Missouri hospitals focus reducing readmissions, post-discharge care as federal penalty kicks in

By Zachary Matson
September 30, 2013 | 5:40 p.m. CDT

JEFFERSON CITY — MU Health Care will receive a Medicare penalty this year under the Affordable Care Act that it managed to avoid last year. Meanwhile, St. Mary’s Health Center in Jefferson City has cut its penalty by nearly half.

Across the state, 55 hospitals are facing penalties, with 29 seeing increased penalties and 32 seeing reduced penalties. About 20 Missouri hospitals will experience no penalty this year.

Nationwide, Medicare is penalizing hospitals $227 million in the second year of the new rule. More than 2,200 hospitals will see reduced payments, and 18 will see the maximum penalty of 2 percent of their Medicare reimbursements.

Under the Affordable Care Act, hospitals that do not meet certain readmission rates face penalties up to 1 percent of Medicare reimbursement rates in 2013, 2 percent in 2014 and 3 percent in 2015. Readmissions of heart failure, heart attack and pneumonia patients are being measured to determine the penalty.

The penalty for University Hospital this year is set at 0.11 percent of its Medicare reimbursements or approximately $70,000. University Hospital is under the umbrella organization of MU Health Care. The penalty falls under a new federal rule that dings hospitals for not meeting certain benchmarks for readmission of patients within 30 days of discharge.

Mary Jenkins, MU Health Care spokeswoman, said the penalty won’t have a significant impact on the bottom line of a hospital with operating expenses in the hundreds of millions of dollars. But she said MU Health Care — like hospital systems across Missouri and the nation — has focused in recent years on reducing and preventing unnecessary readmissions of patients.
St. Mary's reduced its penalty from 0.48 percent to 0.26 percent by continuing to focus on
developing and implementing effective discharge plans and dedicating registered nurses to
post-discharge care from the moment a patient is admitted to the hospital as well as following
up with patients by weekly or even daily phone calls.

“Seeing our readmissions rate drop was encouraging, and it told us we are working on the
right things, going in the right direction,” said Teresa Elliston, care coordination director at
St. Mary’s.

According to a Kaiser Health News analysis of the penalty data, 1,371 hospitals received
reduced fines from last year while 1,074 hospitals received increased penalties. MU Health
Care is joined by 282 other hospitals that are being fined this year for the first time.

Mary Jenkins said MU Health Care first made reducing hospital readmissions a strategic goal
in March 2010, establishing a program focused on post-discharge calls to patients.

Jenkins said MU is taking a multidisciplinary team approach to include nurses, doctors,
pharmacists and others in discharge planning and calling patients within 48 hours of
discharge to check in. Registered nurse care coordinators meet with readmitted patients to
review why the patient is returning and to use that situation to improve treatment of others.

The target goal set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in 2013 for heart attack
readmissions was 16.4 percent in 2013. Between June 2009 and June 2012, MU readmitted
17.7 percent of heart attack patients, which was lower than the national average but still
higher than Medicare’s target, Jenkins said.

All eight of BJC Healthcare’s listed hospitals, including the Barnes-Jewish network of St.
Louis area hospitals, decreased their penalties from last year or, like Boone Hospital Center,
managed a second year of no penalty.

In Jefferson City, Capital Region Medical Center saw a penalty increase from 0.21 percent of
reimbursements to 0.34 percent. The hospital has also been focusing in recent years on
improving education of patients about post-discharge care, following up with phone calls and
making sure patients understand what medication to take when.

“It’s not so much about the money — sure that’s top of mind, it is a business — but what’s
most important is the outcomes of patients,” hospital spokeswoman Amy Berendzen said. “If
we do that right, the penalties are a moot point.”
Not a perfect penalty

Hospital associations and some policy experts have been critical of the penalty but admit the costs of unnecessary readmissions are substantial. According to the Kaiser analysis, hospitals that serve low-income populations were more likely to struggle meeting Medicare’s benchmarks than others.

According to a February study from The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, “Many patients are readmitted simply because they live in a locale where the hospital is used more frequently as a site of care for illness, leading to both higher initial admissions and higher readmissions.”

The rate of readmission for patients discharged after a medical admission in 2010 varied from a high of 18.1 percent in Bronx, N.Y., to a low of 11.4 percent in Ogden, Utah, and the spread was even wider for patients hospitalized for surgery, according to the Dartmouth study. The study cited instances of patients confused about diagnoses, medications and potential complicating factors, family members burned out from caring for loved ones and rushed discharged procedures as challenges the health care industry needs to address to reduce readmissions across the board.

Dave Dillon, vice president of the Missouri Hospital Association, said that in the first year of the penalties, Missouri hospitals experienced a total of about $8.5 million in penalties. He expects the total statewide penalties to be about $6.5 million this year.

Dillon said he thought readmission rates were not the best metric to penalize hospitals because post-discharge care is shared across community providers and the community itself, whereas the penalty affects hospitals only. He also stressed that some hospitals “might be at greater risk for readmissions because cases are more challenging,” citing the state’s major research and teaching hospitals such as MU.

He said the association has raised its concerns with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and, though some changes were made in the 2014 rule, all of the rule’s problems have not been addressed, such as accounting for differences in the complexity of cases across hospitals.

“(The hospital staff) can do everything right and still have people come back,” Dillon said.

While he does not think readmissions is the best metric to use for determining penalties, Dillon said the rule has focused attention on the issue of unnecessary readmissions and
forced hospitals to work more closely with other providers such as primary care physicians and pharmacies and to follow up more methodically with patients after discharge.

"Reducing readmissions makes good sense," Dillon said.

‘Process improvement projects’

At St. Mary's, case managers begin assessing discharge needs at admission, looking for needs such as walkers and oxygen tanks and checking on patients’ family support networks.

Glenda Raithel manages chronic disease nurses, who work alongside care managers, physical therapists, pharmacists and other units providing care in hospital to make sure a patient is ready for discharge.

“Our job is to get all of the pieces of the puzzle for that specific patient, so that they are ready to transition to home," Raithel said. “And once they get home, we follow-through to make sure what we said we were going do is actually getting done.” The nurses call the patient within 72 hours of discharge and continue to stay in touch for a month after discharge.

“We'll call them weekly or as much as every day if they need it,” Raithel said. “After each phone call, we assess, do they need a call tomorrow or in three days or does it need to be a week?”

Elliston stressed that they are not trying to discourage patients from returning to the hospital but rather focusing on reducing return trips that could be avoided.

“It's not that we don't expect people to come back — there's going be people who need to come back — but we want to make sure that we've done everything on our end to give them the best opportunity to stay at home that there is," Elliston said. At St. Mary's, the pharmacist will visit patients prior to discharge to make sure they understand their medication regimen — when to take what pills.

Regardless of whether the penalty is the most effective way to improve patient outcomes, it has focused attention on the problem of unneeded readmissions.

“Everyone's talking about it, so when everyone's talking about it, the knowledge level is ramped up ... and the patients' expectations have risen, too,” Raithel said.

*Supervising editor is Gary Castor.*
University of Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden and his NCAA Division I A cohorts are on a campaign to rebrand and promote paying money to scholarship athletes. The idea has been incubating for decades, spurred originally by arguments that big-time athletes deserve additional compensation for providing the entertainment that produces multimillions for big-time college football and basketball programs. Often the money was suggested as an alternative to onerous academic requirements.

Another justification has been as an antidote to illegal money payments provided under the table by outside boosters, a concern most recently amplified by news some high-profile athletes get paid for giving autographs.

The idea was called "pay for play," an accurate description of the intended transaction. But now that the proposal actually seems to be taking root, its primary gardeners seek to spiff it up with a rebranding effort.

They want "pay for play" off the table. They would provide a "stipend" to all athletes no matter how remote their sports. "It's not pay for play," intoned Division I A Athletic Directors Association President Morgan Burke of Purdue at the association's annual meeting last week. "Get that out of your vocabulary. The quarterback and the point guard aren't getting any more than the wrestler or the swimmer." Or the hammer thrower, one might add. The same idea has been expressed by Alden and MU head football Coach Gary Pinkel.

This excursion into egalitarianism runs headlong into a basic contradiction: The very idea of paying college athletes stemmed from elitism and inequality, the unusual value provided by a few athletic stars in revenue sports that could make athletic department cash registers and popularity ratings dance.
As the idea might actually become institutional policy, nettlesome wrinkles show up. It will never do simply to pay according to the value of play. Instead, the money would close an affordability gap, covering the true cost of college attendance for athletes beyond their scholarship benefits.

Earlier the NCAA proposed a stipend of $2,000 for every athlete on full scholarship. Not only does this qualification undermine the allegation that payment would have nothing to do with player skill — how else are scholarships awarded? — it quickly ran into opposition from smaller Division 1 schools worried about the cost in their relatively small budgets. Discussion labors on.

And who thinks any conceivable amount the athletes might be paid would eliminate sub rosa payments by rogue boosters?

President Burke said, "We got bogged down because the governance system is so convoluted right now and difficult." Beg your pardon, Mr. President, the bog creeps up your leg because the idea you are promoting has fatal flaws.

To build a payment system for athletes, it will have to be honest. You won't be able to sell the idea payment has nothing to do with playing. You won't be able to sell the idea the stipend will eliminate illegal cash under the table.

You won't be able to pay the wrestler in the school with the smallest athletic budget the same as the quarterback in the richest unless you provide the money directly from the NCAA, and how would that work? You will have to pay stipends to every player earning any kind of full scholarship in any Division 1 school. The idea of college sports amateurism already is strained. If direct cash payments are allowed, are you on an even steeper slippery slope?

Alden and the boys left their meeting saying the first step is to do good research into the full implications of their new policy. Right they are. Their findings will be interesting. They are contemplating opening Pandora's box, wherein lie unprecedented dangers and pitfalls.

I think Alden and Pinkel mean well, but colleges and universities had better watch out. This newfound freedom might just bite them in the sweat pants.

HJW III

In other centuries, human beings wanted to be saved, or improved, or freed, or educated. But in our century, they want to be entertained.

— NOVELIST MICHAEL CRICHTON

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Posted in The Tribunes View on Monday, September 30, 2013 2:00 pm.
MU must redouble efforts against sexual assaults

Lewis W. Diuguid

September 30

A shameful statistic at the University of Missouri-Columbia is that its crisis center received nearly 100 reports of sexual assaults on campus last year, but only two students were punished.

The Columbia Missourian reports a sex offense led to one student being expelled and another resulted in a student being suspended. Campus police received 14 reports of sex offenses in 2012 compared with the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center recording 92.

No parents seeing such data would want to send their daughters to the state’s flagship campus. Officials need to increase efforts to make the university safer for all students and clearly show that sexual assaults will lead to harsh disciplinary action and criminal charges.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Gathering marks transfer of Museum of Art and Archaeology to off-campus site

By Emily Donaldson
September 30, 2013 | 8:29 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Employees and supporters of the MU Museum of Art and Archaeology met outside the museum Monday afternoon to mark its transfer to a new location off-campus.

On Tuesday, the museum will begin the process of moving from Pickard Hall to Mizzou North, a facility two miles north of campus. The new location will open sometime in the spring, though an exact date has not been set.

Patricia Cowden, a docent for the museum, and former docent Marybeth Kletti were among the crowd that gathered for one last viewing of its artifacts and a buffet of pizza and cupcakes.

Cowden, who devoted her afternoon to taking pictures for a photo album for retired docents, recounted her favorite memory of the museum.

"Years ago, some football players visited and did not want to be here," Cowden said. "So, I thought, I had to make this fun."

After their visit, the players liked the museum so much they called her "mom" whenever they saw her on campus. She even attended a "Mom's Weekend" for one of the players. The museum formed long-lasting relationships like these with all visitors, Cowden said.

Ann Mehr, a teacher at Lee Elementary School, organized the farewell event because of her longstanding relationship with the museum — she has been bringing her students to it since the '90s. She said she is always delighted to see students develop a love for the artifacts.

"After the students come, they bring their parents back, and they become the docents," Mehr said. The frequency of field trips will likely change after the collections move off campus, Mehr said.
Several children drew pictures of the museum's artifacts and paintings during the final gathering.

The relocation is part of Renew Mizzou, a $22.85 million project to renovate Jesse, Pickard and Swallow halls.

Pickard Hall will undergo testing and renovations to repair the aftermath of former MU professor Herman Schlundt's radioactive experiments, according to previous Missourian reporting. In the early 1900s, Schlundt shipped thousands of pounds of radioactive sludge to MU to conduct research. He failed to abide by safety precautions, leaving behind radioactivity in Pickard Hall.

In 2011, a spokesperson for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission told the Missourian that the hall's walls, attic and floorboards contained radiation. The commission said the level of radiation was safe, however.

During the time Pickard Hall is closed to the public, the university will conduct radiation testing. The cost to move the museum's contents is estimated at $1.5 million, but additional costs to test the building for radiation are unknown.

Until the Mizzou North location opens, the museum's collections will be stored by a moving company. To continue offering access to the artifacts, the museum will add educational tools to its website and will create travel trunks to bring replicas of artifacts into classrooms.

Although the artifacts haven't left campus yet, many regular visitors of the museum expressed concern about their absence from campus.

"This is our last look (because) it may not come back here," said Terri Rohlfing, a member of the museum's board. "It's been great, and it's going to continue to be great."

Kletti said she looks forward to the day the museum returns to campus.

"I'm hoping it will come back. It needs to be here," she said. 

Supervising editor is Richard Wehner.
What Colleges Will Teach in 2025

By Jon Meacham

America must resolve the conflict between knowledge and know-how

Reports on what supposedly educated Americans know—and more sensationally, don’t know—come along fairly regularly, each more depressing than the last.

A survey of recent college graduates commissioned by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni and conducted by GfK Roper last year found that barely half knew that the U.S. Constitution establishes the separation of powers. Forty-three percent failed to identify John Roberts as Chief Justice; 62% didn’t know the correct length of congressional terms of office.

Higher education has never been more expensive—or seemingly less demanding. According to the 2011 book Academically Adrift, by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa, full-time students in 1961 devoted 40 hours per week to schoolwork and studying; by 2003 that had declined to 27 hours. And even those hours may not be all that effective: the book also notes that 36% of college graduates had not shown any significant cognitive gains over four years. According to data gathered by the Chronicle of Higher Education and American Public Media’s Marketplace, half of employers say they have trouble finding qualified recent college graduates to hire. Everybody has an opinion about what matters most. While Bill Gates worries about the dearth of engineering and science graduates, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences frets about the fate of the humanities.

(FULL COVERAGE: The TIME Summit on Higher Education)

Rising tuition costs, an underprepared workforce, an inhospitable climate for the humanities: each of these issues, among others, shapes arguments over higher education. True, polls suggest that most students are happy with their college experiences (if not their debt loads), elite institutions are thriving, U.S. research universities are the envy of the world, and a college degree remains the nation’s central cultural and economic credential. Yet it’s also undeniable that hand-wringing about higher education is so common that it almost forms an academic discipline unto itself or should at least count as a varsity sport.
And so wring the hands of many parents, employers, academics and alumni in the fall of 2013 as the undergraduate class of 2017 begins its freshman year—and as parents of the class of 2025 contemplate the costs and benefits of college down the road. "Higher education is facing a real crisis of effectiveness," says Michael Poliakoff, vice president of policy at the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a group that supports traditional core curriculums and postgraduate assessment tests. At the Time Summit on Higher Education on Sept. 20, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan called for more accountability in higher education through the development of a university ratings system—one that could include the earning power of an institution’s graduates as a factor.

At a time when virtually every state is implementing new Common Core standards to increase the amount of general knowledge in math and English that a typical public-school student must master in K-12, there is renewed interest in the perennial collegiate argument over what’s called either general education or, more colloquially, core curriculum. At issue is whether there are certain books one should read and certain facts one should know to be considered a truly educated person—or at least a truly educated college graduate.

At the heart of the debate between traditionalists (who love a core) and many academics (who prefer to teach more specialized courses and allow students more freedom to set their own curriculums) is a tension between two different questions about the purposes of college. There are those who insist that the key outcome lies in the answer to “What should every college graduate know?”—perhaps minimizing the chances that future surveys will show that poor John Roberts is less recognizable than Lady Gaga. Others ask, What should every college graduate know how to do?

Those three additional words contain multitudes. The prevailing contemporary vision, even in the liberal arts, emphasizes action: active thought, active expression, active preparation for lifelong learning. Engaging with a text or question, marshaling data and arguments and expressing oneself takes precedence over the acquisition of general knowledge.

A caveat: the debate we are discussing here is focused mainly on selective schools, public and private, where there seems to be a persistent unease among key constituencies—parents, trustees, alumni and most of all employers—about undergraduate curriculums. The last time these questions were in circulation was in the 1980s, the years in which Education Secretary Bill Bennett pushed for renewed emphasis on the humanities and Allan Bloom of the University of Chicago published The Closing of the American Mind, a best seller that argued, among other things, that the great books were being wrongly marginalized if not totally neglected by the modern university.

That debate reflected larger arguments about the country’s trend toward the right under Ronald Reagan. What’s driving the core-standards conversation now is the ambition to succeed in a global economy and the anxiety that American students are failing to do so. How does the country relieve those fears and produce a generation of graduates who will create wealth and jobs? It’s a question that’s fueling the Obama Administration’s push for a ratings system, and it’s a question that isn’t going away.
The Roots of the Core

From the founding of Harvard College in 1636 until the Civil War, American university education was mostly about sending pious and hopefully well-read gentlemen forth into the world. As Louis Menand, a Harvard English professor and literary critic, has written, what Americans think of as the university is of relatively recent vintage. In 1862 the Morrill Act created land-grant universities, broadening opportunities for those for whom college had been a virtual impossibility. Menand and other historians of collegiate curriculums note that at Harvard in 1869, Charles William Eliot became president and created a culture in which the bachelor’s degree became the key credential for ongoing professional education—a culture that came to shape the rest of the American academy. The 19th century also saw the rise of the great European research university; the German model of scholar-teachers who educated undergraduates while pursuing their own research interests moved across the Atlantic.

The notion that a student should graduate with a broad base of knowledge is, in Menand’s words, “the most modern part of the modern university.” It was only after World War I, in 1919, that Columbia College undertook a general-education course, called Contemporary Civilization. By reading classic texts—from Plato’s Republic to The Prince to the Declaration of Independence, with the Bible and Edmund Burke thrown in for good measure—and discussing them in the context of enduring issues in human society, every student was compelled to engage with ideas that formed the mainstream of the American mind. The impetus for the move reflected a larger social and cultural concern with assimilating the children of immigrants into American culture. Robert Maynard Hutchins adopted a similar approach at the University of Chicago. The courses were not about rote memorization; they were (and are) centered on reading followed by discussion. They were (and are) required of all students, something that set Columbia and Chicago apart from many other colleges—and still does.

World War II helped bring about the Harvard Report of 1945, an effort by America’s oldest college to provide a common cultural basis not only for its elite students but also for the rising middle class. Students were expected to read, for example, the great books. As the decades went by, however, the assumption that there was a given body of knowledge or a given set of authors that had to be learned or read came under cultural and academic attack. Who was to say what was great? Why not let teachers decide what to teach and students decide what to study?

There are many cultural reasons for opposing the core. For instance, faculties generally dislike being told what to do. (Doesn’t everyone?) The most intelligent argument against a core? That the freedom to choose one’s academic path will stoke one’s curiosity and fuel experimentation. At places like Vanderbilt University (where I am a visiting faculty member) the curriculum alters the Columbia approach in two ways. First, students choose specific courses that the university believes provide what chancellor Nicholas Zeppos calls “both foundational knowledge and critical thinking. In other words, we encourage more student growth and risk taking in electing how one builds that foundation.” Rather than mandate a specific set of general-education courses, Vanderbilt asks undergraduates to meet distribution requirements, choosing classes in broadly defined fields including humanities and the creative arts, the history and culture of America, and international cultures. “So our approach,” says Zeppos, “allows for more exploration and risk taking.”
Knowledge itself changes, and not only in science and technology, where change is so rapid and self-evident. Appomattox will always have happened in April 1865, but one's understanding of the causes, course and effects of the Civil War can shift. The prevailing academic culture puts more emphasis on developing a student's ability to confront questions of interpretation by asking them more about why something occurred than when. But some raise reasonable concerns about this approach. “At prestigious schools, the majority of students come from strong backgrounds and will do well even without the core, but that is not the reality for all students,” says Poliakoff. “The core curriculum makes sure that all students develop the skills they need to be successful.”

So what to do?

A Question of Assessment

Page A1 of the Wall Street Journal often brings news that matters to America’s striving classes. One such story arrived this August. The headline “Are You Ready for the Post-College SAT?” was followed by a revealing subhead: Employers say they don't trust grade-point averages. The piece explained the imminent arrival of an “SAT-like assessment that aims to cut through grade-point averages and judge students' real value to employers.”

The Collegiate Learning Assessment, or CLA+, a voluntary test developed by a New York City-based nonprofit, the Council for Aid to Education, is to be administered to seniors at some 200 U.S. colleges and universities, including the University of Texas system and the liberal-arts St. John Fisher College near Rochester, N.Y., in an attempt to measure learning by asking critical-thinking questions. “Exit exams are an excellent idea because they are a quantifiable way of giving institutions and individuals the measure of the kind of progress they’re making,” says Poliakoff. And while an assessment like the CLA+ might help employers decide which students to hire, some argue that students and parents need more information to help choose a college.

When Duncan told Time’s education summit about the ratings system envisioned by the Obama Administration, he described an approach that would take into account many metrics, including graduation rates, graduate earnings and a graduate’s student debt. The basic question, Duncan said, is this: “How many students at an institution graduate at a reasonable cost without a lot of debt and get a job in the field they choose?”

Fair enough, but none of this tests general knowledge. You don’t have to be able to identify, say, Albert Einstein or explain the difference between a stock and a bond. Critics of the CLA+ argue that institutions may be penalized for attracting strong students who score highly as freshmen and then just as highly as seniors—thus showing no growth. Others have even more fundamental problems with the idea of a universal test. “The idea of the CLA+ is to measure learning at various institutions and compare them,” says Watson Scott Swail, president and CEO of the Education Policy Institute. “I don’t think that’s technically possible with such a diverse system of higher education. That’s based on the fact that all the curriculums are different, textbooks are different, and you’re expecting to get some measure of—in a very generic way across all curriculums—how someone learns in one institution compared to another. All institutions are different, and all of their students are different.”

So why not make the diversity of American higher education an ally in allaying concerns about how much core knowledge college graduates take with them into the world? Why not honor the
independence of each institution and encourage every college to create a required general-education comprehensive exam as a condition for graduation? Ask each department for a given number of questions that it believes every graduate, regardless of major, should be able to answer. Formulate essay questions that would test a student's capacity to analyze and reason. In other words, take the initiative.

Yes, the departmental discussions about what an educated person should know about chemistry or Chinese or communism would be fraught and long. The good news, however, is that the debates would be illuminating, forcing academics to look to first principles, which is almost always a healthy exercise in any field. An institution might decide that such an assessment just isn't for them, but it's an idea worth exploring, for colleges could then control the process rather than cede that authority to yet another standardized national test.

What is heartening to those who believe in the value of a passing acquaintance with Homer and the Declaration of Independence and Jane Austen and Toni Morrison as well as basic scientific literacy is that there is little argument over the human and economic utility of a mind trained to make connections between seemingly disparate elements of reality. The college graduate who can think creatively is going to stand the greatest chance of not only doing well but doing some good too. As long as the liberal-arts tradition remains a foundation of the curriculum in even the most elective of collegiate systems, there is hope that graduates will be able to discuss the Gettysburg Address—in a job interview at Google.
MU student forms first collegiate chapter of professional group for women

Leadership part of EWI mission.

By Karyn Spory

Monday, September 30, 2013 at 2:00 pm

Lindsay Pierce wanted to get involved in a women's leadership program at the University of Missouri, but she wasn't finding anything she felt would foster her success instead of taking all of her energy, so she started the first collegiate chapter of Executive Women International.

"I didn't want something I had to put a lot of time into; I just wanted something that was built more on connections," said Pierce, a junior journalism major.

Pierce thought back to the Executive Women International Scholarship Program she had been involved with in high school. Executive Women International is a not-for-profit dedicated to enhancing the careers of professional women.

When Pierce was a junior in high school, her guidance counselor encouraged her to apply for the scholarship program. "It was a 20-page application. It was longer than my college applications and was pretty intense," Pierce said. She ended up winning first place in the EWI Tulsa, Okla., chapter and placed second nationally.

"I met all of these executive women in the program, and I was just in awe of them. They helped drive my ambition in high school and eventually college," Pierce said.

However, when Pierce looked on its website, she couldn't find a way to be involved on the collegiate level, so she decided to start a chapter at MU. Pierce drafted a proposal and sent it on to the corporate board last winter.
"I have been working with Lindsay since she presented this to our corporate board last December," said Kim Fankhauser, chairwoman of the EWI expansion and marketing committee. Fankhauser said she was impressed with Pierce's proposal. "I was amazed that a 19-year-old could come up with this proposal," she said.

Pierce was in San Diego from Sept. 18-21 for the group's annual meeting, where she presented the new chapter to the EWI members and asked for mentors for the MU chapter's mentorship program.

"There are 85 women who are already ready to be mentors for these girls, and I don't even have enough members yet," Pierce said.

Pierce said a EWI woman will be matched with a student. The mentor will work with the student on résumés, make sure she's on track with schoolwork and understands what she's getting herself into within her chosen industry, Pierce said. Pierce said the mentor also will help the student network and build connections.

Pierce said she is currently receiving applications from MU students to be members of the program, and she hopes to have 15 to 20 members for the first year.

"I'm passionate about changing salaries and changing the way women are perceived in the workforce. ... I think it starts in college, and I think it starts in young women, and if we can give them the connections now — the skills and leadership assets now — it will be so powerful to their future."

This article was published in the Monday, September 30, 2013 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "MU student brings women's group to campus: Leadership part of WI mission."

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Posted in Education on Monday, September 30, 2013 2:00 pm.
MU student arrested after cat found in trash

By Carley Meiners
September 30, 2013 | 4:12 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — An MU student was arrested Saturday afternoon on suspicion of animal abuse and resisting arrest after a live cat was tossed into the trash.

MU Police Capt. Brian Weimer said, Nickholes Martin, 18, admitted to throwing a stray black cat into an orange bag and tossing it into a trash bin at the Campus View Apartments. Martin had taken the stray in and told officers that he threw it away because he believed the cat was dying, Weimer said.

Martin was living at Tiger Diggs, an area of the apartment complex that's operated by the MU Department of Residential Life. Employees of the department called police after hearing about the cat.

Weimer said Martin resisted arrest after admitting to being responsible for throwing the cat in the trash and it took two officers to take him into custody.

The black cat was rescued. It and another cat Martin had been harboring at his apartment were taken to the Central Missouri Humane Society.

According to Residential Life regulations, Martin is not allowed to have cats in his apartment.

Supervising editor is Edward Hart.
Science Safari lets elementary school students explore science with MU grad students

By Caroline Murray
September 30, 2013 | 8:42 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — On Monday morning, Jordan Cadwell, a fifth grader at Midway Heights Elementary School, examined the leaves of a plant in the Tucker Greenhouse. He wants to be a highway patrolman, but he was just as excited to be in the greenhouse as his classmates who aspire to be chemists and doctors.

"I love science!" Jordan said, throwing up his hands. "You get to do experiments and I love everything about it."

Jordan was one of dozens of fourth- and fifth-graders who attended the ShowMe Nature GK-12 Science Safari at MU on Monday to learn from scientists and graduate students.

Science Safari is held four times a year at MU. This time, students came from Midway Heights and Paxton Keeley Elementary School.

Enthusiasm like Jordan's is what program leaders like to see, said Candace Galen, an MU professor of biological science and faculty director of MU ShowMe Nature GK-12, a program that connects elementary students with graduate students.

This is the age when students should become excited about science, Galen said. The students are about to enter middle school, and an increased enthusiasm for science will keep them interested, she added.

"The students are getting experience with what it's like at a university doing science," Galen said. "The activities are modeled after real research projects. For a day, the kids get to say, 'Let's be scientists and do what scientists do.'"
While the students examined plants in the greenhouse, Cathy Kiddoo asked about taking tours. Her son Ben, a fifth-grader at Midway Heights who loves plants, was busy crafting a paper flower pot.

Ben wants to be many things — scientist, wildlife conservationist, engineer and taxidermist. "Gardener" isn't on the list, but he's already earned $10 as a gardener by beating his grandmother in a tomato-growing contest.

"Ben likes science and math, though he'll tell you his favorite class is lunch," Kiddoo said.

As the students continued their experiment — examining the cell structures of plants under microscopes — Jordan and Midway Heights fifth-grader Michael Hernandez had a polite debate about the opening and closing of plants' cell structures.

"Plants are fascinating and weird at the same time," Michael said.

Michael said he learns best from hands-on experiments paired with studying research that scientists have already done. He wants to become one of those scientists one day.

"I want to study different kinds of diseases," Michael said. "I want to help people and learn how to help them."

The graduate students are also happy to work with their younger counterparts. They don't get a chance to talk about their research with non-scientists often, Galen said, and the GK-12 program gives them a chance to work on their communication.

"Even though I want to teach at the college level, I'm learning so much from teaching fifth-graders," Rachel Albert said, a doctoral student in anthropology and a GK-12 fellow. "I'm learning how to manage a classroom and techniques to see if they are really learning. And it is really fun. The students are great."

_Supervising editor is Richard Webner._