Newest UM System executive envisions entrepreneurial education

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Hank Foley, University of Missouri System executive vice president, sits in front of an "idea wall" in his University Hall office. Foley had the wall specially painted so he could write on it. † T.J. Thomson

BY T.J. Thomson

COLUMBIA — Hank Foley, the newest executive for the University of Missouri System, thinks Missouri should raise the next generation of entrepreneurs rather than the next generation of farmers.
Foley is executive vice president for academic affairs, which includes systemwide oversight of research and economic development. Noting Missouri's increasingly diverse workforce, he said that its citizens might work five or six jobs in their lives and that self-employment will likely be part of their job history.

Rather than the Jeffersonian ideal of yeoman farmers, Foley thinks a technologically savvy entrepreneurial workforce is the answer to furthering the state economy.

"I think we’re responsible for providing our students with a toolbox that they can use so that they can be self-employed when they need to be or aspire to be self-employed for their careers," he said. "But either way, those skill sets, are wonderful if you're in a business."

**Foley, 57, came to MU in August from The Pennsylvania State University, where he was vice president for research and graduate school dean.**

One wall of his office at 309 University Hall is covered in black and red ink. He had it specially painted so he could sketch out metrics, dashboards and plans for strategy on the system and campus levels.

Foley recently expounded on funding for education, the role of technology in learning and MU's rankings in the Association of American Universities. Here are excerpts:

**Since 2004, the University of Missouri System has had a shift in how education is funded. It used to be more state-funded, and now it’s more student-funded. What kind of impact is that having on students and their academic performance?**

Students are feeling the pinch. Students’ families are feeling the pinch. There's more borrowing going on. I think that's a topic that’s been covered a great deal. I think it’s just a fact of life.

The cost of Chevrolets has gone up over the last 30 years, the cost of education has gone up over the last 30 years, but the economy has not kept pace. Tax revenues are not there. I don't blame the states — the taxes just aren't there to do the appropriations at the same levels they used to, if they're going to use the same percentage of their money for higher ed. So they have had to make a choice.

It's a devil's bargain. If you give more money to higher ed, you're taking more money away from other programs that are also very good programs. I think they've kind of tried to do their best in most states — I’m thinking Pennsylvania and other states — and it's painful for us in higher ed. But it is, I think, the best you can do under the circumstance.

What we really need is to lift the economy; get it going again. We need young people out there trying to start businesses. We need to make it easy to start businesses. We need to make it more than OK to fail and even easier to start the second one.

Ten years ago, we were starting to tell young people, even 15 years ago, in engineering and business, that they would probably work for five or six companies during their lifetimes.
Now we would say, not only would you probably work for different companies, you'll probably work for yourself at different points. Maybe instead of looking at that as scary, we should give you all the tool kits you need to be entrepreneurs from now on.

I think it would be great. (Thomas) Jefferson had a view of a nation of yeoman farmers. Maybe the best we could get, or the closest we could get to that today, is yeoman entrepreneurs.

One of the strategic goals that the university states for the Columbia campus is to raise the (Association of American Universities) standing four places by 2018, from 32 to 28 out of the 34 public universities in the AAU. How do you intend to do this from the academic affairs perspective?

(The AAU describes itself as a nonprofit association of 60 U.S. and two Canadian preeminent public and private research universities. Members are ranked based on research spending, the number of faculty who belong to National Academies, faculty awards and citations.)

I think the key to that is really focus. It means looking at what are the measures that the AAU is using to evaluate us and going out and hitting and hammering on those points as hard as we can.

It's actually pretty simple. What we have to do is make some tough choices, we have to recycle some money, put it into a pot in the provost's office, basically, and then we have to use that money to go out and hire people who are either close to National Academy of Sciences status, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, American Philosophical Society.

There's a range of societies that people can be in. The more of those people you have, frankly, the higher your numbers go.

Then we need to, at the same time, put clusters together of younger faculty members who will be mentored by those excellent, more senior faculty members. We need to pick some keys areas, and I think the Mizzou Advantage that came out a few years ago, really had done a very nice job of picking areas that were especially relevant to AAU.

The trick in all of that, though, is that the humanities have to realize that we'll do our best to keep them not just doing well, but thriving. There are certain areas, like chemistry and physics, that really weigh heavily into the AAU metrics, and they're costly, so we have to have a broad discussion of that and hopefully get aligned to realize that if you want to do this, and they do, this is what it's going to look like over the next few years.

All boats will rise on the rising tide.

With those professional associations, is UM just paying for the name or will the faculty with those ties actually be a worthwhile investment?

I think they're worthwhile investments. I think the people who are at that level are really the people who are truly the best in their fields. What we need to do is bring a few more of those
people into the sciences, into engineering, into some of the humanities areas — Pulitzer Prize-
winners — so then we can hit the objective measures that the AAU uses, but really it's a lot of
other stuff, too, that the humanities do contribute to, but more subjectively.

So we have to have both, and we have to really try to raise everything at the same time, and I
think we can do it. I think people of goodwill will come together around this, independent of
their area, what their background is, because they love the university.

**Regarding funding models, the joint commission on education is tossing around a model
that’s more performance-based. What’s your view on that?**

I think performance metrics are a great thing, and I think that the idea of trying to live up to those
metrics and using them is a good thing. I think we can overuse metrics on the other side, and
there's some things in some parts of our economy that are easier to measure than other things.

For example, it's easier to measure the outcome of a Ford factory, how many Fords they produce,
the quality of Fords, than it is for me to really measure the output of the University of Missouri
in Columbia.

I can count the number of students, I can see their GPA, but things like that are harder to really
quantify. It's a different kind of business, and we have to realize that we can apply metrics to all
different kinds of businesses, but they apply better in some realms than other. That said, the
performance metrics the governor came up with are really very good. I like them, and I think
they're reasonable.

**Textbook prices have risen about 800 percent in the last three decades. About 30 percent of
textbooks at the Mizzou Store have a digital component, according to a 2013 Mizzou News
article. As you're overseeing eLearning, where would you like that number to be?**

I think where eLearning fits in is in different ways. One is outreach. I think we could reach out to
many, many more students who are place-bound with eLearning, online learning. Again, it's got
to be high-quality. We're experimenting with that. We have some really nice models around the
system now of people who are doing things with eLearning.

I would point to some of the things that are happening. In Rolla, for example, there's a new
chemistry course down there where students can take the course, they can sit in the classroom,
they can sit in their dorm room while the class is being given, or they can take it asynchronously.

Similarly, we've got some courses down there that are going out to major corporations where
they're using studio classrooms of the new kind, not the 20-year-old kind, that are involving
green screens and very sophisticated technology, so it's from one end to the other.

We have other people doing the flipped-classroom thing, where they're putting their media up,
and their lectures and so forth online, and then going to class to solve problems. Problem-based
learning approach with media.
Where I think this is going to go over the next few years is really exciting. I think by the time you're my age, the whole impact of technology will become more fully embraced.

We’re at the beginning of this era, so it's hard to make predictions, but we really do want to make eLearning to be the death of distance, so that it lets people who wouldn't ordinarily be able to get access to our courses to get it. We want to use eLearning to drive even better learning outcomes, so that students who are really digital natives and comfortable with this, see things in the sort of modalities that they learn best in.

Ultimately, some day, I would like to think we would have mass-produced, customization of education. That sounds like an oxymoron, but it's not. What it really means is that you could start whenever you want to start, you could finish whenever you want to finish. You can mix and match and put things together as you wish. That's the direction, I think, that all this will go.

Maybe we'll have superstar teachers, I don't know. Maybe they'll establish their own little universities in the sense, but they won't be universities, they'll be enterprises of different kinds. It's going to be exciting to watch. I'd love to live another 100 years and see it.

**If you had to describe your job description to an elementary student, how would you do that?**

I wouldn't. (Laughs.) So, my job involves three distinct areas. Academic affairs, research and economic development. Academic affairs is everything that has to do with our degree programs.

The core of the university's function in teaching. There's all sorts of issues that come up in keeping track of those programs, making sure they stay up to date, creating new programs, eliminating programs that aren't working so well. Just a plethora of things that we do day in and day out.

Research obviously is embedded in everything that we do at public research universities, so what we're trying to do is always stimulate, as much as possible, the research enterprise and to try to help it grow and become more excellent. That really means the people. Everything we do is all people. It's all faculty and students.

Third leg of the stool is economic development. The idea there is through education and research, we should be able to drive the economy to get better. That's a very hard thing to do.

To some extent, teaching does that. Obviously, as we help the individual achieve more academically, typically they do better in life. The numbers are there to prove it.

The second piece of that, though, is the research we do. What we're trying to do there is even better than we've done in the past. Just sort of drive new science into new technology into the real economy, and there are a couple different ways we can do that:
• We can do that by licensing our technology, if we've patented it.
• We can also do that by licensing technology to entrepreneurs who want to start new companies around it. One of the strategies is you license to a small company and they start a business.
• Around the other end of the spectrum is, you license it to a large corporation — a Monsanto or Boeing — and they take it and embed it in some technology that they already have or that they want to start. Either way works, and then there’s a lot of stuff in between.

Those are the three key things we do. Could I really tell an elementary school kid that? I don’t know. Some smart kids would get it.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
Family battles autism as research continues to look for its cause — and a cure
Friday, December 27, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CST

BY ANNE DANKELSON

MU Mention P. 3
Daniel Compain-Romero, 10, places

COLUMBIA — Daniel Romero-Compain lounges on the couch. It's a November evening, and the 10-year-old is home after a day at school.

He's wearing only his underwear, with a Tupperware container of crushed Saltine crackers resting beside him. He always eats his crackers like this, gripping the stack in his hands until it crumbles.

He is eating plain Saltines instead of the family dinner of chicken and rice. He won't sit at the table, but his parents will check to make sure he's entertained elsewhere.

Daniel gets up from the couch and goes into the kitchen. He opens the refrigerator, leaves it ajar without getting anything and returns to the couch. His grandmother, Maria Compain remembers waking up one night at 3:45 a.m. to the fridge alarm going off. The family sometimes has to fasten the door with a plastic lock.
Back on the couch, Daniel fiddles with his iPad, replaying the same few seconds of a YouTube video over and over again, his timing impeccable.

He's good with electronics, mastering the iPad and running the family printer until the cartridge runs dry. Writing his name with a pencil and paper is more difficult for him.

Daniel has an autism spectrum disorder, a range of symptoms marked by behavioral, social and communicative difficulties. The spectrum ranges from high-functioning, verbal individuals to more severe nonverbal ones. Daniel seems to fall within the latter group.

**Cause and cure are elusive**

A single cause for autism has not been found. Researchers have discovered that a combination of genetic mutations and environmental factors — such as older parents at conception — appears to be responsible.

A recent study by Kaustubh Supekar of the Stanford University School of Medicine found that the brains of children with autism have more neuron connections than those without the disorder. This would cause an imbalance of inhibition and excitation in the brain, accounting for the social and behavioral problems associated with the disorder. But researchers don't know everything. No cure exists. So Daniel's family, like many others, deals with autism every day.

They deal with Daniel's picky eating. They give him melatonin at night to help him sleep. They hold him down for haircuts, sometimes resulting in an uneven patch or two on the back of his scalp.

During the school year, Daniel attends Alpha Hart Lewis Elementary where he receives one-on-one attention from learning specialists such as Scott Chida and learns interaction skills in structured situations. Chida keeps Daniel's family updated with daily notes about the boy's activities and behavior.

The Romero-Compain family looks for other appropriate outlets, as well. On a recent Saturday morning, Daniel, his 11-year-old brother, Andy, his 6-year-old sister, Carolina, and their mother, Ana, decide to attend a movie at the Regal Columbia Stadium 14 theater.
Carolina begs for popcorn, but they must find their seats first. Daniel doesn't want popcorn. He'll be fine with Cheetos and the Silk Soymilk his mother brought in a Tupperware cup.

**In this case, Cheetos from home are allowed. This is a special showing of "Free Birds," presented by the MU Student Occupational Therapy Association specifically for children with special needs.**

The movie begins promptly at 9:30 a.m. with no previews. The lights never fade completely to black. Families cuddle with blankets and pillows.

When Daniel stands up and shouts during the movie, other families don't seem to mind or even notice. They're used to it.

It's the only way the Romero-Compain family will see a movie. They also don't eat at restaurants as other families do, and they cannot take many family vacations.

**Dramatic growth in cases**

Events such as the sponsored movie are tailored to the increasing population of children and adults with autism. The rate, previously one in every 88 people, has risen to one in every 50 for children ages 6 to 17 in the United States, based on a recent study by Stephen J. Blumberg and his colleagues.

Boys are four to five times more likely to have an autism spectrum disorder than girls, thought to be due to genetic and hormonal differences in the brain between genders. Children ages 6 to 9 have a 1.82 percent prevalence rate.; for boys, it's 3.23 percent.

**When looking for a suitable place to live after learning of Daniel's diagnosis in 2006, the Romero-Compain family noticed that Missouri popped up frequently in their searches. It was the period when the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders was developing at MU. The center is now a national leader in autism research, offering diagnostic services, therapies and support for families.**
Daniel has been going to the Thompson Center for occupational therapy for close to two years — long enough for Brittney Stevenson, his occupational therapist, to go through a couple of different hairstyles.

Walking through a maze of hallways, Daniel obviously knows where he is going. He leads his mother and his therapist toward their destination — a room with windows lining the back wall, toy-filled cabinets and a small, kitchen area with a refrigerator and sink.

But before they get there, he stops. He enters a dark room and stands, looking around as if remembering something.

Stevenson playfully ask Daniel if he is recalling bad memories of the room. That’s where they had worked to get him to try new foods, his mother said. He didn’t particularly enjoy it.

Daniel heads to the occupational therapy room where he busies himself with a pink tube that can be pulled apart and pushed back together like a little accordion.

His mother opens his Angry Birds backpack and pulls out the lunchbox from school that day. The few carrot sticks she had packed are still sitting untouched at the bottom of a Ziploc bag.

He eats just rice crackers and Saltines, she says. Sometimes Cheetos. "We go through two cases of crackers a week," she says.

Definite progress made
Daniel's mother starts to read the note from school. He tried candy corn — touched the candies against his mouth as if they were teeth. This was progress.

"I think I’m going to take time off at Christmas," she tells Stevenson. She would spend that time introducing him to different foods. She’ll take away the crackers, she says, and assure her family that he won’t starve.

Stevenson suggests a desensitization method — present the food and just have him look at it. Then maybe have him smell it. Kiss it.

Ten minutes into the occupational therapy appointment, Stevenson brings Daniel over to the sink and takes out two toothbrushes.
"You do it," Stevenson says. She puts her hand over his on his red toothbrush and guides his motions. She kneels down, so her face is level with his.

"Touch," she says. She wants him to touch the toothbrush to his teeth. He does, then quickly removes it.

"He was so aversive to that a couple months ago," Stevenson says. "Now he tolerates it."

Daniel and Stevenson move to the table. From a cookie sheet with small pictures stuck to it with magnets, Daniel chooses the picture of a clothespin. Stevenson takes out a Popsicle stick and six clothespins, each with one of the letters of Daniel's name on it.

Daniel takes the clothespins one at a time and clips them onto the Popsicle stick to spell his name. It takes him all of a minute to complete.


"He's all about letters and spelling," Stevenson notes.

After completing a zipper activity that's almost "too easy" for him, Daniel chooses the writing task from the cookie sheet. He traces his name on a sheet of paper.

"Oh, dude, I know you can do better than that," Stevenson says. Daniel tries again, doing better the second time.

"E is the hardest letter," Stevenson says. The writer must change directions so many times.

But Daniel is good at it. "He likes a challenge," Stevenson explains.

After all the work with letters, which Daniel seems to love, his mother and Stevenson get an idea.

"Maybe he'd eat alphabet cereal!"

**Consistent behaviors shown**
Daniel's actions are common in children with autism spectrum disorders. Autism often involves hypersensitivity to texture, not liking the way certain things feel in the mouth. Ritualistic eating behaviors are typical, like the way Daniel smashes crackers.
His progress points to methods that recent research has found successful in expanding the diet of those with autism. Take slow steps. Incorporate play. Even so, picky eating has been an overlooked issue among autism's other symptoms.

A recent review of studies found children with autism are five times more likely to have challenging eating habits. Previous studies linking celiac disease and autism suggested gluten-free diets to reduce symptoms, but new research refutes this. A research project is now underway to discover the reasons behind autism's link to picky eating and determine ways to expand, not limit, diets. This narrowly tailored project shows how far autism research has come.

Several treatments are now available, including occupational therapy such as Daniel's, that focus on independent living skills, applied behavior analysis and even medication to address symptoms such as sleep problems and seizures.

Some evidence suggests that individuals with autism will progress to the point where they are no longer considered on the spectrum. The Romero-Compain family is prepared either way.

"Daniel won't live independently," his mother says. He won't have a job, won't get married. She's grown to be OK with that.

Culturally, for the Romero-Compains, who are Cuban and Mexican, family always comes first.

"Promise me you'll take care of him," Daniel's mother has asked her family.

They get it.

**A painful diagnosis**

Back when Ana met her husband, Rafael Romero, on a blind date, they did not foresee this. The two eloped after three months. Sophia, now 15, was born and then Andy. The next child — Daniel — was a complete surprise.

Although she didn't realize she was pregnant until about halfway through, Ana's pregnancy and delivery were completely normal. Suspicions set in later.
Daniel met a number of milestones, including ones set by his grandmother, such as saying "mama" and "papa" at 6 months. But then language skills started to fade. Repetitive behaviors began.

"Isn't that funny?" the family told themselves.

They mentioned it to Daniel's pediatrician. They agreed to a free screening. They had professionals watch their interactions.

"I felt very small," Ana says now. "We were sitting in these teeny tiny chairs."

They sat and waited as a group of people — a firing squad, she says through tears — made this earth-shattering decision about their son.

"You are not going to fall apart," she repeated to herself.

The other children were young at the time of Daniel's diagnosis. They just grew up knowing and understanding.

Sophia, as a teenager, is embarrassed about everything her family does, her mother says. She wants to fit in. But she's unapologetic about Daniel.

Andy is devoted to his brother. They have their scuffles, often over a ruined DVD or a broken toy. But Andy is protective, explaining that his brother has autism to anyone who might wonder. He makes them comfortable.

But Carolina has been the boss. "Even her babble was bossy," Ana says.

Carolina understands what is and isn't allowed, once chasing a naked Daniel and holding his underwear until he put them on. Without having to explain, her mother says, Carolina treats him like any other kid.

**Insurance coverage improves**


Insurance reform enacted in Missouri under Gov. Jay Nixon in 2010 has helped cover Daniel's expenses. State law now requires that diagnosis, rehabilitative and habilitative care, as well as pharmacy, psychological, psychiatric and therapeutic care, be covered by
insurance, with an 18-year age limit only on applied behavior analysis, formerly called behavior modification treatment.

Daniel's visits to the Thompson Center are covered. His therapeutic horseback riding sessions are covered. His trained respite provider, Theresa Reinkemeyer — a godsend, his mother says — is covered. They used to pay her out of their pockets.

While it's usually smooth sailing with insurance coverage, the Romero-Compains still pay about $720 per year. Both parents work — Ana is director of university affairs at MU and Rafael works for Joe Machens Toyota Scion.

Occasionally there is a bump. Daniel has to get his teeth cleaned at the hospital instead of the regular dentist's office — he won't let anyone touch his teeth for that long. Usually, this is covered. But last year, the insurance company said there was no causal relationship between autism and the need for this approach.

The dentist battled it out with the insurance company, Ana says, with mixed results. Their out-of-pocket costs for the cleaning are still around $200.

**Much remains unclear**

On Monday and Wednesday afternoons, Reinkemeyer watches Daniel to give the family a break. On this particular Wednesday, he wants to jump on the trampoline. Reinkemeyer gives him her approval.

Although her sessions with Daniel used to have more structure, they're more open-ended now. They'll go to McDonald's or a playground. It depends on Daniel's mood that day.

"But you know what?" Reinkemeyer tells him. "Clothes."

Daniel, who rarely likes to wear clothes inside, puts on a striped shirt and pulls on his pants — backward.

"Some things you just gotta let go," Reinkemeyer says.

Outside, they jump. Daniel jumps in a circle around Reinkemeyer. They sit in the middle and Daniel counts to 30, struggling only briefly when he gets to nine. He pauses sometimes to stare at the protective net around the trampoline.
Then Reinkemeyer announces she's going inside. Daniel can follow if he wants. But he chooses to lie in the center of the trampoline, his arm bent at the elbow and supporting his head, almost like he's posing.

The day before, Daniel lay looking up at the tree above the trampoline. It was a sunny day, Reinkemeyer says, creating a pretty scene as the wind rustled the yellow leaves. Daniel seemed completely captivated.

Now, as he stares at the tree, the branches are still, the leaves are gone. The sky is cloudy, almost dull.

But Daniel keeps looking.

"I wish I knew what he was thinking," Reinkemeyer says.

It may be a while before anyone knows that.
University of Missouri students design clothing for people with disabilities

By KARYN SPORY
University of Missouri students design clothing for people with disabilities

Thursday, December 26, 2013 at 2:00 pm

For three semesters now, students at the University of Missouri looking for an extra challenge in textile and apparel management have been given one — by being asked to design fashionable clothing for people with disabilities. But this project has a much broader design than the kind made with scissors and thread.

Allison Kabel, an assistant professor of health sciences who describes herself as a "medical anthropologist," studies the intersection of culture, health and identity and the factors that threaten an individual's personhood. She was looking for a new research outlet when she had an application for a new textile course cross her desk. Kabel also is on the undergraduate curriculum committee.

Kabel reached out to Kerri McBee-Black, an instructor in the department of textile and apparel management, with the idea to try to combine health profession students with textile students to develop an understanding of how textiles affect patients and their health care.

McBee-Black said that during her first meeting with Kabel the duo threw around a lot of ideas. They decided to begin with McBee-Black's idea of developing an apparel line for people with disabilities or people with special needs as part of a class project.

McBee-Black's textile and apparel management class already designed an apparel line, so she decided to add another element.

"I thought it would be the perfect way to open the eyes of textile and apparel management students to this consumer market that needs are not being met."

McBee-Black said the first challenge the students faced was the lack of target demographic research about this market. McBee-Black and Kabel received a $3,000 Margaret Mangle Catalyst Grant from the College of Human Environmental Sciences to conduct focus groups with people with disabilities and their caregivers.
"The second challenge," students "found out during that focus group, is people with disabilities want what you and I want: to go to a store and shop for clothes. They don't want to have to go to a specialty store," she said.

McBee-Black said the challenge is taking current trends and adapting them for someone with limited mobility.

"The disability community is so diverse. … How do you easily address all of those with one product?" McBee-Black said.

McBee-Black said her students determined that minor tweaks to garment details and styles can help with the fit of clothing, which is the biggest complaint for those in wheelchairs. An example would be making deeper armholes and longer, more voluminous sleeves to provide more mobility in that area.

Kabel said she will mentor three students working on master's degrees in occupational therapy in January, and they will analyze the data from the focus groups.

"They will be applying occupational therapy theories and looking through a clinical lens, which is something neither Kerri nor I can do," Kabel said.

Through the focus groups, McBee-Black and Kabel collected enough data to apply for the Richard Wallace Faculty Incentive Grant, which they recently received. That grant will allow them to create a survey so they can expand the pilot beyond Columbia.

"There was an overwhelming response to the focus groups. People wanted to participate, but the people we most needed to talk to couldn't come to campus — especially parents of kids with disabilities," Kabel said.

Kabel said she hopes the two projects will give her and McBee-Black enough data to support an extramural grant proposal next year.

Kabel's goal is to study the role a lack of apparel items plays in the disablement process.

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University of Missouri study shows controversial J-turns reduce crashes

By ANDREW DENNEY

Thursday, December 26, 2013 at 2:00 pm Comments (4)

J-turns might not be the most popular traffic design scheme with area motorists, but University of Missouri researchers have found that employing the design at intersections of high-speed rural expressways and minor roads results in fewer accidents at those intersections than at those that are controlled by two-way stops.

For the study, researchers conducted field work by setting up video cameras at the J-turn at Highway 63 and Deer Park Road just south of Columbia and at Highway 63 and Calvert Hill Road, a two-way-stop intersection just north of Columbia.

The researchers assessed crash data from five J-turns in the state and found that there had been no fatal crashes at these sites and that there were almost 35 percent fewer accidents. At the J-turn south of Columbia, there was an average of about 13 crashes annually for the three years before the installation of the J-turn, compared with six in the year after it was installed.

Researchers also used crash analysis data from five Missouri J-turn sites and conducted a survey of travelers using the J-turn at Highway 63 and Deer Park Road. Opinions about J-turns were negative: Of 423 respondents, 62 percent said they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that J-turns were easy to navigate, and 60 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the J-turn made the intersection safer.

"I think some people sometimes still get lost in what is safe versus what is convenient," said Dave Silvester, district engineer for MoDOT’s Central District. He compared some motorists' opposition to J-turns to a similarly negative public sentiment about roundabouts that the department saw several years ago when they were introduced to Missouri. That resistance has since faded.

Ashland city leaders have expressed concern that the Missouri Department of Transportation’s plan to construct a J-turn south of the overpass at the Routes M and Y interchange and roundabouts at the interchange could divert heavy volumes of traffic through the center of town down Henry Clay Boulevard.
MoDOT also has proposed a J-turn for Highway 63 at Clark, where the expressway intersects with Routes P and B, but many of those present at a public meeting earlier this month in Clark said they oppose the plan.

Both the Columbia Fire Department and the Boone County Fire Protection District have instructed firefighters not to drive firetrucks through J-turn intersections in nonemergency situations and to instead use the next available overpass. They are allowed to use J-turns in emergency situations but are advised to use extreme caution.

Battalion Chief Gale Blomenkamp of the Boone County Fire Protection District said that while J-turns could make travel time longer in nonemergency situations, the researchers' study shows that J-turns could be making firefighters' jobs easier by reducing accidents.

"A little bit of an inconvenience in a nonemergency situation? So be it," Blomenkamp said.
Bowl Game Gifts For College Football Players Are Expensive But The Reactions Can Be Priceless

The Huffington Post | By Chris Greenberg

Posted: 12/26/2013 8:00 pm EST

Appearing in a high-profile college football game may be its own reward but an iPad mini doesn't hurt.

Players from the University of Missouri were, to put it mildly, pleasantly surprised to learn earlier this week that they would be receiving Apple TV and an iPad mini just for playing in the AT&T Cotton Bowl.

Those high-tech gifts were just two of the many that players received for earning spots in the 35 games on the 2013-2014 bowl schedule. Those Cotton Bowl gifts may not have even been the best -- or the most expensive -- of the bowl season with video game consoles, watches, sunglasses, gift cards and more being handed out across the country. Of course, it will be hard to say that these gifts didn't elicit the best reaction.

In an attempt to keep a "level playing field," the NCAA has rules capping the value of gifts awarded by organizations managing bowls to $550 per player. According to an explanation of the rules at the official NCAA website, the "members don't want a large, profitable program or event to be able to provide more valuable gifts than less-profitable schools or events." Even with the rules in place, one look at SportsBusiness Journal's annual roundup of bowl game gifts reveals that there remains quite a range in gifts and gift packages.

Despite aiming to keep the prizes somewhat comparable, not all gift packages are created equal and certain players seem to bring much better goodies back to campus than others. As reported by SBJ, bowl committees make bulk purchases allowing them to obtain items at less than retail value in order to keep under the NCAA price cap.

Here are five of the most extravagant gifts from the 2013-2014 bowl season:

- Playstation 4 (Military Bowl presented by Northrop Grumman)
- Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 (Texas Bowl, BBVA Compass Bowl, Beef 'O' Brady’s St. Petersburg Bowl, Royal Purple Las Vegas Bowl)
• Southern Motion Viva home-theater recliner (option available in all bowl game gift suites operated by Carrollton*)
• iPad Mini (AT&T Cotton Bowl, Valero Alamo Bowl)
• $450 Best Buy Gift Card (Russell Athletic Bowl, Capital One Bowl)

*SportsBusiness Journal has all the info you need on the chair as well as the gift suites.
In late January, the U.S. Department of Education instructed public schools that federal law guarantees disabled students equal opportunity to participate in school sports. “While it’s the coach’s job to pick the best team,” said the agency, “students with disabilities must be judged based on their individual abilities.”

“Schools don’t have to change the essential rules,” Education Secretary Arne Duncan explained, “and they don’t have to . . . provide a student with a disability an unfair competitive advantage. But they do need to make reasonable modifications.”

The Education Department struck the right balance. In schools and community leagues alike, children with disabilities can play sports with other children if their abilities permit, and if their participation does not change the character of the game or compromise safety. Programs such as Little League’s Challenger Division enroll children with disabilities when integrated play would be inadvisable or impossible.

Each December, I present the year’s “top 5” news stories about young athletes who did something special. This year’s quintet shows why dismantling barriers through sports is good for youngsters, and for the nation. Sports inspires children with disabilities, and these children inspire others with their determination and perseverance.

5. In Louisville, Ky., Manual High School senior Whitney Foster was born with a rare congenital disorder that left her with small arms that cannot extend and small hands that cannot grip. But she still competes on the school’s bowling team. When she bowled a 203 game, she credited her teammates, whose support “made me ... want to be there.”

4. In Eugene Ore., Sheldon High School senior Avery Ingram completed his four-year varsity wrestling career with more than 20 victories. He has been totally blind since removal of an eye tumor when he was 2. His younger brother says that watching Avery “gives me a different point of view in life and wrestling. I can really understand more things that I don’t think other people really see.”
3. With seconds remaining, the Coronado High School T-Birds were about to defeat their crosstown El Paso, Texas, rival, the Franklin Cougars, 53-40. Rather than run out the clock beneath Franklin’s basket, Franklin’s Jonathon Montanez inbounded the ball to Coronado senior Mitchell Marcus, who was making his first varsity appearance. A special-needs student with a developmental disability, Mitchell served as Coronado’s team manager for four years.

“Shoot it,” Jonathon told Mitchell after the intentional turnover. “It’s your time.”

Mitchell scored a last-second basket, and fans cheered as his teammates hoisted him on their shoulders.

2. Six-year-old kindergartener Danny Keefe is the water boy for the Bridgewater (Mass.) Badgers pee wee football team. A brain hemorrhage at birth left him unable to talk clearly. He also chooses to wear a jacket, tie and fedora to school each day, and then on the sidelines at the Badgers’ games.

When the Badgers fifth-graders learned that classmates were bullying their water boy for his speech impediment and attire, the whole team arrived at school a few days later wearing jackets, ties and fedoras on “Danny Appreciation Day.”

The Badgers’ 11-year-old quarterback, Tommy Cooney, explained that the team took a stand “to show Danny that we love him very much.”

1. In Brentwood, Tenn., wrestler Jared Stevens’ cerebral palsy leaves him with the physical abilities of a six-month-old, though his intellectual ability is close to that of other children his age.

Jared practices with his Sunset Middle School team and cheers his teammates in every match, but he uses a wheelchair and had never wrestled in a match before two coaches arranged an exhibition. Jared’s coach requested the opposing team’s wrestler with “the kindest heart,” which meant 12-year-old captain Justin Kievit.

Jared could not stand on his own, so a coach carried him onto the mat. The referee blew his whistle, and Justin twisted and turned before deliberately losing the 18-second match by putting Jared’s arm over him to score the pin as the crowd cheered.

“I think a lot of people are scared to put kids like me on the mat,” Jared said afterward, “but they don’t need to be.”

“I really didn’t care if I won or lost,” said Justin, “I just wanted to do the right thing.”

After the match’s video went viral, the Stevens and Kievit families dined together to let the two boys get to know each other better. “He’s really funny,” said Justin. “He’s really nice, too.”