UM Press Advisory Committee recommends strategic changes

By Greta Weber
June 10, 2013 | 9:03 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — On the brink of closing just more than a year ago, the UM Press is now re-evaluating its publishing strategies.

University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe announced in May 2012 that the press would close because of budgetary constraints. The announcement spurred a backlash from MU faculty members and supporters of the press, causing Wolfe and system administrators to rescind their decision on Aug. 28.

They also decided to shift the control of the press from the UM System to MU. It created the UM Press Advisory Committee in September to help the press with the transition.

Craig Roberts, one of two faculty council representatives to the advisory committee, presented a report, prepared by him and fellow representative Rebecca Johnson, at Thursday's Faculty Council meeting. It outlined several recommendations for improving press operations.

"We're advising the press to do some thinking about how they do business," Roberts said.

The report offered five main recommendations, along with arguments for why they're good ideas:

- **Expanding content:** The press, the report says, should consider expanding its content from English, history and related disciplines to medicine, nursing, agriculture, business and/or engineering. Publishing content in more subjects — particularly the sciences — would require the press to move out of its comfort zone and develop a critical mass to justify sustained effort in acquisitions and marketing.

- **UM titles:** The press needs to consider publishing the university's best content, the report suggests, adding that publishing elite faculty content would bring prestige to the press, capture revenue that is being siphoned off by for-profit presses and would render the press less dependent on UM subsidies.
• **Financial reporting:** The report says that it is mandatory that financial summaries and detailed reports be provided to advisory committee members so financial matters can be discussed with transparency. Otherwise, committee advice will be of limited value.

• **Sustainability discussions:** The press needs to engage its advisory committee and other critical thinkers in an open dialogue regarding its long-term stability, the report suggests. It recommends a sense of urgency in discussing a new business model over the next three years.

• **Improved messages:** The press needs to create a concise and persuasive message that attracts widespread faculty support, the report says.

The report also discussed the lack of faculty consultation regarding the decision to close the press. "Both the council as well as the general faculty disapproved of the manner in which the press was closed — without shared governance or faculty input," the report reads.

Mel George, chairman of the Press Advisory Committee, wished Roberts and Johnson had included that its highest and most urgent priority is to recruit a new permanent director.

"Many people on the overall committee, while understanding the point of view that Craig expressed and wishing to discuss it, felt that we needed to have permanent leadership in place before we jointly reached any decisions about the future," George said.

The new director needs to be someone "who is experienced, who knows the university press field, who is open to new ideas but comes from a background of knowledge," Mel said.

He said a search committee is working to name a new director this summer.

"I am doing very little thinking about the future of the press until we know who the director will be," George said.

Jane Lago, former managing editor of the press, came out of retirement to serve as the consulting director during the transition. She agreed that finding a new director is the next step.

"At the last meeting, it was decided to wait until a new director is hired to hold the next meeting, rather than advising a person who is not present in the room — an unknown entity," Lago said.
Roberts emphasized that analyzing the press's financial reports and pursuing a new business model should be top priorities.

"The press is a good press, it's just the way that they're conducting their operation," Roberts said. "They're operating the old way that got them in trouble in the first place."

The "old way" Roberts referred to combines a UM subsidy of $400,000, limited buy-in to the press and budgetary strain. Roberts said those factors combine to create a vulnerable business model.

Roberts said he and Johnson have requested financial reports from the press, including information about the production costs and sales revenue of the books it has published. No one has given them those reports.

"It is serious, as the financial aspects of the press have attracted severe criticism," the report stated.

Roberts pointed to a consultant report from the winter of 2008-09 advising the press to form a management board. The report stated that such a board is "the single most important determining factor in the long-term success of a press."

Regarding other recommendations in the report, Lago said expanding the press's content is something that press administrators have been looking at very hard. They are considering the types of books being published and the venues through which they are distributed.

"We very much appreciate Dr. Roberts's recognition of how much we have achieved in the past year and are very grateful for the ongoing support of the Faculty Council and their help with bringing the press, and the books that we publish, much greater visibility on the MU campus," she said.

Although Roberts said that he doesn’t have any evidence to believe the press is pursuing any new business models, Lago expressed openness to change.

"Book publishing is changing for everybody, and it's changing quickly," Lago said. "We face the same challenges that every publisher is facing, and I hope we're positioning ourselves so that we'll be able to change and adapt in the years to come."

Supervising editor is Scott Swafford.
FROM READERS: Museum should be at the heart of MU's campus

By Shared by W. Arthur Mehrhoff/Missourian Reader
June 10, 2013 | 1:39 p.m. CDT

W. Arthur Mehrhoff is the academic coordinator for the MU Museum of Art and Archaeology.

"The idea that aesthetic perception is an affair for odd minutes is one reason for the backwardness of the arts among us. The eyes and visual apparatus may be intact: the object may be physically there: the cathedral of Notre Dame, or Rembrandt’s portrait of Hendrickje Stoffels. In some bald sense, the latter may be 'seen.' They may be looked at, possibly recognized, and have their correct names attached. But for lack of continuous interaction between the total organism and the objects, they are not perceived, certainly not aesthetically."

Noted British educator and public policy leader Sir Ken Robinson of the Getty Foundation, who gave the keynote presentation at the 2012 Excellence in Teaching conference here at the University of Missouri, remarked: "Nobody has a guaranteed seat at the top anymore. They never did, of course, but the fact is that if America wants to remain competitive in the global markets of the 21st century, [integrative thinking] is not a luxury. America needs a workforce that is flexible, adaptable and highly creative; and it needs an education system that can develop these qualities in everyone."

In short, an integrative university experience involving higher-level thinking is no longer optional in the new knowledge economy; engagement with the arts and humanities offers survival value for the future of America itself.

A growing number of academic and business leaders share Robinson’s enthusiasm for highlighting the arts and creativity in higher education.

"The arts are valuable in the real challenges we face in educating students in this century," said John L. Hennessey, president of Stanford University in the very heart of Silicon Valley. "They are helpful when it comes to building creative skills — or tooling that ability to think..."
outside the box, as well as teaching students to understand the increasingly diverse multicultural nature of the world and the evolution of societies."

Matthew W. Barrett, Chief Executive Officer of Barclays Bank in London, stresses the importance of a liberal arts background for success in business; Barrett maintains that a young person who can decode the imagery in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales or conduct sophisticated iconographical analysis of a Renaissance painting can also learn how to break down a balance sheet.

The American Association of Colleges & University’s report, College Learning for the New Global Century, concluded that integrative learning should now be considered an "essential learning outcome." These leaders believe the arts and humanities are essential, not peripheral, to the future of university education.

However, moving the Museum of Art & Archaeology to the north edge of Columbia “for the foreseeable future” with no transparent plan for its future place in the life of the campus sends exactly the opposite message to that of visionary leaders like Robinson, Hennesey and Barrett.

It's not quite the same as creating a virtual museum, but limbo status certainly reinforces the image of the Museum as a “hidden jewel” to be displayed on special, ceremonial occasions as John Dewey pointed out in his remark, an “affair for odd minutes.” Out of sight, out of mind does not heighten visual literacy, aesthetic experience, or the occasional chance encounter with an object that can change your life.

Museum educators increasingly offer a much more compelling vision of the Museum as the focal point for a thoughtful, creative 21st century university education that celebrates creativity and critical thinking, heritage and diversity.

For example, the highly respected Carnegie Foundation for Higher Education also suggested that "strategic points of connection" like the Museum of Art & Archaeology offer the most promising venues for integrative learning (and its report on that topic can be found here).

The Nasher Museum of Duke University bridges the campus and community as well as offering a focal point for interdisciplinary courses and research. Strategic points of connection like the Museum of Art & Archaeology offer students vital docking stations for the endlessly expanding universe of their knowledge and understanding.
As the Academic Coordinator for the Museum of Art & Archaeology, I believe strongly that the Museum of Art & Archaeology deserves pride of place in the heart and soul of the 21st century university.

**The real question is: What do you think is its proper place?**

*The Missourian would welcome more viewpoints on this issue. This story is part of a section of the Missourian called From Readers, which is dedicated to your voices and your stories. We hope you'll consider sharing. Here's how. Supervising editor is Joy Mayer.*
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Dean Roger Mitchell was 'an angel on Earth'

By NANCY ATKINSON
June 7, 2013 | 3:20 p.m. CDT

Our community and beyond has lost a wonderful, compassionate man — Dr. Roger Mitchell, the former dean of the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

Roger never boasted about himself, so to me and others, he was simply known as Roger.

I met Roger 13 years ago while volunteering at the Food Bank. I soon discovered that my dad had worked for Roger in the agronomy department at MU.

When Roger found out who my dad was, he was delighted. Whenever Roger would introduce me to someone, he would always tell people that he and my dad used to “work together.”

Those who never got to meet Roger missed knowing a true angel on Earth. Those who knew him know the sadness that is felt in our hearts that will remain.

Roger treated everyone he met with respect and grace. My 33-year-old son Chris, who has autism, got to feel that love from Roger, who always gave him big hugs.

Roger was always so excited to hear about whatever was going on in my children's lives. When he found out that my son was riding at Cedar Creek Therapeutic Riding Center in Columbia, Roger donated his 50-year-old riding saddle to them for Chris to ride on a big horse.

When Roger heard that another son of mine would be attending MU, he was very excited for him. Roger was there every step of the way, always willing and eager to write recommendation letters for him whenever asked to do so. And then, when my son graduated from MU, Roger was there, along with his wife, to see that success. He was just as proud as the rest of us.

He was a true gentleman with sweetness and kindness, loved by all. What a privilege and honor to have known this man.
Roger is on a very short “list” I have of the greatest men I’ve ever known, starting with my dad. Roger was an angel on Earth — now somewhere over the rainbow.

He is one of God’s angels in heaven ... no doubt “working with” my dad, making so many others smile, just like he did here on Earth.

Rest in peace, Roger, you deserve it.

Nancy Atkinson lives in Columbia.
Missouri audit faults $170K given to child-care centers

By DAVID A. LIEB

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri paid more than $170,000 to several child-care providers that failed to follow through on plans to open or expand facilities, according to a state audit released Monday.

Auditor Tom Schweich also faulted state officials for allowing what he called "a pretty serious conflict of interest" in which a supervisor at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education also directed a University of Missouri entity that received state contracts to assess preschool programs.

The audit focused on programs financed by Missouri’s Early Childhood Development, Education, and Care Fund before June 30, 2012. The fund had received its revenues from casino fees but, under a change passed last year by lawmakers, now gets a share of Missouri’s proceeds from a national settlement with tobacco companies.

Schweich gave state officials a “poor” rating for the management of the fund, the lowest grade possible on his rating scale.

Among its numerous findings, the audit cited three specific grants awarded by the Department of Social Services for child-care providers to open or expand their facilities:

• One grant provided $89,000 to a child-care facility to expand its capacity by 24 slots, but the audit said the center increased capacity by 14 spots and then was sold within less than a year to a buyer who did not wish to continue in the state grant program.

• Another grant provided $60,000 for a new facility capable of caring for 16 children, but the center never was built.
A $22,500 grant was awarded to operate an in-home child care facility, but no children ever attended. The grant included $18,700 for the owner’s salary, but the owner said she received no interest in any children attending her facility, the audit said.

“We don't have any evidence of fraud” in those three cases, Schweich said. “But there was no serious effort to get the money back, and that was our problem.”

The Department of Social Services said Monday that it is seeking to recoup $89,062.50 from two of the entities, in Dexter and Higginsville, but had not received any money as of June 1.

In a written response included in the audit, the department said the third facility had complied with the legal obligations of its contract.

The Legislature stopped funding the department's start-up and expansion grants to child-care facilities in July 2012. But the department said it agrees with the auditor's recommendation to strengthen its policies and procedures for contracts.

Schweich also cited an alleged conflict of interest involving Kathy Thornburg, although she was not mentioned by name. Thornburg was the assistant commissioner in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for the Office of Early and Extended Learning from April 2010 through August 2012 while also serving as director of the Center for Family Policy and Research at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

In September 2010, the state education department awarded a no-bid contract to the university entity to perform assessments of preschool programs, the audit said. The state Department of Social Services awarded contracts to the university entity in October 2010 and September 2011 to conduct educational assessments of child-care facilities.

Thornburg was not directly involved in awarding the contract or approving payments, but she supervised state employees responsible for issuing early childhood contracts and continued to work on the contracted programs through the university initiative, Schweich said.

“It's clearly a conflict of interest, and it just undermines public confidence when things like that happen,” Schweich said.

The education department said in a written response attached to the audit that it “will continue to avoid apparent conflicts of interest.” The audit said the state agency and university determined when Thornburg was hired by the state that there was no conflict because she would not be approving state contracts between the entities.

Thornburg did not immediately return messages seeking comment Monday.
Most women suffering intimate partner abuse don't get therapy

U.S. women abused by their intimate partners tend to have post-traumatic stress disorder and/or depression, but don't get psychological help, researchers say.

Mansoo Yu, an assistant professor of social work in the College of Human Environmental Sciences University of Missouri, studied the rates of PTSD, depression and substance abuse among 50 female intimate partner violence survivors and the types of services the women used.

The study, published in Social Work in Mental Health, found the majority of the women did not use any mental health services, but they reported regularly seeing their primary care physicians, Yu said.

"More than half of the women participating in our study suffered from depression, PTSD or both illnesses," Yu said in a statement. "However, most of the survivors had not used mental health services in the past year, even though they reported having access to the services. Social stigma, shame, privacy concerns, healthcare costs and lack of information may prevent survivors from getting the help they need."

The abused women in the study also reported having trouble accessing housing, legal services, crisis lines and medical care, the study said.

"Abuse causes harm, and service providers and health professionals should strive to end abuse and the mental suffering that lingers in its wake by connecting survivors with services," Yu said.
Recession is over, but many are still 'food insecure' in St. Louis area

By Mary Delach Leonard, Beacon staff

6:55 am on Mon, 06.10.13

Chances are, a university would not be the first location you’d think about if you were setting up a food pantry to assist the needy in the farmbelt of the Midwest.

So hats off to a group of enterprising students at the University of Missouri at Columbia who recognized that there were members of their campus community who couldn’t afford to buy food -- and then did something about it. The student-run Tiger Pantry, which opened its doors on campus last fall, has provided free food to 1,300 needy students and employees so far this year.

Tim Lewis, 22, of Sullivan, Mo., who helped organize the pantry, points to some telling numbers: 15,000 Mizzou students qualify for need-based aid and at least 1,000 students can expect less than $1,000 a year in help from their families. In addition, there are staff members in low-wage jobs and graduate students who are paid at or below the poverty level.

By opening a pantry on campus -- “Mizzou Tigers helping Mizzou Tigers” -- the students hoped to cut down on the stigma associated with visiting the community food pantry in Columbia, Lewis said.

I stumbled across the news of the Tiger Pantry while researching a story on an unrelated topic. But it stuck with me because the issue of hunger -- or food insecurity as it is now called -- has been brought to my attention in a number of ways recently.

Several weeks ago, I was invited to attend an informal gathering of media folks to learn about Operation Food Search, a nonprofit that distributes 2 million pounds of free food each month to needy residents in the St. Louis region. Among the presenters was Kate Antonacci of Panera Bread who offered an update on the company’s “meal of shared responsibility” -- a program that allows customers to pay what they can for turkey chili served in a sourdough bread bowl. Since the program began in March, the meal has been ordered more than 10,000 times, Antonacci said.
Food insecurity was also on the agenda at an agribusiness conference that I attended last week at the University of Illinois sponsored by the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting. Topics ranged from ethanol production to food quality, and one session was devoted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s hunger-fighting efforts: food stamps and subsidized school lunches.

Since 2007, the rate of food insecurity in the U.S. has increased by one-third, according to USDA research. In 2011, 15 percent of Americans -- 50 million people -- were food insecure. In St. Louis, according to Census Bureau statistics, 135,000 children are at risk.

The bottom line: The recession may be over, but hunger has not gone away.

Over the next weeks, I will be sharing what I’m learning about food insecurity in our region -- and what’s being done about it. In addition to facts and figures, I will be including stories about grassroots efforts: What people are doing to help their neighbors.

If you’d like to share a personal perspective or experience -- or you know about a program that has been effective -- please drop me a line: mdelachleonard@stlbeacon.org
Carter C. Price is a math geek.

Make that a super math geek. Mr. Price has both a master’s and doctorate in applied mathematics from the University of Maryland to go with his math and physics degrees from Hendrix College in Arkansas.

So when Mr. Price, an associate mathematician at the nonpartisan Rand Corporation, studies Medicaid expansion in the states as proscribed by the federal Affordable Care Act, what he cares about is not the policy, but what that policy does to the numbers.

In this case, the math is simple.

If states expand Medicaid, their bottom-line health care costs will be significantly less than if they don’t.

That’s not politics. It’s not spin. It’s just math.

The numbers in the Rand study authored by Mr. Price should not be a surprise to people who have been paying attention. Numerous studies now, including in Missouri, have pointed to the simple reality of the policy implications of the ACA to argue for Medicaid expansion. Over the next three years, the federal government picks up nearly all of the tab for putting millions of more Americans on insurance. States expanding their Medicaid programs will bear nearly no costs, while seeing overall health care costs go down because when people are uninsured they enter the health care system through more expensive emergency rooms.

The Rand study confirmed what we already knew.

In looking at 14 states in which governors had vowed not to expand Medicaid, Rand found four key numbers:

- 3.6 million fewer Americans will have insurance if those states don’t expand Medicaid.
- Those states will give up $8.4 billion in federal reimbursement costs.
- The hit to those state budgets for not expanding Medicaid will actually be $1 billion in additional health care costs.
- 19,000 people will die.
That last number should be the only one that matters. Frankly, there are public policy decisions that should be made for moral reasons, costs be damned. This is one of them. Giving people access to health insurance saves lives. That's just a fact. Lawmakers don't like to talk about it, but it should be the single most important factor in states like Missouri. People will die early and unnecessarily unless stubborn political opposition is overcome and states provide health insurance to the working poor.

That the decision also makes financial sense is really just gravy. But the financial argument makes the intransigence of the Republicans in the Missouri Legislature who refused to give Medicaid expansion serious discussion all the more alarming.

Republicans used to understand money. What happened?

Lawmakers ignored the University of Missouri study that showed how the investment of federal dollars would spur thousands of health-care jobs. They ignored a handful of other studies pointing to the economic and budgetary benefits of Medicaid expansion because they were either funded by the health-care industry or other left-leaning think tanks.

They should not ignore the Rand study, funded completely by Rand, Mr. Price said. It makes it clear, if it wasn't clear already, that Missouri lawmakers made the state's future budget situation worse, not better, by declining federal Medicaid dollars.

Even though Missouri wasn't one of the states studied, "The broad takeaways would apply across the nation," Mr. Price said.

Both the Missouri House and Senate have appointed interim committees to study Medicaid "reform" and expansion. Every member of the committee should start with a reading of the Rand study. It's time for Missouri lawmakers to put aside their partisan opposition to Medicaid expansion and focus on the facts. Do the math.

The numbers tell the truth: Putting more Missourians on health care policies will save the state money. It will create jobs. It will save lives.

That last sentence should have been all the supposedly "pro-life" Missouri Legislature needed to hear. So let's say it one more time for good measure.

Expand Medicaid or people die.