MU ADVISING CORPS PLANS TO DOUBLE IN SIZE

A group that helps Missouri high school students pursue a college degree plans to expand across the state and double in size in the next two years.

The Missouri College Advising Corps places recent University of Missouri graduates at high schools where many students don't go on to college. The advisers help students pursue a college degree.

The program, which is based at the University of Missouri, currently has 25 advisers at 26 schools in Kansas City, St. Louis and rural south-central Missouri. Its goal is to expand to 50 advisers in 52 schools by 2016, The Columbia Daily Tribune reported.

The group's executive director, Beth Tankersley-Bankhead, said partner schools will be added in the current service area but also in central, southeast and southwest Missouri. She hopes the program eventually will expand to northern Missouri.

The Missouri program, which is part of the National College Advising Corps, is funded by the university and private donations. Its current operating budget is $1.3 million, most of which comes from donors. A $1 million grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation started the program in 2008. The advisers are paid $32,000 plus benefits and a $5,500 education award from AmeriCorps.

The University of Missouri System is seeking $3 million to fund the advising corps' expansion over the next two years.

Kofi Oyirisi, a Missouri graduate and second-year adviser at McCluer South-Berkeley in north St. Louis County, said the program is rewarding.

"I think for me, the most important thing is I can tangibly see the results of the work that I'm doing," he said. "I can see how my work is directly serving the kids and how, without me, things may have been drastically different."
MU clinic will serve veterans

Law students get experience.

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri Veterans Clinic stands ready to assist military veterans who need legal help.

The clinic, housed in the MU School of Law, is a clinical course for third-year law students. The students work with experienced attorneys to help veterans who are appealing disability benefits decisions made by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Angela Drake, clinic adviser and law professor, said the clinic is focused on serving veterans who cannot afford a lawyer. The clinical course started Tuesday and meets every week, she said.

"I run it basically just like a meeting in a small law firm," Drake said. "I want students to call me by my first name, and we sit around the conference table and talk about what we need to do for the week. The goal is to make it like a small law firm."

The clinic has six active cases, and Drake said she gets calls every day from veterans who need help. Students return each call and offer "preliminary thoughts" about each case, but because there are only seven students and a limited amount of time, the clinic can't accept every case. If the clinic cannot handle a case, it will refer the veteran to another lawyer or organization.

The clinic is funded by a $250,000 donation from an anonymous source, Drake said.

The law school celebrated the opening of the clinic yesterday with a visit from Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Greca, the highest-ranking noncommissioned officer in U.S. Army Forces Command.

Greca, who served with Shawn Lee, a third-year MU law student, said veterans need to be aware of the benefits that are available to them after they leave the military and return to the civilian life. Greca said it is "unacceptable to lose a soldier here" — meaning in civilian life — because they cannot access the health care to which they are entitled.
A student asked Greca about what is being done to address sexual assault and sexual harassment in the military. Greca said the Army is working hard to regain the trust of families affected by sexual assault and harassment.

"We're going to re-establish the trust," he said.

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Posted in Education on Thursday, January 23, 2014 2:00 pm.

PELL GRANT LIMITS HAMPER SOME COLLEGE STUDENTS

By Tim Barker tbarker@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8350

NO MENTION

When Congress decided two years ago to slash lifetime eligibility for federal Pell Grants, financial aid advocates worried the abrupt change would cast adrift thousands of students on the verge of graduation.

They were thinking about students like Lauren Colquitt.

She was in her final semester at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, when a notice arrived in September from the school’s financial aid office, telling her she was no longer eligible for the Pell Grant.

It was a message that left her staring at a $5,000 tuition bill and no way to pay it.

“It was very devastating,” said Colquitt, of St. Louis. “I spent a lot of nights crying.”

What snagged Colquitt was a 2012 change in the number of years students are eligible to receive a Pell Grant, one of the primary sources of financial aid for students from lower-income families.

Before that, students were eligible for 18 semesters – essentially nine years. The new rule, which went into effect during the 2012-13 school year, cut it to 12 semesters.

Congress made the move ostensibly to encourage students to complete degrees more quickly. But it also was an attempt to trim a program whose costs have soared in the past decade.
Rather than cut the overall award amount for each student – the current maximum is $5,645 per year – legislators opted to cut off aid to long-time students. The idea was that students who fail to get a degree in six years are unlikely to get one in nine years, said Mark Kantrowitz, a financial aid expert and senior vice president of Edvisors Network.

Congress also wanted to reduce waste by making it harder on so-called Pell runners – people who enroll in college only to run off with their Pell grant money.

The change may indeed be effective in eliminating some Pell fraud. But it also trapped students like Colquitt, who've been slow to finish college in six years for one reason or another.

Colquitt’s college journey started in 2007 at the University of Missouri-Kansas City where she was pursuing a career in dentistry. But after two years there, she decided she wanted to be closer to home.

“I really liked the university. But I was so homesick,” Colquitt said. “I was driving to St. Louis every weekend.”

So she transferred to UMSL and started work on a nursing degree. In doing so, she found herself with some 30 credit hours that wouldn’t count toward the new degree requirements.

Then came the new rules from Congress, which offered no relief to students like Colquitt, who were already working their way through college.

“It's a shame there was no grandfathering,” Kantrowitz said. “This was cutting them off cold-turkey.”

It's difficult to say how many students have been caught by the change. But it seems likely the number is larger than originally projected.

When the new time limits were announced, the federal government estimated it would affect 100,000 students nationally.

The number has not been updated, but there is anecdotal evidence suggesting the initial projection was optimistically low.

Educators in just two states – Mississippi and Alabama – are expecting some 28,000 students to lose Pell eligibility during the first few years of the change, according to a report last year by The Institute for College Access and Success.

Some financial aid experts expect the problem to diminish over time, as students adjust to the new restrictions.

But that does little to help those who were caught in the abrupt policy shift, said Lauren Asher, president of the Institute.

“It put students who were close to completion in an impossible position,” Asher said. “There was gravely insufficient warning.”
For many of these students, there's not a lot of help available. Many already have exhausted their federal student loan eligibility, and don't have the financial resources to offset the substantial loss of support.

In Colquitt's case, the out-of-class obligations for her nursing degree made a second job virtually impossible. She considered a private loan, but doubted her credit score would be strong enough to secure one. Her family, she knew, didn't have the money.

“I had no idea how I was going to pay that $5,000,” she said.

Then UMSL stepped in.

The school recently put together a new scholarship – the Senior Degree Completion Program – designed to help students like Colquitt.

It covers tuition and fees and is awarded based on academic achievements, payment history and progress toward graduation. Preference is given to those needing 15 or fewer credits to graduate.

Colquitt was one of six students to get the scholarship last fall, helping her graduate in December.

So far, the school has seen more than 500 students lose Pell eligibility. And while the new scholarship program can’t help all of them, there will be as many as 30 more scholarships given out this spring, said Alan Byrd, dean of enrollment services.

Byrd sees it as a safety net of sorts for promising students stuck within arms reach of their degrees.

“You can tell if they are abusing the system or are really trying to graduate,” Byrd said.

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**SETTING 2 FIRES ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES GETS MISSOURI MAN 6 YEARS IN PRISON**

**THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

**COLUMBIA, Mo.** • A Columbia man has been sentenced to more than six years in prison for setting fires at two college campuses.
The U.S. attorney's office says Christopher Curtis Kelley also was ordered Thursday to pay $591,114 in restitution.

**Kelley, 28, was found guilty of two counts of arson last year for setting fires in 2011 at the University of Missouri-Columbia and Stephens College.**

Federal prosecutors accused Kelley of starting fires at 10 locations at the university's Ellis Library. That disrupted library services for a couple of days. Water damage also forced the temporary closure of the Missouri State Historical Society, which is located at the library.

Damage was less extensive from the fire that Kelley was convicted of setting at the Audrey Webb Child Study Center at Stephens College.

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**Columbia arsonist sentenced to 6½ years in federal prison**

By Alan Burdziak

Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (2)

A Columbia man who was convicted last year of setting fires on the campuses of the University of Missouri and Stephens College in 2011 was sentenced to 6½ years in federal prison on Thursday.

Christopher Kelley, 28, received the maximum sentence for his crimes. He was convicted of two counts of arson for his role in setting fires at the University of Missouri’s Ellis Library and at Stephens College in 2011. The fires resulted in about $1 million in damage.

Kelley also was ordered to pay $591,114.35 in restitution. When he is released from prison, he will be on three years’ supervised released.

Jim Lynn, assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Missouri, had requested Kelley be sentenced for a term longer than the 63- to 78-month recommended sentence.
“A sentence within the guidelines range is insufficient because such sentence fails to account for certain aggravating circumstances surrounding the commission of these offenses that were not considered in determining the guidelines range,” Lynn wrote.

Those factors, Lynn wrote, include that Kelley’s actions caused “extensive damage” and disrupted governmental functions and show that Kelley is a serial arsonist motivated by the thrill of committing such crimes.

Damage to Ellis Library at MU totaled $750,000, and cleanup totaled about $531,000. Damage added up to nearly $55,000 at Stephens’ Audrey Webb Child Study Center.

Kelley’s attorney, Burbank, Calif.-based Jennifer Wirsching, filed a response Monday, saying the sentencing guidelines did take into account the factors that Lynn listed. Kelley maintained his innocence in a previous response to the initial sentencing memorandum filed Jan. 17.

This version of the article appeared only in the online edition of the Tribune. To view the version printed in the Thursday, January 23, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Prosecutor wants longer arson sentence,” click here.

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Posted in Crime on Thursday, January 23, 2014 2:00 pm.
Christopher C. Kelley, 28, was sentenced for two counts of arson. He will not be eligible for parole, according to the media release.

One count of arson was for lighting fires in 10 places around the library in September 2011. The second count was for setting fire to a classroom in Stephens College's Audrey Webb Child Study Center in May 2011.

“We did ask for a higher sentence than the recommended 63 to 78 months, but nothing specific,” public affairs officer Don Ledford said.

The smoke, water and fire damage to the library was estimated to cost between $750,000 and $1 million, according to previous reporting in the Missourian. Damage to the Stephens facility was estimated to cost about $55,000. Between $60,000 and $75,000 of damage was done to the State Historical Society of Missouri, which is in the basement of the library.

According to previous reporting, the library remained closed for two days following the fires.
U.S. District Judge Beth Phillips sentenced Kelley.

Letter to the Editor: Lack of heat in Arts and Science building is troubling

By Caitlin McEwen

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a senior English major and have had many courses in multiple buildings across campus. I have seen the great resources in the Journalism School and have seen the deplorable conditions of Arts and Sciences. Just this morning I spent an hour and a half in A&S for my capstone course; during our time together my class wore our heavy coats over long-sleeved shirts and shivered in the little-to-no-heat classroom.
While I understand that A&S is not one of buildings that comes to mind when asked about Mizzou's campus, many students spend hours upon hours there; the foreign languages are housed there as well as many other classes. A&S is an important building for a majority of students on campus, and it is alarming that such building is not up to par with others on campus. I am not suggesting that A&S be completely renovated, however I would recommend that instead of putting in a new projector in the student center (which was put in on Wednesday, January 24) that the basic needs of a building, such as heat, get met.

I have heard in the past that buildings such as the J-School, Student Center, and the Rec get renovated and improved because those buildings have funds coming in from outside sources (alumni donations, grants, etc.), however one building should not be lacking the ability to be comfortable for its students just because there are no donations being specified to that building. I know that what is done cannot be undone and that the projection screen put in above the circulation desk in the student center is now permanent, but I urge those whom choose how funds get spent to look at what the needs of the school are, rather than wants.

Columbia program helps cancer patients with wigs

January 24
BY CAROLINE DOHACK
Columbia Daily Tribune

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Walk into the back room at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center's gift shop in Columbia, and you'll be greeted by a bevy of well-coiffed mannequin heads.

For five years, this is where gift shop supervisor Edlyn Donovan has been helping patients who are losing their hair to cancer choose wigs.

These wigs can be an important part of a cancer patient's recovery, the Columbia Daily Tribune (http://bit.ly/1e9UilZ) reports.
"Hair is an emotional thing for most people. It's how people see you," Donovan said.

Hair also is part of how people see themselves. While cancer patients understand on an intellectual level that they will lose their hair, Donovan said it’s in her wig boutique that they understand on an emotional level what it will mean to lose their hair. It's not uncommon for a patient to have a breakdown in Donovan’s wig boutique, she said.

Donovan isn't just a wig fitter, but a good listener.

And it's this role that inspired Donovan to make it easier for patients to get wigs. About two years ago, Donovan was helping a young woman with a wig fitting. The patient didn't have the money to buy a new wig, and the wigs that had been donated and refurbished had come from much older patients.

"I knew I had the perfect wig, but I couldn’t just give it to her. I thought, 'Well, Edlyn, I’ll just buy it.' But I can't buy a wig for everybody," Donovan said.

Then while watching television at home that night, she saw a commercial for a charity in which donors sponsor a child in need. Inspired, Donovan decided to organize a program through which donors could provide the funds for qualifying patients to choose wigs at no cost.

And so the No One Fights Alone wig sponsorship program was born.

Most of the wigs at the Ellis Fischel boutique are in the $100 to $150 range — considerably less than what one would pay at a wig shop or salon, Donovan said — but this still is an extraordinary expense for many cancer patients. Furthermore, Donovan said, the vast majority of insurance companies will not cover the cost of a wig.

"People are generous," Donovan said, "but often patients are reluctant to take money from friends. A sponsorship program allows it to be more anonymous."

Of note, Donovan said, is that a patient doesn't need to be receiving care at Ellis Fischel to qualify for a wig through No One Fights Alone, and she has helped patients from all over the state choose wigs.

In the past six months, Donovan said, she assisted 125 patients with wig fittings. Of these, she sold 38, gave away 21 new wigs through No One Fights Alone and gave away 25 that had been donated and refurbished.

**University of Missouri Health Care Director of Development Kellie Ann Coats said in the past two years, the program has raised about $35,000.**

This sum includes an endowment of $25,000 from Ellen and Guy Brown.

Ellen Brown recalls the importance of finding a good wig when her mother-in-law was diagnosed with breast cancer in the 1970s.
"Being a Southern lady, she really enjoyed her hair and always looked beautiful and went to the beauty parlor once a week," Brown said. "When she lost her hair, she needed a wig."

Finding a wig was not easy. Brown's mother-in-law, who lived in Fayetteville, Ark., had to travel to Tulsa, Okla., to get the wig. But it was worth the effort.

"It was almost the same as her old hair. She looked like herself again — oh, exactly," Brown said.

Looking like one's self again is especially important for a patient whose appearance is changing in so many other ways, Donovan said. For this reason, she likes to see patients as soon after their diagnoses as possible so she can get a feel for what their natural hair looks like.

Often, Donovan said, she knows instantly which wig in her inventory will best suit the patient. However, experience has taught her that the first wig a patient tries on will look especially strange to him or her.

"All they see is the wig," Donovan said.

So, she starts with something else and gradually works toward the wig she has in mind.

Sometimes, Donovan said, a patient requests a style very different from what he or she had before. Perhaps the patient had always wanted to be a platinum blonde or a redhead. Donovan usually tries to steer patients away from drastic changes such as these.

"Usually, that's not really what they want. They want to be themselves again," Donovan said.

One particular story drove this point home for Donovan. A patient visited the boutique to find a new wig to replace the one she had been wearing. Donovan didn't know what the patient looked like before she started chemotherapy, but the wig she chose was a hit.

"The tears just started streaming. She said, 'I look like me again,'" Donovan said.

There's quite a bit that goes into helping a patient find that "me" wig.

First, there's fit. Wigs typically come in three sizes — petite, regular and large — but they still have to be fitted to the person's head. If it's still not right after some minor adjustments, Donovan can take it apart and rebuild it.

Color is important, too. Donovan works with five wig companies to ensure she has a variety of colors. Often, these wigs have both highlights and lowlights, which creates visual depth and a more natural look.

Some wigs are sewn onto caps made of monofilament, which allows some of the scalp to show just as it would with a person's natural hair. Additionally, Donovan said, a wig might be a little thinner in some spots, which mimics natural hair growth. Some wigs also have lace fronts, which helps create the illusion of a natural hairline for people who like to wear their hair pulled back.
Although a patient can buy a wig made from human hair, Donovan said most prefer synthetics because they're easier to care for. Wigs made from real hair must be combed and restyled after wash. Synthetics, on the other hand, are permanently set in their styles.

"It's pretty much shake and wear," Donovan said.

Most patients will start to grow their hair back after finishing chemotherapy, Donovan said, and it's not uncommon for the wigs she provided to find their way back to her boutique. Donovan is able to clean and refurbish them to donate to new patients.

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**MU professor gives presentation to violence task force, despite lack of quorum**

Panel hears presentation on ex-offender re-entry.

By Alan Burdziak

Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (2)

A University of Missouri law professor gave his presentation on ex-offender re-entry to the six members of the Mayor's Task Force on Community Violence in attendance at Wednesday night's meeting, despite the lack of a quorum.

Seven of the 13 task force members are necessary to make a quorum that can discuss and vote on agenda items. S. David Mitchell, who specializes on the criminal justice system and the consequences of a conviction, detailed several ways to give former prisoners a better shot at success. He also presented data on the number of ex-offenders moving into Boone County over the last several years and barriers that prevent their success.

These issues affect everyone who has gone through the criminal justice system, he said, though data do point to young black males being disproportionately affected.

Collateral consequences of a conviction, he said, can often hinder a person's prospects. Throughout the country, states restrict the rights of people with certain convictions. In some states, Missouri included, felons lose the right to vote when incarcerated or on probation or
parole. States also restrict eligibility for public housing, welfare assistance, the ability to serve on a public body and various employment opportunities depending on the state and the crime. Many rights are restored once all sentencing requirements are complete, but in some cases, the only way to regain some rights is through a gubernatorial or presidential pardon, Mitchell said, both of which are exceedingly rare.

Many factors should be considered when it comes to ex-offenders re-entering society, Mitchell said, including the possibility of the expungement of their criminal record, "banning the box" and determining ways to increase post-release stability and pathways to economic security.

"There's got to be something more," Mitchell said of assistance provided to ex-offenders. "More than just the platitudes that we've been giving. More than just rhetoric."

"Ban the box" refers to a question on an employment application that requests the disclosure of a felony or, in some cases, misdemeanor conviction.

Recommending that the city pass an ordinance that does "ban the box" is an example of "low-hanging fruit" that task force members have said they would like to send to the Columbia City Council before they make a complete set of suggestions later this year, Mitchell said.

It would remove the stigma of a conviction, "allowing the individuals at least a shot at an opportunity," he said.

Task force member Pamela Hardin, vice president of the Mid-Missouri chapter of the NAACP, agreed with Mitchell's assessment of the difficulty ex-offenders, particularly young black men, face in finding steady work and housing.

"There is a big problem here in Columbia ... that they don't have anything to do," Hardin said. "It is the economic problem."

It is common for people recently released to move around in the first few years, which can lead to recidivism. Mitchell said ex-offenders who are forced to move, sometimes because they are ineligible for low-income benefits like public or Section 8 housing, are much more likely to reoffend.

Columbia Mayor Bob McDavid assembled the task force last summer after numerous high-profile crimes. The committee began meeting in August and has until November to recommend policy changes to the city council. The group regularly meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month.

This article was published in the Thursday, January 23, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "'Just rhetoric' won't cut it, MU prof says: Panel hears presentation on ex-offender re-entry."

Posted in Crime on Thursday, January 23, 2014 2:00 pm.
COLUMBIA – A.J. Boren was always quick with a joke and managed to find something in common with everyone, his friends said.

"He would help you with any problem, no matter how dark," his close friend Robbie Shutt said. "He brought me out of my shell as my mentor and best friend, and without him I couldn’t have made it this far at Mizzou."

Aaron Jerald Boren of Jackson, Tenn., died Friday, Jan. 17, 2014. He was 22 years old and studying at MU.

Mr. Boren was born Dec. 29, 1991, to Ricky and Donna Boren. He earned his Eagle Scout rank when he was 14 years old and was the 12- to 16-year-old Tennessee Tae Kwon Do champion in 2006.

He graduated from the Missouri Military Academy in 2010 as a first lieutenant with high honors.

"A.J. was a bright young man who did very well academically and made many friends here," MMA spokeswoman Christine Smith said. "He was active with the yearbook and the school newspaper, carrying his camera with him wherever he went to document athletic games and school activities."

Friends remember Mr. Boren for his kindness and generosity.

Mr. Boren is survived by his parents, Ricky and Donna Boren; his sister Abigail Pearson and her husband, Giles Pearson; his sister Ellie Boren; his grandmother, Frances Boren; his grandfather, Jerry Rutledge; and his niece, Charlotte Pearson.

Private services are planned.
Residents from the Sixth Ward spoke face-to-face with Columbia city government officials about the city's growth and development policies and the central-city parking crunch Wednesday night at the ward's check-in meeting.

The Sixth Ward encompasses the southeast portion of the city and includes neighborhoods located just east of the University of Missouri campus. Like the downtown-based First Ward, the Sixth has also been targeted for the construction of new student housing; a New York-based developer wants to build an 899-bed complex near the intersection of Highway 63 and Stadium Boulevard called the "The Avenue at Columbia."

While East Campus residents have long had problems with MU students, faculty and staff who do not live in the neighborhood parking their automobiles and commuting to campus, residents say the problem has gotten worse in recent years as an influx of new people in the downtown area has made parking spaces scarcer.

"More and more we are becoming the parking lot for the central city," said Betty Wilson, an East Campus resident who serves on the city's Citizens Police Review Board. Wilson also asked Columbia Community Development Director Tim Teddy what the city plans to do about a shortage of downtown parking.

Teddy said the city does not want to encourage the construction of any more large surface lots in the downtown area, but has considered the construction of "strategically" placed parking lots.

Additionally, the city has held meetings with East Campus residents to discuss a potential permit-only parking system similar to the one now enforced in the North Village Arts District. To enforce parking outside of downtown, the city must rely on police officers, while it can rely on parking enforcement officers for the downtown area.

"Every neighborhood's different, so the things that work there aren't going to be plug-and-play in East Campus," said City Manager Mike Matthes.
Sixth Ward resident Barbara Wren asked Matthes if the city has considered using large surface lots outside of the downtown area to allow motorists to park and use public transportation or other modes to get into the center of the city.

Matthes noted the city has made an effort to encourage more of a park-and-ride atmosphere in the downtown area by giving bus passes to people who buy parking garage passes, a system that began in the current fiscal year.

The meeting, held at Shepard Boulevard Elementary School, was the latest in a series of check-in meetings the city began last year as a way to engage residents more directly. The city plans to hold two meetings annually in each ward.

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