UM System VP for research is retiring

Nichols leaving at end of week.

By Jacob Barker

Tuesday, June 4, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Mike Nichols, the University of Missouri System's vice president for research and economic development, is retiring at the end of the week, five months after UM President Tim Wolfe announced he was creating a new position overseeing Nichols' department.

Nichols, who has had the job since December 2007, sent an email to the Tribune announcing he would retire on Friday after an inquiry about an unrelated matter. He did not respond to further emails requesting comment. The office of research and economic development referred inquiries to the UM System's public relations staff.

In January, Wolfe announced a reorganization of some of the system's departments. Wolfe said in a statement then that a new vice president for academic affairs and research position would oversee Nichols' department and the department of academic affairs. Nichols and the senior associate vice president for academic affairs, Steven Graham, would report to the new vice president, the January announcement said.

UM System spokeswoman Liz McCune said the new position will now be known as simply the vice president for academic affairs but that the system's research and economic development office will still be overseen by the new vice president. Nichols' position will not be filled, she said.

"The university is still very much committed to research and economic development," she said. "It's still very much part of our mission. ... The plan has always been the vice president of academic affairs was going to be overseeing both academic affairs and research and economic development."

When the UM System disclosed its salary database last year, most vice presidents received a 3 percent or 4 percent raise, but Nichols' salary remained the same, and Graham received an increase of less than 1 percent. Graham has no plans to leave his position, McCune said.
Under Nichols, the office of research and economic development has undergone changes that even critical researchers acknowledged as improvements. The office developed software that let faculty file research disclosure forms more easily and allowed them to track the system's patent applications, and it developed rules letting students retain ownership of their intellectual property.

Some faculty complained their inventions sat on the shelf because the system was too slow filing patents and they couldn't act on it themselves because of the university's ownership rights. Under Nichols, the department boosted its staff and streamlined the waiver of intellectual property rights back to faculty members. From 2004 through 2009, the office doubled the amount of patents it filed.

The consolidation could put a lot on the new vice president's plate. In addition to overseeing the university's core missions of academics and research, the new person would be in charge of Wolfe's new strategic planning initiative. Under that initiative, the system's four campuses are identifying core strengths where they should focus their resources, and Wolfe has said he might withhold as much as $40 million in state funding and divvy it up based on their strategies.

That process had been overseen by Nikki Krawitz, UM vice president of finance and administration, who announced in January she would be retiring this month. The university announced last month that treasurer Thomas Richards would become interim vice president of finance effective July 1.

There is no timeline for finding a permanent replacement for Krawitz, McCune said. The university system's priority is filling the new vice president for academic affairs position.
Gov. Jay Nixon is trying again to place Cape Girardeau attorney Michael Ponder on the University of Missouri Board of Curators.

Nixon yesterday appointed Ponder, a member of the Missouri State Board of Education since 2009, to the Board of Curators for the second time this year. The nomination stalled in February in the Missouri Senate, and Nixon withdrew it to preserve his ability to reappoint Ponder.

When they blocked Ponder’s nomination earlier this year, lawmakers were upset over how school aid was distributed and how the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was handling funding for early childhood education.

They contended the department violated state law in the way it prorated funding when appropriations did not meet the target for full support of education programs. The state board should have voted on that decision rather than leave it to the department staff, they said.

The early childhood funding has been a source of argument between lawmakers and the department on a variety of issues involving both personalities and the way the money is used. Ponder did not return calls seeking comment on the appointment.

Ponder, a Democrat, will represent the Eighth Congressional District, filling a seat that has been vacant since the resignation of Judi Haggard of Kennett in January 2012. Because lawmakers are not in session, Ponder will be able to participate in meetings until the Senate confirms or rejects his appointment early next year.

Ponder graduated from the MU School of Law in 1990 and holds his undergraduate degree from Central Methodist University in Fayette. He is a partner in the Cape Girardeau law firm of Cook, Barkett, Ponder and Wolz.

Nixon appointed Ponder to the State Board of Education. If confirmed, Ponder’s term on the UM Board of Curators will expire Jan. 1, 2019.
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Posted in Education on Tuesday, June 4, 2013 2:00 pm.
Gov. Nixon appoints to Mo. college, highway boards

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon has re-appointed a former state board of education member to the governing board for the University of Missouri system.

Nixon in January first tapped Cape Girardeau lawyer J. Michael Ponder to serve on the University of Missouri Board of Curators. The governor withdrew the appointment a month later because senators had not confirmed the choice and the deadline for confirmation was approaching. The appointment was renewed this week, and Ponder can serve because lawmakers are not in session.

Senate confirmation still will be required. Ponder's term would run through the end of 2018.

Nixon also appointed two people to the state Highways and Transportation Commission. Republican Kelley Martin, of Kansas City, and Democrat Gregg Smith, of Clinton, were named to that commission.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

At MU veterinary hospital, dogs help test human cancer treatments

By Richard Webner
June 5, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The master and his dog are both very nervous.

On a Thursday morning in April, Randy Wildebrandt has brought Jazzy, a black, 14-year-old poodle, to the MU veterinary hospital for an examination of a cancerous tumor on her right hind leg. She will be injected with a radioactive liquid for a PET, or positron emission topography scan to determine whether her treatment is shrinking the tumor, then she'll spend a day in isolation while the radiation wears off.

Wildebrandt insists that Jazzy knows something unpleasant will happen, and he could be right. His other poodles, Shasta and Cory, are playing. Jazzy stands trembling, turning her head this way and that to look at the other dogs in the lobby.

"She knows this isn't how it's supposed to be," Wildebrandt says. "This isn't normal Jazzy. This is her stressed out."

They are joined by Karen Howe, a graduate student in the College of Veterinary Medicine, who collects a sample of Jazzy's urine and a journal used to track her health. She patiently answers a barrage of questions from Wildebrandt:

Yes, Shasta can keep Jazzy company in isolation.

Yes, there's plenty of space to run around.

Yes, there are toys for her to play with.

No, they can't bring a bed that Jazzy is used to sleeping in.

Wildebrandt tells Howe, in detail, about the last times Jazzy ate, drank, peed and pooped.

Howe promises to call him that evening to let him know how his dog is doing.
"And that'll be to say, 'She's doing fine, you can pick her up tomorrow,'" she assures him.

After issuing one last anxious instruction — that Jazzy likes to be walked "happy, confident" — Wildebrandt hands Howe the two dog leashes.

"It's fine," Wildebrandt says, holding Cory's leash while Howe walks down the hospital corridor with Shasta and Jazzy. "I'm really happy for her to make this contribution. I am."

That "contribution" could help save a life someday. Maybe even Wildebrandt’s wife.

**Help from man's best friend**

*Jazzy is one of several dogs receiving experimental treatments through the comparative oncology program at MU. Veterinarians hope they can examine the dogs' responses to the treatments to learn new ways of fighting cancer in humans.*

Dogs are good test subjects because of all the things they have in common with humans, said Christina Mazcko, a program manager at the Comparative Oncology Trials Consortium, a network of 20 universities that run cancer trials on pets.

Dogs tend to get the same types of cancer as humans; some of the same genetic glitches that cause cancer in humans occur in dogs. The variety of canine breeds means dogs have a lot of genetic diversity, as do humans. Their body size is closer to ours than most other pets.

Running trials on dogs is relatively fast because their bodies react quickly. So canine trials are typically much shorter than those in humans, lasting only one or two years, Mazcko said. And veterinary care is cheaper than medical care for humans, lowering the costs of the trials.

The abundance of pet dogs in our society makes them a convenient source for trial participants. There were more than 78 million pet dogs in the United States in 2012, according to the Humane Society.

Dogs have been used in trials for human cancer treatments since at least the 1960s, when bone marrow transplants were tested on them. MU began running comparative oncology trials in the early '80s, when it tested Quadramet, a drug that fights bone tumors, on pet dogs. The trials were successful, sending the drug on its path to the open market.
Since the university joined the consortium in 2007, more than 100 dogs have been entered in trials evaluating treatments for bladder cancer, prostate cancer, breast cancer, melanoma and other diseases.

**An enduring enemy**

Deborah and Randy Wildebrandt have been feeling that spot on Jazzy's right hind leg every week for years. Cancerous tumors there had been surgically removed twice before. When they felt a new tumor in January, it seemed harder than the others had been.

Jeffrey Bryan, their veterinarian at MU, gave the Wildebrandts these options: have the leg amputated; schedule another surgery; or, given her age, keep Jazzy comfortable while nature takes its course.

Or, he said, they could enter her in an experimental trial that, if successful, could eliminate the tumor with less pain than surgery and keep Jazzy mobile so she could continue her favorite hobby: going on walks. They chose the latter.

"We want to keep Jazzy going as long as we can," Randy Wildebrandt said.

Jazzy's well-being wasn't the only factor in their decision. In 2007, Deborah Wildebrandt endured her own bout of cancer that left the couple devoted to improving treatment of the disease.

While reflecting on her cancer, Deborah Wildebrandt kept returning to one memory. It was an afternoon in 2007, and the couple were sitting at their kitchen counter in O'Fallon, wracked with worry. Through a speakerphone, an employee from Genomic Health Inc. was explaining the results of an Oncotype DX test that would predict the chance of Deborah's breast cancer returning.

The news was unsettling and confusing: The test showed a 25 percent chance of a recurrence. Yet after a mastectomy, she had been told she had only a 4 percent chance of recurrence.

"I was scared," Deborah Wildebrandt said. "I was upset, but I was really, really scared."

She had already endured a lot of "mental angst" in coping with the mastectomy. "I'm not losing a hand, not losing a leg; it's not that essential a body part," she finally reasoned.

Now she realized her struggle was far from over. She began five years of an estrogen suppression program and five months of chemotherapy to lower the risk of recurrence.
"The experience is spooky," Deborah Wildebrandt said of the chemo treatments. "The nurses are gloved up and masked to not touch this stuff, and it's dripping into your veins. This is poison. Years later, they'll look back on this and think, 'This is barbaric.'"

The cancer hasn't returned, but Deborah has felt chronic pain all over her body — back, legs, shoulders, neck — over the past year. Doctors haven't found the source of the pain, but the Wildebrandts suspect it's a result of the chemo.

So when it came time to make a decision about Jazzy's recurring cancer, Deborah's experience informed the couple's reasoning.

Worried as they are about their pet, they're proud that she's involved in an effort that seeks better treatments and cures for cancer, so others might be spared their trauma.

"New approaches like this can stop the disease or cure it," Randy Wildebrandt said. "We're excited that Jazzy's doing this, that she's part of a field of study to help other dogs and people."

**Quest for the 'holy grail' of treatment**

In the MU trial, Jazzy's tumor is injected with Clostridium Novyi NT, a bacterium found in soil that causes infectious black leg disease in cattle. Clostridium grows only in places with low oxygen, such as tumors, which helps keep it from spreading to the rest of her body.

The hope is that when Jazzy's immune system mobilizes against the clostridium, it will recognize the malignant tumor and attack it as well.

"Getting the body to recognize a tumor as an invader and something that shouldn't be there is the holy grail of being able to cure cancer," Bryan said.

Clostridium is already being tested on humans in clinical trials, but the canine trial could help doctors learn how to better calibrate treatments. They want to know what amounts of the bacterium are most effective, and why the immune systems of some patients respond while others don't. By looking at the characteristics of dogs that benefit from the treatment, they hope to figure out which humans should be treated with it. They might be able to modify patients' immune systems to make them similar to those of the dogs who responded well.

The clostridium trial began when a pharmaceutical company approached MU and offered to sponsor a study using the bacterium. MU has promised not to release the company's name.
Some trials are subsidized by universities, cancer charities and animal foundations, but most are proposed and funded by pharmaceutical companies hoping to bring a new drug to the market. Bryan estimates that MU has worked with a half-dozen companies on trials since joining the consortium in 2007. The cost to fund a study can range from the tens of thousands dollars to more than a million.

As part of the trial, Jazzy’s treatment has been free except for an initial examination fee the Wildebrandts paid. The cost to trial participants varies, but treatment through a trial program almost always costs less than getting treatment through a private veterinarian.

The path from clinical trials with animals to approving a drug for human use is long and arduous. Before beginning a trial, veterinarians consult MU’s Animal Care and Use Committee, which oversees animal research; the committee examines the ethics of the trial and helps design a plan.

The veterinarians involved try to make sure that pet owners, who must sign a consent form, understand the experimental nature of the trials and the risks involved.

"Whenever we treat cancer, there's a risk of death from treatment," Bryan said. "I try to explain that very carefully to people."

Once the trial is complete, the veterinarians send their records to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which decides whether the treatment can advance to clinical trials with human subjects. The treatment then faces three rounds of human trials before it can enter the open market.

It took 16 years for Quadramet, which fights bone tumors, to make its way from MU canine trials to human treatment. MU veterinarians Jimmy Lattimer and Louis Corwin Jr. spent four years testing the drug on dozens of pet dogs before the first phase of human testing began at the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center in 1987. The drug became available to patients in 1999.

Returning home

It's a rainy Thursday afternoon in early May, almost four months after Jazzy's tumor appeared. Randy Wildebrandt is sitting in the lobby of the veterinary hospital, holding a McDonald's coffee in one hand and Shasta and Cory's leashes in the other. A small pouch containing doggie treats and plastic bags is attached to his belt; he always wears it when he takes his dogs out.
Wildebrandt is waiting for Jazzy to emerge from the clinic, where she spent the day while her veterinarians performed a biopsy on her tumor.

He's in good spirits. The results of the PET scan haven't come back yet, but Jazzy's tumor has become softer and smaller. In January, it was round and hard, but now it feels like a squishy quarter. The veterinarians tell him its size has been reduced 28 percent.

Jazzy has responded better to the clostridium than most of the other dogs in the trial. Bryan plans to look at the data he's collected from her to see whether there's something about her immune system or her tumor that has made the treatment so successful.

With the tumor in check, the Wildebrandt's have two choices for further treatment. Bryan could try to cut out the tumor, but so little tissue remains on Jazzy's leg after her previous surgeries that it could be risky. They prefer the second option: Keep a close eye on the tumor, and give Jazzy another clostridium injection if it grows again.

A veterinarian brings Jazzy into the lobby and walks her to Wildebrandt. Shasta and Cory's tails wag wildly, and the three of them greet each other, noses to tails.

After a short conversation about Jazzy's next appointment, where they'll discuss the biopsy results, Wildebrandt leads the dogs outside to the wet parking lot and lifts them into his van.

He has a routine for driving with the dogs: He covers them with their favorite blankets to keep them calm. Leaning into the van, he carefully covers Jazzy with her green blanket, which she's had since 1998. Then he walks around his car in the drizzle and gets behind the wheel.

Jazzy seems excited to be going home, where Deborah Wildebrandt awaits her. Deborah's pain has kept her from accompanying Jazzy to the clinic. And as always, wherever Deborah goes, Jazzy is sure to follow.

*Supervising editor is Katherine Reed.*
ST. LOUIS — For the first time in its 56-year history, someone outside the Taylor family is leading Enterprise Holdings.

The St. Louis-based vehicle rental company said Tuesday that Pamela Nicholson, a 32-year veteran of Enterprise Holdings, has been named chief executive officer. She was previously president and chief operating officer. She will continue to serve as president.

**Nicholson began at Enterprise as a management trainee in 1981 after graduating from MU.** She was promoted several times, becoming senior vice president of North American operations in 1999, to chief operating officer in 2003 and president in 2008.

Andrew Taylor, who had been CEO since 1991, will remain as executive chairman.

"This step is a natural evolution of Pam’s strong leadership of our business — leadership that has won her the loyalty and respect of our management team, of the Taylor family and of the larger Enterprise family," Andrew Taylor said in a statement.

Enterprise Holdings operates Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Alamo Rent A Car and National Car Rental.

Enterprise has had just two CEOs, founder Jack Taylor and his son, Andrew.

Nicholson was chief operating officer for 10 years. During that tenure, the company's revenues have more than doubled, to $15.4 billion in fiscal year 2012 from $6.9 billion in 2003. She was credited with leading the acquisition and integration of Alamo and National and overseeing international expansion.

Nicholson said following in their footsteps is a "terrific honor."
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Enterprise's new CEO to 'franchise the rest of the world'

7 hours ago • By Lisa Brown ibrown@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8127

One of St. Louis' largest companies has a new leader in the driver's seat.

Enterprise Holdings promoted Pamela Nicholson to CEO effective Tuesday, marking a milestone for the world's largest rental car company.

Nicholson, 53, is the first chief executive picked outside the family of founder Jack Taylor and only the third person to hold that title in the Clayton-based company's 56-year history. She also oversees the family's affiliated business, Enterprise Fleet Management.

Enterprise also becomes the largest local company run by a woman.

The change comes as Enterprise is heavily investing in its car-share operations and undergoing significant growth internationally, with more than a dozen countries in its franchise pipeline.

"I'm just extremely proud and honored to take this role," Nicholson said. "We have a bright, bright future."

She takes over from Andrew Taylor, 65, who continues in a new role as executive chairman of the privately held company. He will continue to be actively engaged in the company's operations, Enterprise said.

Nicholson, a 32-year Enterprise employee and St. Louis native, started as a management trainee at Enterprise in 1981 after graduating from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Within 12 years, she was promoted to regional vice president of the company's Southern California operations, where she helped oversee the company's fleet there grow to 27,000 cars from 1,000.

Nicholson later served as corporate vice president and senior vice president of North American operations before she was promoted to chief operating officer in 2003. In 2008, she added the title of president, which she continues to hold.

"This step is a natural evolution of Pam's strong leadership of our business — leadership that has won her the loyalty and respect of our management team, of the Taylor family and of the larger Enterprise family," Andrew Taylor, Jack Taylor's son and CEO since 1991, said in a statement.

Nicholson's rise to CEO comes at a critical juncture in Enterprise's history as it seeks to grow beyond its North American base and expand internationally.
Enterprise, which operates Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Alamo Rent A Car and National Car Rental, has grown its fleet to 1.3 million cars and trucks and 8,200 airport and neighborhood locations worldwide. Enterprise businesses — Enterprise Holdings and Enterprise Fleet Management — employs 4,400 in the St. Louis area and 74,000 worldwide.

In announcing Nicholson’s promotion, company executives noted Enterprise’s strong financial performance in recent years.

Since she was appointed COO in 2003, revenue at the Enterprise businesses has more than doubled, to $15.4 billion in 2012 from $6.9 billion in 2003.

“Pam has done a great job, and if anybody has earned the right as a non-Taylor CEO, it would be her,” said Neil Abrams, president of Abrams Consulting Group, a rental car consulting and research firm based in Purchase, N.Y.

While a non-Taylor is in charge of the company’s day-to-day operations, family members continue to play an important role.

Earlier this year, Andrew Taylor’s daughter, Chrissy Taylor-Broughton, 37, was named Enterprise Holdings’ senior vice president of North American operations.

Jo Ann Taylor Kindle, Andrew Taylor’s sister, is president of the Enterprise Holdings Foundation; and her daughter, Carolyn Kindle, is vice president and executive director of the foundation.

CHANGING MODEL

Enterprise’s origins date to 1957 when Jack Taylor began leasing seven vehicles at an automobile dealership and began renting cars five years later.

Enterprise focused initially on neighborhood locations away from airports, but the company has expanded its market share at airports after its 2007 acquisition of the National and Alamo brands from Cerberus Capital Management.

Before the acquisition, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Alamo and National, combined, had 27 percent market share at airports, and the company has since grown that to 34 percent.

Part of Enterprise’s growth has been fueled by expanding internationally, including its 2012 acquisition of a 15 percent ownership stake in eHi AutoServices in China.

“It all boils down to the domestic rental car market being saturated with a few top players,” said Nima Samadi, an analyst with business research firm IBISWorld, based in Santa Monica, Calif. “There’s little room for those players to grow” except for international markets.

At the end of last year, the company franchised its flagship Enterprise Rent-A-Car brand for the first time in a partnership with Guerin Car Rental Solutions in Portugal.
More franchise deals followed, including a new franchise deal for its first Alamo and National car rental locations in Uruguay signed last week.

“Our goal is to franchise the rest of the world,” Nicholson said, adding that the company has 17 additional companies in the franchise pipeline. “It definitely is part of our growth model.”

Enterprise is taking the right steps with its franchise efforts and international expansion to grow its business, Samadi said.

“Enterprise is concerned about growth, and they’re making efforts to place themselves in a position to grow going forward,” he said.

The new CEO said the company would continue to grow both Enterprise’s airport and neighborhood locations, in addition to making more investments in car-sharing. The fast-growing car-sharing segment allows members to access a car for a shorter period of time than a standard car rental, for a shopping run or a night out.

Enterprise entered the car-sharing business in 2007 and has made several acquisitions of car share companies in Philadelphia, Boston and New York. Last week, Enterprise announced its acquisition of IGO Car Sharing in Chicago, which rents vehicles by the hour.
Despite posting bond, Saudi remains behind bars in Warrensburg bar owner murder

June 5

WARRENSBURG, Mo. — Ziyad Abid was a Missouri college student aspiring to become a pilot like his father back home in Saudi Arabia when he was accused of paying his roommate to kill a Warrensburg bar owner.

The judge set bond at $2 million, completely out of reach for his family - but not for the Saudi government.

The money came in. Yet two months later, Abid remains jailed because a judge is refusing to let him out. The judge acknowledged he may be violating the Missouri Constitution, which allows suspects to be held without bond only in capital murder cases.

But the judge won't budge. Or explain why.

Abid's lawyers, including a former U.S. attorney for Missouri, have asked a state appeals court to release Abid and remove Circuit Judge Michael Wagner from the case, arguing that he's biased in part by Abid's nationality. The court has given Wagner until Monday to respond.

Abid was studying aviation at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg when his roommate, Reginald Singletary Jr., admitted killing popular bar owner Blaine Whitworth in September but claimed Abid paid him to do it, according to court documents. Prosecutors haven't disclosed an alleged motive, but defense attorneys said Abid had no personal connection to Whitworth and that Singletary had been fired as the bar's bouncer.

"There's no indication whatsoever this case has anything to do with any kind of subversive activity or terrorism," said defense attorney John Osgood, the former federal prosecutor. "This is a plain, old simple murder of a bar owner done by a bouncer who was fired a week before. My client just happened to be his roommate."
Both men are charged with first-degree murder, but not capital murder, and armed criminal offense. If convicted, they could face up to life in prison.

Johnson County prosecutor Lynn Stoppy declined to comment on case details, but said she agreed with a previous judge's ruling that Abid should be granted bond. An attorney for Singletary, who remains jailed on $1 million bond, declined comment.

Wagner hasn't returned messages from The Associated Press.

David Mitchell, a professor at the University of Missouri School of Law, agreed that Wagner may have "an unconscious bias that might be acting out" about Abid's nationality. He said the judge likely fears Abid could flee ahead of his Aug. 20 trial, noting that the involvement of the Saudi government, a U.S. ally, is especially unusual and has increased that speculation.

"Imagine if this judge grants bail and this person flees. Think of the ramifications," Mitchell said.

Wagner's predecessor in the case, Johnson County Circuit Judge Jacqueline Cook, initially denied bond in November because she feared Abid would flee or be deported. She said Abid's revoked student visa - the result of him being expelled from school - could open the door for the government to deport him ahead of trial.

But two weeks later, she acknowledged Missouri's constitution required bond and set it at $2 million. That same day, she retired - and handed the case to Wagner.

David A. Martin, a law professor at the University of Virginia School of Law who specializes in immigration issues, said the judge's concerns weren't unfounded.

"There have been instances of this kind in the past where someone who bonded out from a criminal proceeding moved quickly through the deportation proceeding and was deported before local law enforcement knew about it," Martin said. "I know ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) was working on better communication in that kind of setting, but these instances have occurred."

That's what frightens the slain bar owner's mother. Diane Whitworth said she's afraid Abid would ask to be deported if he's released from jail.

"We understand nothing we can do will bring our son back," she told the AP. "It isn't just about one person. It's about anyone who comes to the U.S. to avail themselves of our educational system and commits a crime. They have the potential luxury of being deported before anything happens."

An ICE spokesman declined comment. But one of Abid's attorneys, Pat Peters, insisted the government rarely deports foreigners in such cases.
Peters also said Abid was expelled because he couldn't attend classes while in jail. But the university's associate provost, Corey Bowman, said Abid had violated school policies "not directly related" to his arrest. Bowman said he couldn't release details, citing privacy laws.

Still, defense attorneys insist Abid isn't going anywhere, arguing that prosecutors' case won't hold up. In a recent court motion, they said Singletary gave investigators several stories - including saying a Kansas City gang put him up to the killing, then agreeing with interrogators that the mafia made him do it - before saying Abid was involved.

"While there is overwhelming evidence that Singletary killed Whitworth, there is no corroborating or physical evidence suggesting Abid was involved: no DNA, no fingerprints, nothing. There is only the statement of confessed murderer Singletary," the attorneys wrote.

In unsuccessfully trying to lower his bond, Abid's attorneys argued it would bankrupt his family to post the 10 percent - or $200,000 - that bond companies require before posting bail.

Abid's father, Saudi Airlines pilot Tariq Abid, eventually persuaded the Saudi government to post the $2 million bond, according to court records.

The younger Abid was equipped with an electronic monitoring device on April 2. His family paid $2,500 for the device and pays $15 per day to have someone monitor it, even though Abid is in jail, his attorneys said.

During a hearing April 5, Wagner told Peters the court would be satisfied if $2 million were deposited in its bank account. The money was wired that day, according to court documents. But a few days later, Wagner reversed himself.

Peters confronted him, according to court transcripts, saying: "I just want to make sure I heard this court just say that despite the law, despite Judge Cook's order, despite the representations by the prosecutor and defense counsel, you have just said 'no bond' in this case."

"That is correct, counsel," Wagner said, according to the transcript.

It's not unusual for the Saudi government to help its citizens who get into trouble in the U.S., but Wagner's response is far from the norm, said John Leger, an attorney for the Saudi government who handles legal matters for the Saudi consulate overseeing Missouri and 15 other U.S. states.

"I've been doing this over 40 years, and I've never seen this," Leger said, estimating that about 47,000 Saudi students are in the U.S.

"It's not whether (Abid) deserves it or does not, or if he's guilty or not guilty," he said. "The rules say he's entitled to a bond."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU faculty member Monika Fischer watches protests in Turkey first-hand

By Julia Sumpter
June 4, 2013 | 7:27 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Protests in Turkey have persisted since Friday, with thousands rallying against plans to build a shopping center in a popular green space. The protests in central Taksim Square, a major square in Istanbul, have been met with severe police intervention, including tear gas and water cannons. What was once a small sit-in has escalated into a widespread anti-government demonstration. Protests have also sprung up in other Turkish cities, including the capital Ankara.

Monika Fischer, the associate director of the MU Honors College and an associate teaching professor of German, is in Turkey this week for a trip abroad with other faculty. She was in Taksim Square, observing the unrest firsthand. Fischer answered questions by email Tuesday afternoon, about 9 p.m. in Turkey.

Q. Do you or the other faculty feel like you are in danger?

A. No, not I nor anyone I met. The danger comes from police attacking at night. I leave when it gets dark and keep mostly to the side in case there is trouble. There are thousands of people fairly close together, and if anything would happen it would be difficult for first aid to arrive. Last night I saw five emergency vehicles parked around Taksim.

Q. What other kinds of things have you been seeing?

A. Lots and lots of people gather in the evening hours (thousands I’d say) and chant and sing or, as they do right now, clap hands and bang their silverware on glasses or bang pots. That’s people sitting in restaurants or just walking along. Istiklal is a famous shopping street and always crowded, but now one sees lots of people with gas masks and flags and street vendors selling water, gas masks and whistles.

Q. Have the demonstrators been peaceful?
A. Altogether my impression has been it is a peaceful crowd, much like the Occupy movement. People dance and sing in the streets. It has been getting ugly when police move in and use excessive force.

Q. Who are these protesters?

A. I heard on Al Jazeera today a commentary that addresses that no one specific is in charge — kinda like Occupy. Lots of groups and individuals, mostly urban youth, are complaining about the increasing Islamization politics of the A.K.P. (the party in charge since 2001).

It all started with bulldozers moving in six months ago, and no one knew what was happening. The government did not ask the people or inform them that they planned to build a shopping mall where a fairly small park — Gezi Park — is located. So it started with the park, but a lot of frustration about the government is coming up, about freedom of speech (Turkey has the highest number of journalists in prison) and also environmental concerns about a new bridge over the Bosphorus.

Q. What is the general tone in the city?

A. Everyone helps everyone; that spirit is in the air. It's like a big party (sort of) but also tension in the air. People are walking along Istiklal and side streets, and of course Taksim, and chanting anti-government slogans everyone seems to know and chime in or clap hands when they pass to show their support.

Q. Turkish news outlets weren't covering this initially. How did that change?

A. Turkish media was not allowed to cover the demos the first few days. A friend of mine has a Turkish journalist friend who works for Bloomberg Turkey and has not been allowed to cover the demos. Bloomberg threatened to pull out of Turkey, I heard, and now TVs and newspapers are writing about the event. I was at the Kadir Has University and Lerna Yarnik, a professor of political science, told me she got her news from a Norwegian channel. Social media stepped in, and that's how many people found out and gathered.

Q. What kinds of things are you hearing?

Chicken-Free Strips for Best Bites

1 hour ago • By Joe Bonwich

This stuff was developed in conjunction with the University of Missouri and one of its offices is in Columbia. We've had it in the past as an ingredient in some of Whole Foods' deli items, but now it's available in the refrigerated case with many other meat substitutes. Its claim to fame is that it fooled überfoodie Mark Bittman (twice); we think it depends on how you cook it, but it really does come as close to real chicken flavor (and texture) as anything we've tried.

Size • 12 ounces/340 grams

Price: • $4.99 at Whole Foods Market

Per (3-ounce) serving • 120 calories; 4.5g fat; no saturated fat; no trans fat; no cholesterol; 290mg sodium; 5g carbohydrate; 3g fiber; no sugar; 18g protein.

— Joe Bonwich