted in Education on Friday, February 8, 2013 2:00 pm.
Grant will help expand MU's online degree programs

By Maddie Aberman

February 8, 2013 | 4:28 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Public health, hospitality management, biomedical sciences and nursing leadership and entrepreneurship are among 16 programs that will expand into online offerings for MU students.

The recipients of a $2.5 million online learning initiative were announced Friday at Reynolds Alumni Center. The investment is intended to increase the accessibility of undergraduate and graduate programs at MU.

The other areas are: geospatial intelligence, education studies, education quality management, college teaching, energy efficiency, architectural studies, public affairs, nonprofit management, public management, health communication, interactive media and health systems innovation.

"We are pleased to begin offering online programs in these in-demand subject areas," MU Provost Brian Foster said at the announcement. "Producing graduates with the skill sets and preparation needed to advance these industries is at the core of our mission at the University of Missouri."

MU offers five undergraduate degree programs and 61 graduate certificate and degree programs in part or completely online. The addition of these programs will increase Mizzou Online offerings to nearly 90, with eight undergraduate degree programs and 79 graduate certificates and degree programs offered in part or completely online.

A theme among the speakers at the announcement was that investment in Mizzou Online reflects a growing trend in online education. In 2012, one-third of higher education students in the United States took an online class, College of Education Dean Daniel Clay said.

"New online degrees and certificates will allow, for example, a teacher in Mill Spring, Mo., a town of 203 people, to stay there, work full time and fulfill their dream to become a principal or superintendent," Clay said.
He said "hundreds of studies" have found that online education student learning outcomes are just as good, if not better than face-to-face classes.

"The online courses will be taught by the same faculty as face-to-face courses," Foster said. "The diplomas they earn will be exactly the same."

It is not simple to convert degrees to online, Foster said. The new funds will help offset the start-up costs of developing an online curriculum, including hiring faculty and purchasing the necessary software.

The money used to fund the new programs is coming from current online education tuition revenue, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

Some of the new online programs will begin in the fall; the rest will begin in the spring of 2014.

"Offering online degrees and certificates is not a choice we had to make, it was made for us," Clay said. "But how we embrace it is our choice."

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
Nixon aims high for 2013

February 8  By STEVE KRASKE

The usually safe-to-a-fault Gov. Jay Nixon is going for a personal best.

When Nixon outlined his second-term agenda last month, he placed a marker on two issues that will determine the success or failure of a pivotal year: Medicaid expansion and campaign-finance reform.

Both will be extraordinarily difficult to pass, given the topsy-turvy political dynamics in Jefferson City where state government is headed by a Democratic governor and Republicans dominate the General Assembly.

Passing one would be huge. Getting both would be like winning the Super Bowl and a Nobel the same year.

Asked when he was in town last week how he’d celebrate, the aw-shucks Nixon demurred at first, then said, “Probably, I would go fishing.”

He probably should toss in a little champagne, too.

Strange as it sounds, passing the Medicaid expansion might be the easier play of the two even though it ranks as most high-profile challenge Nixon has undertaken. He’s putting enormous pressure on GOP lawmakers, who are reluctant to fund a multi-billion-dollar expansion of government by providing health care to legions of poor Missourians.

Nixon is aiming at the heart of the GOP. On Thursday, he went to Independence where he spoke to the typically Republican Chamber of Commerce.

“This is the largest economic development question facing the state of Missouri right now,” Nixon told civic leaders.

Later Thursday, Nixon was in Columbia, where he spoke — not at a hospital, the most obvious venue — but at the conservative turf of the University of Missouri’s Trulaske College of Business.

“This transcends politics,” Nixon said.

At his State of the State address, the governor introduced Chamber of Commerce members from around the state who backed his plan.

“They know,” Nixon said, “that bringing billions of dollars back to Missouri is good for our state’s economy.”
Notably, Democratic lawmakers stood to applaud the chamber members. GOP lawmakers clapped, but stayed seated.

On Medicaid, Nixon is hustling.

On campaign reform, he’s making his points, but not waging the same day-in and day-out push.

There is no obvious constituency for ending Missouri’s embarrassing predicament as the only state in the country that permits unlimited campaign donations and unlimited lobbyist gifts. Except, perhaps, the voters who back in the 1990s overwhelmingly passed campaign limits.

But voters apparently aren’t clamoring for change. The last election is history. No one’s thinking about limits now.

That’s why Republicans show virtually no sign of getting on board.

Nixon has worked hard over the years to cast himself as productive and successful. The streak’s in jeopardy.
Letter to the Editor: Missouri GOP ignores the good of Medicaid expansion

February 09, 2013 12:00 am

The Feb. 7 Post-Dispatch reports that Michigan’s governor has become the sixth Republican governor to support the statewide expansion of Medicaid as provided for under the Affordable Care Act. Apparently, these Republicans realize something which Missouri’s Republican legislators refuse to acknowledge: Medicaid expansion is good for the states.

Here in Missouri, the evidence could not be clearer. Medicaid expansion would provide health care coverage for more than 267,000 Missourians, bring an estimated $1.56 billion to Missouri in new health care funding, and create thousands of new jobs. (More than 24,000 in the first year, according to a study by the University of Missouri.) Indeed, it is estimated that expanding Medicaid could save the lives of as many as 6 percent of the new enrollees.

Medicaid expansion would be good for Missouri’s working poor, good for our state’s medical community, and good for the local economy. It’s a shame that Missouri’s Republican legislators are unwilling to put the good of the state ahead of partisan politics.

Greg Campbell • Creve Coeur
Mizzou Wheelchair Relay raises money for fund

Fundraiser aids scholarship fund.

By Brennan David

Sunday, February 10, 2013 at 2:00 am

With a plastic bowl clenched between his teeth and coffee and a newspaper stuffed down his shirt, 23-year-old Tyler Belt wheeled himself 100 feet across a basketball court yesterday without dropping a single item while he powered a wheelchair.

The challenge was one of several that 56 participants faced yesterday at the 13th annual Mizzou Wheelchair Relay at Brewer Fieldhouse. Fourteen teams of able-bodied persons walked away with a better understanding of life with a disability and a recognition that simple, everyday tasks often are taken for granted, said Joe Sloan, a student services coordinator for University of Missouri Recreation Services.

"It's about awareness," Sloan said. "It's about showing there is a lot they can still do" without the power of their legs.

Participants competed in a circuit of activities that required them to play volleyball while sitting down, shoot a basketball from a wheelchair and to carry an assortment of grocery items. Most competitions were timed, and participants were competitive.

"No deductions," Belt yelled out to his teammates after completing the grocery competition without dropping an item. "Whoop!"

Freshman Erik Todd, 19, is diagnosed with spina bifida and volunteered yesterday to assist with the event that benefited the Mizzou Wheelchair Basketball Scholarship Fund. Todd, who is a member of the intramural wheelchair basketball team, said he enjoyed watching others struggle with the mundane activities and learn to overcome, but he said basketball and volleyball are not activities all disabled persons participate in.

The everyday struggle of accessing bathrooms and transportation is where people restricted to wheelchairs learn to adapt and overcome on a daily basis, he said. Together with his teammates,
however, is where he has learned to achieve great things, such as winning games and championships.

"There's a lot more to it. I may not encounter a problem to that extent," he said of the grocery competition where participants could barely wheel the wheelchair because of the number of items they had to transfer. "But it shows the athletic side of it. It shows how you need to adapt day to day."

For one event, participants were asked to put on sweatpants while sitting in a wheelchair and then to complete an obstacle course. The difficult part was putting on the pants because they were not allowed to lift or use their legs.

Most struggled with the challenge, while others just accepted the point deduction in an effort to complete the course. "You can't use your legs. That was difficult," said freshman Fernando Garcia, 19. "It was second nature to use your legs. I didn't think it would be that tough."

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Pulitzer-winning photojournalist who documented his battle with cancer to visit MU

By Abbey Sussell
February 10, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — When John Kaplan learned he had cancer at 48, he did what was natural for him — he took pictures.

Kaplan has won multiple awards for his work as a photojournalist, including a Pulitzer Prize for feature photography. As a photographer, he has worked in Africa and countries all over the world to capture the emotional and intimate aspects of social issues.

"In my career I've almost taken for granted that people will be willing to open up their lives to me and thus for readers and viewers of my work," he said. "That was a question I had to face myself — would I be able to open up my own life and that of my family, as we faced the largest crisis we could have ever foreseen?"

He did. The result is the autobiographical film, "Not As I Pictured," which follows Kaplan as he battles lymphoma, beginning with the diagnosis in 2008.

He will visit the Missouri School of Journalism on Monday for a reception at 5 p.m. and a showing of the documentary at 6 p.m. An exhibit of his work on the project will be on display until March 4 in the McDougall Center Gallery in Lee Hills Hall at Eighth and Elm streets.

The film began as a coping mechanism for Kaplan, but he said he wanted to share it with families facing cancer to lend hope and support.

In 2011, there were an estimated 662,789 people living with lymphoma or in remission, according to the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Through grant money, Kaplan is giving the film away for free on his website. He has already given away almost 7,000 copies.
The film has also helped people in the medical field see a patient's perspective, he said. It reminds the medical community to treat cancer patients like people and not like another chart.

“I don’t think the film teaches those in the health care field necessarily how they should treat patients, but it does help motivate them to know they can truly make a difference in the world through empathetic care for patients,” Kaplan said.

His cancer is in remission, and he said the disease has brought a great clarity to his life about what’s truly important.

“If you or a loved one has ever had to hear that seemingly horrible word, cancer, my hope is that in the future it won’t have the same bite, because cancer no longer typically means death,” he said.

“You can make it back to health and the joy of every day. Today, most people do.”
Federal officials allege that a married Jefferson City lawyer offered to pay a broke high school teacher to marry the lawyer's Ukrainian lover so she wouldn't have to leave when her student visa expired.

But the teacher was engaged to someone else, St. Louis Post-Dispatch (http://bit.ly/14xf9dn) reported, and the deal came crashing down when the teacher's jilted fiancee went to authorities.

Federal officials in St. Louis charged the Ukrainian woman, Dar'ya Chernova, 38, with attempting to falsely procure naturalization and lying to an immigration official. She pleaded not guilty late last month. Her attorney, Brocca Smith, said the case was likely to go to trial.

There's no indication in court records that the teacher or lawyer face charges.

In court documents and testimony, federal prosecutors and agents say the lawyer offered the teacher $36,000 to marry Chernova. It was not stated whether the money was paid.

Chernova's lawyer said her client attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City on a tennis scholarship and later graduated from the University of Missouri with bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical and aerospace engineering.

The lawyer was a witness when Chernova and the teacher were married on March 13, 2005.

Just four days later, the lawyer represented the teacher in a Chapter 7 bankruptcy. And in October of that year, the lawyer also represented the teacher in a child custody case involving the former fiancee _ they had a child together.

According to claims in court documents, Chernova lied in a 2010 interview with immigration officials when she said the teacher was the father of her second child. DNA tests proved that the lawyer was the father of her first and second, prosecutors say.

Smith said she believed that Chernova and the teacher remain married and that Chernova's citizenship application was still pending.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Chinese New Year: Year of the snake celebrated at MU

By GH Lindsey
February 9, 2013 | 9:09 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Gathering with family is a hallmark of any holiday, but when family is thousands of miles away, that's not always possible.

"Most Chinese people in Columbia come here," said Eileen Li, a Columbia resident. "We like to celebrate together."

Li was one of about 250 people, mostly MU faculty, staff and their families, ringing in the Chinese New Year on Saturday evening at a party hosted by the Mid-Missouri Chinese Association in Memorial Union. At midnight Saturday, the year of the dragon will end, giving way to the year of the snake.

"The snake represents intelligence and good fortune," Li said.

"And bad temper," said her son Kellan, who was born during the last year of the snake in 2001.

Li and her children, along with many other guests, wore red, a color associated with good luck and prosperity in Chinese culture.

In a side room, some guests watched a broadcast of China Central Television's New Year's Gala. The gala is the most-watched television program in the world, according to NPR.

Food at the event came from local Chinese restaurants, and some guests contributed their own dishes.

The party featured numerous performances, including dances, martial arts demonstrations, a string quartet and a children's choir.

Supervising editor is Emilie Stigliani.