MU, city offices join list of snow cancellations

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF


Cancellations on Thursday included afternoon and evening classes at the University of Missouri, and city and county offices also closed early in response to heavy snow. Columbia Public Schools will be closed again Friday, the district announced Thursday afternoon, and MU will be closed Friday as well.

MU announced around noon Thursday that classes this afternoon and evening would be canceled. On Thursday night, MU announced all classes, exams and events would be closed again Friday. MU hospitals remained open, but MU Health Care clinics will be closed until Monday.

The Missouri women's basketball game against LSU that had been set for 8 p.m. Thursday at Mizzou Arena was moved to 1 p.m. Friday.

Stephens College and Columbia College also closed early Thursday and will be closed Friday.

Columbia Public Schools called off classes for today at 7:30 p.m. yesterday. The district still held snow club Thursday, a program started last year that provides child care on days when school is cancelled for weather. However, snow club was canceled for Friday.

Parents pay $20 a day for snow club, which goes toward operating costs, and scholarships are available. Snow club is held at three sites: West Boulevard, Derby Ridge and Mill Creek elementary schools.

A total of 106 students are enrolled in snow club, district spokeswoman Michelle Baumstark said. About one-sixth of those came today, said Peter Stiepleman, assistant superintendent for elementary education. Superintendent Chris Belcher said that is likely
because of how bad the weather is, and he expected that as parents left work early because of the weather, they would pick up their kids.

"Lots of businesses are sending people home," he said.

Commercial passenger flights at Columbia Regional Airport were canceled after the first flight to Dallas left at 6:45 a.m., said Steve Sapp, spokesman for the Columbia Public Works Department. The cancellations were part of a series of grounded flights in the Midwest announced by American Airlines, Sapp said.

American Airlines canceled flight 3348, which would have arrived at Columbia from Dallas at 8:25 p.m. Thursday, the city said in a news release. That means flight 3215, scheduled to depart Columbia at 6:45 a.m. Friday, also is canceled.

The main runway at Columbia Regional Airport has been kept open by many hours of work by airport maintenance and public safety crews, the release said.

The Columbia Transit system switched to its winter-weather schedules at 10 a.m. yesterday, with buses leaving the Wabash Station every hour instead of every 40 minutes, Sapp said.

Columbia Transit planned to begin with limited service Friday morning. Fixed routes 101 North and South, 102 North and East, 103 West and Northeast, 104 Southeast and West and FastCAT will run limited schedules. Delays are expected.

Paratransit will also run when necessary, according to a city news release. The Tiger Line and Black and Gold routes are canceled because of college campus closings.

The city canceled meetings scheduled today for the Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Health, the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Public Transportation Advisory Council. The Activity & Recreation Center closed at 1 p.m.

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency in response to the storm. The declaration also allows state agencies to coordinate directly with cities and counties to provide emergency services.

The governor issued the declaration from his office in the Capitol, where he was one of only a few people actually in the building. The House and Senate canceled their sessions Thursday, and most of their offices were closed.
Storm promises messy, dangerous commute in Midwest

Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — A major snowstorm that shuttered airports in Missouri, stranded truckers in Illinois and buried parts of Kansas in knee-deep powder was promising a messy and possibly dangerous commute Friday morning as it crawled northeast.

Wind gusts of 30 mph were expected to churn-up snow that fell overnight in southern Wisconsin, where forecasters were warning Milwaukee-area residents of slick roads and reduced visibility. The same was expected in northeast Iowa, where residents could wake up to as much as 7 inches of new snow, while nearly 200 snowplows were deployed overnight in Chicago.

At a Travel Centers of America truck stop in the central Illinois city of Effingham, all of the 137 parking spaces were filled by truckers unwilling to drive through the storm overnight.

"When it gets really bad, they like to camp out," cashier Tia Schneider said Thursday night, noting that some drivers called ahead. "They can make reservations from 500 miles away to make sure a space is available."

The storm system swirled to the north and east late Thursday, its snow, sleet and freezing rain prompting winter storm across the region - and leaving some impressive snow accumulations.

Northern Oklahoma got more than 13 inches of snow, while up to 10 inches fell in the Kansas City, Mo., area. In Kansas, 17 inches of snow fell in Hays and several other cities.
got nearly that amount. Farther east in Topeka, 3 inches of snow fell in only 30 minutes, leaving medical center worker Jennifer Carlock dreading her drive home from work.

"It came on fast," Carlock said as she shoveled around her car late Thursday. "We're going to test out traction control on the way home."

Numerous accidents and two deaths were being blamed on the icy, slushy roadways.

State legislatures shut down in Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Nebraska and Iowa. Most schools were closed in Kansas and Missouri, and many in neighboring states.

**That included the University of Missouri, where classes were canceled for one of the few times in its 174-year history. At a nearby WalMart, students made a beeline for the aisles containing sleds and alcohol.**

"This isn't our usual Thursday noon routine," Lauren Ottenger, a senior economics major from Denver, said as she stockpiled supplies.

All flights at Kansas City International Airport were canceled for Thursday night, and officials said they'd prepare to reopen Friday morning. On the other side of the state in St. Louis, more than 320 flights at Lambert Airport were canceled.

Transportation officials in the affected states urged people to stay home.

"If you don't have to get out, just really, please, don't do it," Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback said. Interstate 70 through Kansas was snow-packed, and a 200-mile stretch between Salina and Colby was closed. The Kansas National Guard had 12 teams patrolling three state highways in Humvees to rescue motorists stranded by the storm.

For those who needed to drive, it's wasn't a fun commute.

Richard Monroe, a technology manager and marketing representative for the Missouri State University bookstore, said he arrived with eight of his colleagues in Kansas City, Mo., on Wednesday for a conference. He said a shuttle bus taking them on what should have been a five-minute trip got stuck in the snow, then ran into a truck. The vehicle was incapacitated for nearly two hours.

"We saw today that Kansas City is just shut down. I've never seen a big city like this where nothing is moving," the 27-year-old said.

Others people came down with cabin fever, including Jennifer McCoy of Wichita, Kan. She loaded her nine children - ages 6 months to 16 years - into a van for lunch at Applebee's.

"I was going crazy, they were so whiny," McCoy said.
Heavy, blowing snow caused scores of businesses in Iowa and Nebraska to close early, including two malls in Omaha, Neb. Mardi Miller, manager of Dillard's department store in Oakview Mall, said most employees were gone by 4 p.m., with "only two customers are in the entire store."

The storm brought some relief to a region that has been dealing with its worst drought in decades.

Vance Ehmke, a wheat farmer near Healy, Kan., said the nearly foot of snow was "what we have been praying for." Climatologists say 12 inches of snow is equivalent to about 1 inch of rain, depending on the density of the snow.

Near Edwardsville in Illinois, farmer Mike Campbell called the precipitation a blessing after a bone-dry growing season in 2012. He hopes it is a good omen for the spring, noting that last year, "the corn was just a disaster."

Areas in the Texas Panhandle also had up to 8 inches of snow, and in south central Nebraska, Grand Island reported 10 inches of snow. Arkansas saw a mix of precipitation - a combination of hail, sleet and freezing rain in some place, 6 inches of snow in others.
University of Missouri cancels classes

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - Classes at the University of Missouri-Columbia have been cancelled due to severe winter weather.

The university announced at noon that all classes and exams are cancelled effective immediately. Columbia College has also cancelled its remaining classes.

This is the first time in two years the university has cancelled classes due to weather conditions.

Columbia roads are completely covered with snow and ice. Drivers are saying visibility is very low and the roads are slick.
At MU, a rare campus closing after snowstorm

BY Caitlin Holland

COLUMBIA — MU closed the campus Thursday afternoon for only the second time since 1949. All classes, exams and events scheduled after 12:50 p.m. were canceled.

The MU Student Center will remain open all night for students stuck on campus, according to a text message from MU Alert. Normally, the center closes at midnight.

"There are various places for them to go, study or stay warm," said Christian Basi, associate director of the MU News Bureau. "So that’s a safe haven for students if they are on campus."

The campus will remain closed Friday, MU announced late Thursday evening.

Basi said the university decided to close its campus out of concern for the safety of students, faculty and staff. About an hour earlier, MU Alert posted a tweet announcing the cancellation of all classes.

Faculty and staff with critical jobs, such as health care or campus facilities workers, will continue working, Basi said.

"We have a hospital that cares for patients," Basi said. "We cannot simply shut the entire campus down."

MU closed from Feb. 1 to 3, 2011, during the "Snowpocalypse" storm that buried Columbia under more than 17 inches of snow.

The university has canceled classes several times without necessarily closing the campus because of snowfall since 1949, when the winter semester was delayed because of unspecified reasons, according to records from MU.

• 2011 — The full campus closed Feb. 1 to 3 after 17.7 total inches of snow.
• 2006 — Classes were canceled Dec. 1 after 14 inches of snow.
• 1998 — Classes were canceled Jan. 12, which delayed the start of the spring semester.
• 1995 — Classes were canceled Jan. 19 after 19.7 inches of snow.
• 1978 — Classes were canceled Feb. 13 after 12 inches of snow.
Winter snowstorm shuts down Columbia

By Brendan Gibbons
February 21, 2013 | 7:53 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — A vast snowstorm swept across mid-Missouri on Thursday, shutting down businesses, major roadways and schools, including MU.

By about 4 p.m., 11 inches of snow had accumulated downtown, and 9.7 inches were reported at Columbia Regional Airport at 7 p.m., according to the National Weather Service.

Fred Glass, a meteorologist with the service in St. Louis, said the totals were among the highest in central to eastern Missouri.

Early in the morning, Columbia’s roads were clear enough for many residents to make it to work. Heavy snow started to fall about 8 a.m., and loud thunder could be heard throughout the morning.

Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency just before 10 a.m.

Many local businesses, including The Blue Note, shut down and sent their employees home for the day.

By noon, Columbia College, Stephens College, William Woods University in Fulton, and MU had all canceled classes. Columbia Public Schools canceled Thursday and Friday classes.

MU canceled classes at 11:58 a.m., and eventually closed the campus for the first time since the "Snowpocalypse" storm of February 2011. It was only the second full campus closure since 1949.
MU said it would announce plans for Friday no later than 6 a.m. Friday.

Students, faculty and employees took to snow-covered roads during the afternoon, slowing traffic to a standstill on Providence Road, College Avenue, Broadway and Stadium Boulevard, among other places.

During the afternoon, ad hoc crews of Columbia residents could be seen all over downtown helping neighbors push stalled cars. Some wielded snow shovels. Many used gloves and boots to clear snow away from tires.

Fire and ambulance crews responded to 11 injury accidents between 8 a.m. and 6:45 p.m. None of the accidents involved serious injuries, and no transports to medical facilities were reported, Boone County Fire Protection District shift supervisor Chuck Mastalski said.

Interstate 70 was partially or completely closed for a series of weather-related accidents since about 11:30 a.m. Thursday.

All four lanes of the interstate between U.S. 63 and the Lake of the Woods exit were closed from 3 p.m. until 6:05 p.m., when the westbound lane opened. The eastbound lane was still closed at that time.

Two tractor-trailers had stalled in the area, which also stopped traffic on U.S. 63 near the interstate, said Travis Koestner, assistant district engineer for the Missouri Department of Transportation's central district.

“It all centers around that area,” Koestner said.

The department also closed a portion of Route WW near the border between Boone and Callaway counties after a tractor-trailer turned sideways. Another semitrailer was blocking Route Z near St. Charles Road at 7 p.m., according to an advisory from Columbia-Boone County Joint Communications.

Crews continued to plow major roads throughout the evening, though sleet and freezing rain made work difficult, according to a statement from the Public Works Department.
Crews hope to begin plowing smaller residential streets by late Friday afternoon, the statement said.

Trash collection stopped at 1:30 p.m., but will continue Friday and Saturday, according to the statement.

Columbia was one of many communities that dealt with the storm. Cold air moving up from the south led to heavy snowfall across the Midwest and Northeast.

Winter storm warnings extended in a rectangle that stretched from eastern Colorado through southern Illinois, and from southern Missouri to northern Iowa.
MU cancelled classes for the eighth time in history Thursday when the amount of snowfall surpassed early predictions of 4 to 6 inches.

The snow began to fall at 8 a.m., and by 11 a.m. there were already 5 inches accumulated, according to KOMU.

Chet Dunn, Road Operations Manager at the Boone County Public Works office, said crews pretreated the major roads at 1 a.m. and had been plowing them since 9 a.m., trying to keep them passable. “With it snowing so much, it’s hard to keep up,” Dunn said.

He said crews would be working 24/7 until all roads are cleared, which might not be until sometime Saturday.

By noon Thursday, 6 inches of snow had already accumulated, and stations were predicting up to 10 inches, with snow falling until midnight or the early morning.

With this news, Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency. He urged citizens to avoid unnecessary travel and to rely on news sources to assess conditions.

An hour later, MU Alert announced the cancellation of classes for the rest of the day.

Director of MU News Services Mary Jo Banken said the fact that the snow didn’t start falling until after 8 a.m. delayed the decision to cancel class and close the campus.

“Close to noon when the forecasts changed and the governor declared a state of emergency, we reassessed the situation,” Banken said. “We decided it was in the best interests of the students (to cancel classes).”

MU Alert announced the full closure of campus at 1 p.m. when 8 inches had accumulated. Some buildings remained open though, such as the Student Center, which MU announced would remain open 24 hours.

With roads in unsafe conditions, the Student Center soon became a refuge for students who lived off campus and were stranded.
Senior Asia Myles, whose only class of the day was at 9:30 a.m., said she had been waiting for hours at the Student Center for an 11 a.m. bus to go home. She said when she first arrived on campus, the snow hadn’t started falling yet.

“It was just cold,” Myles said. “But afterward it was a lot worse.”

MU student Hannah Pancoast said she was in a chemistry lab when classes were cancelled. She said the teacher’s assistant told students they could clean up and leave halfway through the class.

Pancoast also lives off campus, but said her bus home, like many other buses, wasn’t running due to the weather. She said she was trying to find another way home.

“I’ve seriously considered just walking home,” she said.

Most drivers who braved the snow suffered severe backups. Some even got stuck in the unplowed streets. Police officers and fellow drivers were seen trying to help them out.

Missouri Students Association President Nick Droege offered his help over Twitter, telling students to tweet at him if stuck drivers needed “a push.”

By the evening, almost 10 inches of snow had accumulated in parts of Columbia.
MU seeks input on budget during meeting with faculty

By Karyn Spory

Thursday, February 21, 2013 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri held the first of two forums Wednesday to hear input on the 2014 fiscal year budget and beyond as the university expects to make more cutbacks in the face of higher operating costs and less state funding.

Budget Director Rhonda Gibler said there were two things she wanted to come out of last night's forum, which was for faculty. The first was for faculty to understand the reasoning behind the tough financial choices the university will have to make in the future.

"We want to work as a community and being transparent about some of these issues just helps people work together better and understand what the issues are," Gibler said.

The second was to hear ideas from faculty.

"We've been careful stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us, but because of a lot of uncertainty we face, we have done that in a very short-run view," Gibler said.

Gibler said MU has been in a mode of "just getting by" and if left in that mind-set could see an annual shortfall of $3 million, which would have to be reallocated from other areas. This leaves the university stretching to fulfill high-priority issues such as salaries, building maintenance and research and development.

Gibler came to the $3 million conclusion by assuming state funding and tuition caps stay the same and enrollment stays flat, which it is projected to do.

Deputy Provost Ken Dean said the 47 percent student increase since 2001, when state funding began to decline, has helped to close that gap within the budget.

"That has provided the margin to stay alive over the past 12 years," Dean said.

In 1958, Missouri was ranked No. 43 out of 48 states for state appropriations per capita. Today, Missouri is seated at No. 44.
"If the numbers are the same as 1958, maybe we should quit using the business model from 1958 and start looking towards the future," said Randy Curry, a professor of electrical and computer engineering. Curry then asked about the possibility of MU becoming a private institution.

Dean said that was not in the cards.

"Fact is, as a state institution they may not give us much money, but they want to control us," Dean said.

Also, if it were to become private, the university would have to make up the $168 million it receives from the state, he said.

"At least not for 20 years," Curry said. "The trend line is clear, it's going to happen."

Curry, who has attended the budget forums every year, said one constant has been deferred maintenance, and he said he wondered how long that could continue.

The Missouri General Assembly is considering a bond issue for building construction that would provide $700 million for college and university construction needs and $250 million for other state projects.

The University of Missouri System would receive funding to build or overhaul four buildings, with a total cost of $238.5 million.
MU Provost Brian Foster went home sick Wednesday, so he missed the first budget forum scheduled by his staff.

Good call. After sitting through two hours of unremittingly grim explanation, futile attempts to lighten the mood and fruitless suggestions by faculty listeners, I felt a little queasy myself.

Provost Foster's deputy, Ken Dean, noted that Wednesday was new Budget Director Rhonda Gibler's 51st day on the job, succeeding the legendary Tim Rooney. It was her first crack at the thankless annual chore of showing and telling just how bad our university's fiscal situation is, and why it's not likely to get any better any time soon.

She came across, I thought, as candid, well informed, good humored and way too kind to both our masters in the legislature and their putative masters, our fellow citizens of Missouri.

The numbers tell only part of the story.

Our university is a $2 billion business (run, Ken Dean commented, as no rational business would be, with almost no control over its costs and artificial limits to its revenue). Of that total, about $537 million is the general operating budget. The rest is made up of such "enterprise" funds as hospitals and physicians, athletics and student housing, all of which are more or less self-sustaining.
The legislature provides this year less than one-third of that general operating budget. Tuition provides 62 percent. For purposes of historical interest, remember that back in 1990, the state appropriation covered 70 percent of the budget.

Since the high point of state support in 2001, Dr. Gibler pointed out, state support has declined by 12 percent while enrollment has grown by 47 percent and the Consumer Price Index has gone up 32 percent.

That means, she and Deputy Provost Dean observed, that the campus has come to count on enrollment growth to balance the budget. And that growth is slowing, both because of fewer high school graduates in Missouri and the limitations of campus capacity.

Budget planners are counting on only about half the increase in enrollment next year. This year's freshman class included the highest percentage ever of out-of-state students, 36 percent. Those, of course, are the high-dollar newcomers. They pay roughly double the in-state average of $9,272 in tuition and fees. (That's below both the SEC average ($10,727) and the average of our peers in the AAU ($10,904).

Looking ahead, the picture is no rosier. Once she's factored in expected cost increases and the expectation that there'll be no more money from the state, and set a goal of 3 percent for salary increases, Dr. Gibler's chart shows a shortfall next year of $16.3 million. So departments that have long since cut away their fiscal fat will once again have to engage in the self-mutilation known as "rereallocation."

That leads me where Ken Dean and Rhonda Gibler, for good and sufficient reason, didn't want to go. Who's to blame?

Both budgeters insisted that MU has a good reputation in Jefferson City. They pointed out that the Republican-led legislature actually gave us more money last year than Gov. Nixon proposed. The legislature just doesn't have the money to do any better, they said.
But I ask, whose fault is that? The reason Missouri ranks 44th among states in support for higher education per capita is that our political leaders have an ideological resistance to the taxes necessary to sustain state services -- not only education -- at anything close to an adequate level. The citizenry seems content. As Dr. Gibler understated, "Missourians aren't excited about taxing themselves." The fate of the proposed tobacco tax last year stands as supporting evidence.

I've said jokingly that we Missourians are poor and ignorant and proud of it. It's increasingly clear that the joke's on us.

George Kennedy is a former managing editor at the Missourian and professor emeritus at the Missouri School of Journalism. Questions? Contact Opinion.
MU’s first appropriations meeting addresses funding for 2013

By Bell Johnson

MU’s first appropriations meeting for the current fiscal year was held Tuesday morning to discuss Gov. Nixon’s higher education request.

According to the request for operations, the foremost priority for this fiscal year is the funding of $405.8 million — previously a core piece of the 2012 fiscal year appropriations.

Last year, higher education funding faced a 12.5 percent cut, about $100.1 million. The projected cuts for this year were expected to be much worse, but are around a 1 percent cut instead of an anticipated 12.5 percent.

Missouri Students Association Legislative Coordinator Ben Levin said he attended the meeting to keep an eye on MU’s core funding.

“The goal of the money is to make up for the gross funding negligence the university has been dealing with for 10 years,” Levin said. “The governor’s requested budget this year was very generous, and hopefully we’ll have smooth sailing as far as the budget goes this year.”

There aren’t any planned spending cuts for higher education funding in this fiscal year, but Levin said the problem with the budget is its built-in revenue projections, which depend on some politically-contentious issues.

“If Medicaid is not expanded and if extra revenue is not brought in, there is no indication where revenue will be cut,” Levin said.

In Nixon’s budget, he cut 1 percent from higher education base budgets but then allotted a $34 million reservoir of money to be divided based on performance measures.

MU's appropriation this year is $411 million.

A plan devised by Budget Committee Chairman Rick Stream opposed Nixon’s increased funding for higher education as well as Medicaid.
In the plan composed by Stream, $20 million would be distributed to higher education funding instead of Nixon’s proposed $34 million.

Regardless of the proposed budget plans, MU’s appropriations request outlines dividing an additional $127 million, factored into the total budget, to raise salaries, improve infrastructure, combat enrollment growth, adjust St. Louis funding gap, continue funding Caring for Missourians initiative, establish endowed professorships and improve MU’s science and engineering national ranking.

According to the report, “the requests reflect the need to address funding issues resulting from several years of increased enrollment and decreased or stagnant state appropriations.”

The goal of the budget is to raise faculty salaries to a more competitive rate, repair delayed maintenance and address the issue of growing enrollment. The report states student enrollment growth has grown immensely over the past 10 years, and the stagnant or declining state appropriations did not address the issue.

Levin said the appropriations report sees the issue of competitive faculty as a priority.

“We pay our faculty less than any other public (Association of American Universities) institution,” Levin said. “We’ve given them one pay raise in the last four to five years. Having core funding and maintaining level core funding is crucial.”

Levin said the committee has not received any news as of yet on spending cuts.

“No news is good news,” Levin said.
Eating lunch and discovering diversity

A couple of times a year, I have lunch with my neighbors. We have a good time, despite the fact that we come from so many different neighborhoods.

You see, these are my neighbors in faith. Two times a year, Dr. Keith Marty, the superintendent of the Parkway School District, invites representatives from various faith traditions in the school district to sit with him and talk about our mutual interests. We share the concerns of the families and children we each know, serve, and love. Like many districts in the St. Louis area, Parkway is a slice of North American suburban diversity. And our lunch meetings are fairly representative of that racial, ethnic, and religious diversity.

This is way more than a typical school lunch.

It is instructive that our public educational institutions often take the lead in bringing diverse religious traditions together. Most meetings include Catholic priests and nuns, rabbis and pastors, leaders from the Islamic community, Christian Science practitioners, Mormon bishops, and parochial school educators. It’s a slice of our neighborhood. Instead of focusing on what divides us, we eat lunch and talk about what unites us. Like I said, it is a good time.

As part of our discussions, we pass around a calendar of religious observances which may impact a student’s attendance or participation in school. As our neighborhoods become more and more diverse, it is important to understand that some school events—concerts, practices, exams—may pose a conflict for children. Some students may be required to attend religious observances, others may be fasting. There is no one-size fits all rule, so many school districts try to help their staff be aware of many religious observations.

Students aren’t excused from mandatory assignments, of course. But district staff members are expected to use discretion in planning, to be aware, and to allow students the opportunity to make up missed work.

This all sounds reasonable to me. In fact, I know that more than once our family has been involved in helping teachers understand that our children couldn’t participate in an evening event because of a religious obligation. Most of the time, it has worked out well, and I hope that the same courtesies are extended to persons of different faiths.
Since religious scheduling conflicts are particularly hard for children to understand, I’m glad that teachers are given information to be used as learning opportunities for all.

Such policies aren’t new. We live in a broadly pluralistic world. What are new are attempts to include others at the table. We need to be reminded that there is room for many at the table. **Recently the University of Missouri has taken heat about its attempts to accommodate the religious and spiritual needs of students.** One radio commentator said the policy, which includes Wiccan and Pagan holidays, has gone too far in giving students excuses for not attending class. In a Fox News article, radio commentator Tammy Bruce said “It almost seems as though we’re looking for excuses for people to not have to take their commitments seriously.”

Some students might try to pull one over on professors, I suppose--though the policy doesn’t exempt students from completing work. I’m going to wager that more students will find it hard to head to class after St. Patrick’s Day this year (not a religious holiday, by the way) than those who may be participating in a Wiccan holiday later that week.

**In response, an editorial in the Mizzou student newspaper The Maneater called the Fox News story insulting to students, faculty, and staff, and an attempt at ridiculing those who may practice religious traditions that are lesser known.**

Hundreds of schools, universities, and colleges have policies about religious diversity. Such policies try to help students and faculty take those religious commitments more seriously, not less. This isn’t about getting a free pass on school work. Nor is about diminishing the significance of other more established religious traditions. It is about learning about our world. It is about learning cultural competencies. It is all about learning--the core mission of any educational institution or body.

When I listen to the passion that my religious neighbors have for their traditions, it helps me discover new meaning in celebrations and holidays I’ve come to see as important. As I hear others tell stories about what is involved in setting aside a sacred day, I realize that so many of my tradition’s holidays have been overtaken by a commercialism that has dislodged the day from its religious roots. As we eat lunch together, we discover the importance of these traditions, and how hard it is to help their children understand the meaning of our sacred days. This is no ordinary school lunch. Instead, it often calls me to look again at the true meaning of my celebrations. That’s not a bad lesson to learn while sharing lunch.
Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., congratulated MU professor Dr. M. Frederick Hawthorne on Tuesday at the International Institute of Nano and Molecular Medicine in Columbia.

Hawthorne, director of I²NM² and a professor of chemistry and radiology, earned the National Medal of Science Award earlier this month. President Barack Obama presented the award to Hawthorne, the first MU professor to receive it.

“I am proud to honor these inspiring American innovators,” Obama said in a White House news release. “They represent the ingenuity and imagination that has long made this nation great.”

According to the release, the award recognizes those who have made “outstanding contributions” to the field of science.

Hawthorne is currently conducting research in the field of boron neutron capture therapy.

“Dr. Hawthorne has pioneered the field of boron research throughout his impressive career,” Blunt said in an address to the U.S. Senate on Jan. 31. “The National Medal of Science, the highest award the country can bestow upon our scientists, is a fitting recognition of his critically important and innovative work.”

According to I²NM²’s website, boron neutron capture therapy is a cell-selective binary radiation method for cancer, arthritis and evolving non-invasive surgical protocols.

Although his research focuses on colon cancer, it could be transferable to other types of cancer.

“(Hawthorn’s) work has shown incredible promise in developing noninvasive treatments for cancer and other diseases,” Blunt said in the address. “As a cancer survivor myself, I am especially grateful for the treatments Dr. Hawthorne is exploring to help the many people whom the disease affects.”

I²NM² is using the life sciences laboratory of the Dalton Cardiovascular Research Center, including small animal facilities, to conduct its research on boron neutron capture therapy.
According to the MU Research Reactor’s website, I²NM² is also using MURR, the most powerful university-based research reactor in the world, to complete the preclinical development of boron neutron capture therapy.

MURR houses the thermal neutron beam for cell and small-animal radiobiological research. The beam is an essential part of the process used in boron neutron capture therapy.

By injecting the patient with tumor-specific boron and low-energy neutrons, researchers are able to detect the difference between normal cells and cancer cells. The thermal neutron beam then hits the targeted tissue and vaporizes the molecules infected with cancer.

Hawthorne believes boron neutron capture therapy will be ready for humans after it has been successfully used on dogs and small pigs, but first, the institute requires a neutron beam energetic enough to handle large animals.

The thermal neutron beam itself costs approximately $2 million, but with additional equipment the total cost amounts to approximately $6 million.

I²NM² is in the process of seeking funding for the new thermal neutron beam.

During his presentation at I²NM², Blunt also discussed the threat of sequestration currently facing Congress. If Congress does not pass a budget, which Blunt says he does not believe it will, automatic budget cuts will take effect.

There will be $85 billion in cuts in the next 7 months and $1.2 trillion in cuts over the next 10 years.

“The right thing to do is reduce spending,” Blunt said at Politico’s post-State of the Union event. “The wrong way to do it is with across-the-board cuts.”

Congress has until March 1 to pass a budget.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Thunder snow researcher at MU keeps tab on storm

By Caitlin Holland
February 21, 2013 | 12:21 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — An MU meteorologist who previously worked to develop a thunder snow measuring system is sitting this storm out at home on his laptop.

Thunder was heard in the Columbia area Thursday morning, and thunderstorms producing 2 to 3 inches of snow per hour prompted the National Weather Service in Kansas City to increase totals to 10 to 14 inches along Interstate 70 in west-central Missouri. Meteorologist Patrick Market said that snow chasing, the winter storm version of tornado chasing, can be risky and expensive. Snow chasing usually requires a large team working together with multiple vehicles and several researchers.

“It is really difficult to pinpoint and say, 'OK, Columbia is where we need to be,' and then actually have things happen in Columbia,” he said. Even though he isn’t actively researching Thursday’s storm, Market said he expects at least 6 inches of snow somewhere within 70 miles of where thunder occurs. That’s in keeping with the National Weather Service forecast of 4 to 6 inches for Columbia.

According to the weather service, a Feb. 1, 2011, storm left Columbia with 17.7 inches of snow, but Market said only a few rumbles of thunder occurred during that event. A Nov. 30, 2006, storm featuring much more thunder and lightning produced 15.3 inches. Thunderstorms with snow aren't different from thunderstorms in the summer. “It’s really, in principle, not that different from a summertime rain event,” he said. Thunder snow happens because different airstreams collide to produce a layer of warm air beneath a layer of cold air. Market’s extensive thunder snow research is referenced in a Scientific American article from March 4, 2009.
“There’s the appropriate mixture of ice crystals, snow and supercool water droplets,” Market said. “There’s actually a fair amount of water in the clouds. Everybody thinks it’s completely frozen, and that’s not true. It’s actually liquid water that hasn’t yet collided with a snow crystal.”