MU chancellor search forums set

The University of Missouri System is seeking help from the public in its first steps toward finding a new chancellor for the Columbia campus.

System officials on Thursday announced the dates, times and locations for two public forums to get input from the public on the qualities needed in the next MU chancellor.

UM System President Tim Wolfe will host the forums on the MU campus. They will be from 10 to 11 a.m. on July 22 in Jesse Hall Auditorium and on July 25 in the Jesse Wrench auditorium at Memorial Student Union.

“Like the 21 leaders who have come before, the next chancellor must understand and respect this historic institution, its stakeholders and its role in Missouri, while leading the university to new heights of greatness,” Wolfe said in a statement.

“As president of the University of Missouri System, I am eager to hear Missourians’ thoughts on the qualities and characteristics they would like to see in the next MU chancellor.”

The new chancellor will replace Brady Deaton, who last month announced his retirement effective Nov. 15.
Patrons want answers about MU museums' future

Professors, patrons question MU logistics.

By Karyn Spory

Thursday, July 18, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Although the upcoming moves of two University of Missouri museums from the heart of campus to the former Ellis Fischel Cancer Center on the Business Loop have been called temporary, many are still wondering what the end plan is for the two facilities.

The Museum of Art and Archaeology and Museum of Anthropology are being moved at the end of this year as part of a nearly $23 million project to renovate historic buildings around Francis Quadrangle, including Jesse Hall. Pickard Hall houses the art and archeology museum, and the anthropology museum is in Swallow Hall. MU's Faculty Council hosted a campus forum yesterday on the situation.

In a recent letter to the Columbia City Council, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton confirmed that plans to move the museums off the main campus were temporary. However, Jackie Jones, vice chancellor for administrative services at MU, and Michael O'Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and director of the Museum of Anthropology, said they did not feel comfortable giving a timeline for when the museums would return.

O'Brien said it is easy for an administrator to stand in front of a group and guarantee a project will be done by a certain date. But "what you're doing is tying the hands of somebody down the road," he said.

He said he knows people want reassurance that the moves are temporary, but because of the radiation testing and decommissioning to be done in Pickard Hall, they are unable to give a more specific timeline. Options are open for what the museums' futures could hold.

"You've seen letters from the city council about joining forces down the road. Those are all possibilities that are on the table," O'Brien said, referring to talk of potential partnerships in creating new museum facilities.
Angela Speck, director of astronomy at MU, asked on behalf of Sixth Ward Councilwoman Barbara Hoppe — who was unable to attend the forum — whether the university had started any conversations with the State Historical Society of Missouri, another entity that has made plans for relocating its museum. O'Brien said conversations with the historical society had been going on for years.

Alex Barker, director of the Museum of Art and Archaeology, said because each of the museums and the historical society have different governing bodies, there might be challenges in uniting them in a single facility. He said he was not aware of current conversations among the three entities.

Lois Huneycutt, director of graduate studies and associate professor of history, said she was concerned about how not having the museums on campus will affect her undergraduate students. Huneycutt said she uses the collections extensively for two undergraduate classes and will have to redesign those courses.

"One thing I've not seen discussed here is, how do we use those collections for our undergraduate teaching purposes?" she said.

Jones said transportation options were still being discussed, but there likely will be a shuttle system.

Community members were also curious why, if Mizzou North is so big, the museums were using the same footprint. Barker said because Mizzou North is being used as a temporary space for several departments, including staff being displaced from Jesse Hall, the museum will have the same amount of space available during the campus renovations. Jones said that once Jesse and Swallow hall renovations are completed, however, there will be more room at Mizzou North for museum displays.

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Posted in Education on Thursday, July 18, 2013 2:00 pm.
Lee Elementary pushes for keeping MU museum nearby

By Catherine Martin

Thursday, July 18, 2013 at 2:00 pm

When Lee Elementary School parents and staff members found out the University of Missouri's Museum of Art and Archaeology was moving away from campus without a firm date for return, it was a shock to the school community, PTA President Amy Sarver said.

Lee is Columbia Public Schools' expressive arts school, and trips to the museum are a major part of its curriculum, Sarver said. All students in grades K-5 take a walking field trip there at least twice a semester, teachers said.

Aside from exposing children to art, trips to the museum help tie art to other curriculum areas. For example, if a class is learning about weather, students might go look at landscapes, first-grade teacher Lottie Bushmann said yesterday after a campus forum about the upcoming moves of MU's Museum of Art and Archaeology and Museum of Anthropology. The moves stem from renovations planned at campus buildings.

"We take trips there because it goes with the curriculum," kindergarten teacher Jacque Kephart said. "It's not just random trips."

Soon, though, the museum will no longer be within walking distance of Lee, which is at 1208 Locust St. In December, the museum will be relocated from Pickard Hall to Mizzou North, the former Ellis Fischel Cancer Center on the Business Loop.

Lee teachers and parents have pressed the university to make sure the museum moves back downtown, although administrators have not said when that might happen.

"Our concern is it won't come back," kindergarten teacher Cindy Kilfoyle said.

Many parents sent letters to MU's chancellor and president, Sarver said, and teachers had students write letters, too.
Art teacher Ann Mehr, who has been with the school since it became an expressive arts school, kept the Lee community informed on the situation.

Yesterday, a few teachers and parents attended the campus meeting, including Betsy Raghu and her three children. Not only do her children attend Lee, Raghu said, "we live in East Campus, and it has been a weekly thing for us to visit the museum. Having it walking distance from our home and school is an integral part of our lives."

Her oldest, third-grader Arjuna, agreed.

"I like how close it is to my house and how close it is to my school so we can walk to it," Arjuna said.

Although teachers hope to continue trips to the new location, they're unsure how frequent those will be.

"Money for busing is hard to come by," Bushmann said.

Teachers are already rearranging some plans for next year, such as moving up from spring to fall a fifth-grade project in which each student gives a presentation on a museum piece.

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At long last, the public will be able to visit the Museum of Art and Archaeology, which has been practically hidden by the University of Missouri for many years. Being able to visit this highly visible new location will be of great benefit to Boone County, the city of Columbia and the University of Missouri. I cannot imagine anyone opposing this move.
NO MU MENTION

JEFFERSON CITY • Gov. Jay Nixon used one of the St. Louis business community's new pet issues Thursday to press for its support on a big political fight he's got brewing.

About halfway through a 12-minute lunchtime speech to the St. Louis Regional Chamber — after name-checking a string of corporate expansions in the region, chest-thumping about Missouri's low unemployment rate and touting a series of small tax cuts — Nixon started praising the Chamber's recently launched push to boost the share of people with college degrees in St. Louis.

"As you have said, no accomplishment will be more important to our future economic viability," Nixon told the room full of Chamber members. "I could not agree more."

And that, Nixon said, is why those same Chamber leaders should support his veto of an income tax cut passed by the General Assembly in May. The measure, which would lower both personal income tax by a half-point and corporate income taxes by 3 percentage points over a decade, would blow an $800 million hole in Missouri's budget, Nixon said. That is more than the state spends on "every single one of our public two- and four-year colleges, combined."

"Members of the General Assembly can either support (the tax cut) or they can support education," he said. "They cannot do both."

Nixon is stumping for support ahead of a September veto session that will likely decide the tax cut issue. Supporters of the cut, including some statewide business groups, say it will make Missouri's economy more competitive, especially against neighboring Kansas, where lawmakers passed a sharper income tax reduction last year. They're joined by billionaire free-marketeer Rex Sinquefield, who has donated $2.3 million just this month to help finance a PR blitz that will urge lawmakers to override Nixon's veto.

The issue has been a hot button all year in Jefferson City and in Kansas City, where a number of companies have jumped the border to Kansas. But St. Louis-area business groups have largely stayed out of the fray. The Regional Chamber did not take a formal position on the tax cut during the legislative session, and that stance has not changed, spokesman Gary Broome said Thursday.

Nixon is trying to change that, to pull them into the game on his side of the field. Even if St. Louis' corporate titans don't stand up for the veto, he said after the speech, he's confident it will stand. No matter how much Sinquefield spends.

"If it's one guy against 6 million Missourians," Nixon said, "I like our side."
WASHINGTON — Senators are ready to offer students a better deal on their college loans this fall, but future classes could see higher interest rates.

The Senate could vote as early as Thursday on a bipartisan compromise that heads off a costly increase for returning students.

A senior administration official said the White House was deeply involved in the negotiations and supports the agreement as a way to get lower rates now and protect students from future rate increases. The official was not authorized to discuss the negotiations on the record and spoke on condition of anonymity. The compromise could be a good deal for students through the 2015 academic year, but then interest rates are expected to climb above where they were when students left campus in the spring.

Under the deal, all undergraduates this fall could borrow at 3.85 percent interest rates. Graduate students would have access to loans at 5.4 percent, and parents would be able to borrow at 6.4 percent. Those rates would climb as the economy improves and it becomes more expensive for the government to borrow money.

The deal was described by Republican and Democratic aides who insisted on anonymity because they were not allowed to be publicly identified discussing the ongoing negotiations.

Undergraduates last year borrowed at 3.4 percent or 6.8 percent, depending on their financial need. Graduate students had access to federal loans at 6.8 percent and parents borrowed at 7.9 percent. The interest rates would be linked to financial markets, but Democrats won a protection for students that rates would never climb higher than 8.25 percent for undergraduates. Graduate students would not pay rates higher than 9.5 percent, and parents' rates would top out at 10.5 percent.
The bipartisan agreement is expected to be the final in a string of efforts that have emerged from near-constant work to undo a rate hike that took hold for subsidized Stafford loans on July 1. Rates for new subsidized Stafford loans doubled from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent, adding roughly $2,600 to students' education costs.

Lawmakers from both parties called the increase senseless but differed on how they thought the lower rates should be restored. Republicans have pushed for a link between interest rates and the financial markets. Obama included that link in his budget proposal, as did House Republicans. Democrats balked, saying it could produce government profits on the backs of borrowers if rates continued to climb.

Leaders from both parties, however, recognized the potential to be blamed for the added costs in the 2014 elections if nothing were done. Senate aides said a vote on the agreement could come as early as Thursday, although it could be pushed back to the middle of next week. The House has already passed student loan legislation that also links interest rates to the 10-year Treasury note. The differences between the Senate and House versions are expected to be resolved before students return to campus this fall, and Obama is expected to sign the bill.

Few students had borrowed for fall classes. Students typically do not take out loans until just before they return to campus, and lawmakers have until the August recess to restore the lower rates. The students who had borrowed for summer programs since July 1 would have their rates retroactively reduced. The deal was estimated to reduce the deficit by $715 million over the next decade.

Lawmakers and their top aides have been tinkering with various proposals — nudging here, trimming there — trying to find a deal that avoids added red ink for students and the government alike.

Democrats and Republicans met with Obama and Vice President Joe Biden on Tuesday at the White House. An outline of an agreement seemed to be taking shape Tuesday, with follow-up meetings Wednesday in Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin’s office yielding a final agreement.

Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Republican Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina were the main negotiators, with Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee and Durbin filling the role of mediators.
Mizzou International Composers Festival keeps the surprises coming

By Caroline Ludeman, Beacon intern

6:59 am on Fri, 07.19.13

The Mizzou International Composers Festival, entering its fourth year, is built around the close cooperation of musicians and composers, a collaboration that leads to performances with an unusual degree of artistic insight.

The Festival is part of the Mizzou New Music Initiative, an array of programs intended to position the University of Missouri's School of Music as a leading center for music composition and new music.

Managing director of the Mizzou New Music Initiative Bill Lackey explains, "The idea (behind this festival) is to put out a national call for composers of the highest caliber and give them an opportunity to work with professionals in an intense time frame."

In addition to the festival itself, Lackey describes the opportunities given to participants, "I think the impact of this festival and what composers are doing with work beyond the festival is what is so exciting. The composers have used their recordings for winning awards, jobs and more. It provides the opportunity to propel a career even further."

After considering the largest number of applicants (150) yet in its history, the Missouri School of Music and the Mizzou New Music Initiative chose eight resident composers.

Each applicant submits a portfolio of 3-4 scores that showcase the versatility of his or her work. Once selected, the eight composers are given roughly six months to compose a piece for the contemporary music ensemble Alarm Will Sound's complete instrumentation. The music can last up to eight minutes.

The composers selected are Jason Thorpe Buchanan (Rochester, N.Y.), Ryan Chase (Bloomington, Ind.), Andrew Davis (Austin, Texas), Eric Guinivan (Los Angeles), Elizabeth Kelly (Rochester, N.Y.), Wei-Chieh Lin (New York, N.Y.), Greg Simon (Ann Arbor, Mich.), and David Witter (Columbia, Mo.).
Different paths to compositions

Composer Elizabeth Kelly lucked out during her six months of composition. It coincided with her selection as fellow at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. Those fellowships provide every resident artist the use of a private studio, accommodations, meals and the opportunity to engage with a dynamic artistic community for up to two months.

She says, “The place inspired the piece. I’ve been a city girl my entire life so I thought the woods would be quiet. Actually, it was noisier than the city! One day I was sitting there working and a huge crash sounded off the roof. Ice slid off and sounded like a bomb. Then birds were born outside my window and I couldn’t believe the noise they could make. Life was springing up everywhere and that inspired the piece.”

For composer Andrew Davis, the process was not as simple. He says, “I was trying to juggle other composition projects and this piece for Alarm Will Sound while also traveling all over the country interviewing for PhD programs in composition. Despite the seemingly large amount of time to write the piece, it was actually quite a time crunch for me.”

Alarm Will Sound, created in 2001, is a world-renowned 20-member chamber orchestra that focuses on recordings and performances of contemporary music.

For many composers, getting to work with Alarm Will Sound is a dream come true.

According to composer Greg Simon, “Alarm Will Sound has a sterling reputation for being on top of their game. Their reputation precedes itself for not only being incredible talented but being a group that is passionate about new music.”

During the festival, the composers will also receive composition lessons from guest composers Augusta Read Thomas (University Professor of composition at the University of Chicago and past composer-in-residence for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and Daniel Kellogg (an assistant professor of composition at the University of Colorado who has been called “one of the most exciting composers around” by the Washington Post.)

Having run in the same music circles, Thomas and Kellogg have known each other for more than 15 years.

About the festival, Thomas says, “I am really going into this to be a giver and not a receiver. While I cherish the chance to make music with great musicians, I also want to be a very good teacher and mentor to the composers, give them detailed comments and ways to improve and widen their perspective. It’s also a great chance for the audience to put a finger on the pulse of what is happening in contemporary composition today.”

In addition to mentoring the composers, Thomas and Kellogg will debut a piece each has written.

Kellogg’s a new piece was inspired by the death of his mothe. He sees this festival as an opportunity to showcase a new side of his creative abilities: “I usually write much more uplifting
pieces but this is a dark piece responding to sorrow. It's a very personal piece. It's going in a different direction than my recent pieces and [this festival] is a chance to see if it works, to get feedback and see if it's something that produces good results in my music."

As the guest composers and resident composers draw along with the Mizzou International Composers Festival, the audience can expect some surprises.

Lackey says, "Most are amazed at the diversity. Some people come in with an idea of what music is in their head. Genres are now meshing together, rock, pop, classic are coming together and you don't know what is going to happen on Saturday night. We hope people will take advantage of this experience."

The festival is supported by the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation. Rex and Jeanne Sinquefield are donors to the St. Louis Beacon.
A gift for spatial reasoning — the kind that may inspire an imaginative child to dismantle a clock or the family refrigerator — may be a greater predictor of future creativity or innovation than math or verbal skills, particularly in math, science and related fields, according to a study published Monday in the journal Psychological Science.

The study looked at the professional success of people who, as 13-year-olds, had taken both the SAT, because they had been flagged as particularly gifted, as well as the Differential Aptitude Test. That exam measures spatial relations skills, the ability to visualize and manipulate two-and three-dimensional objects. While math and verbal scores proved to be an accurate predictor of the students’ later accomplishments, adding spatial ability scores significantly increased the accuracy.

The researchers, from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, said their findings make a strong case for rewriting standardized tests like the SAT and ACT to focus more on spatial ability, to help identify children who excel in this area and foster their talents.

“Evidence has been mounting over several decades that spatial ability gives us something that we don’t capture with traditional measures used in educational selection,” said David Lubinski, the lead author of the study and a psychologist at Vanderbilt. “We could be losing some modern-day Edisons and Fords.”

Following up on a study from the 1970s, Dr. Lubinski and his colleagues tracked the professional progress of 563 students who had scored in the top 0.5 percent on the SAT 30 years ago, when they were 13. At the time, the students had also taken the Differential Aptitude Test.

Years later, the children who had scored exceptionally high on the SAT also tended to be high achievers — not surprisingly — measured in terms of the scholarly papers they had published and patents that they held. But there was an even higher correlation with success among those who had also scored highest on the spatial relations test, which the researchers judged to be a critical diagnostic for achievement in technology, engineering, math and science.

Cognitive psychologists have long suspected that spatial ability — sometimes referred to as the “orphan ability” for its tendency to go undetected — is key to success in technical fields. Earlier studies have shown that students with a high spatial aptitude are not only overrepresented in
those fields, but may receive little guidance in high school and underachieve as a result. (Note to parents: Legos and chemistry sets are considered good gifts for the spatial relations set.)

The correlation has “been suspected, but not as well researched” as the predictive power of math skills, said David Geary, a psychologist at the University of Missouri, who was not involved in the study, which was funded by the John Templeton Foundation. The new research is significant, he said, for showing that “high levels of performance in STEM fields” — science, technology, engineering and math — “are not simply related to math abilities.”

Testing spatial aptitude is not particularly difficult, Dr. Geary added, but is simply not part of standardized testing because it is considered a cognitive function — the realm of I.Q. and intelligence tests — and is not typically a skill taught in school.

“It’s not like math or English, it’s not part of an academic curriculum,” he said. “It’s more of a basic competence. For that reason it just wasn’t on people’s minds when developing these tests.”

It is also a competence more associated with men than women. In the current study, boys greatly outnumbered girls, 393 to 170, reflecting the original scores of the students in the ’70s. But the study found no difference in the levels of adult achievement, said Dr. Lubinski, though the women were more likely than the men to work in medicine and the social sciences.