House panel considers Nixon’s education spending plan

Lawmakers see a need for cuts.

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 2:00 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — The House Appropriations-Education Committee has a math problem to solve.

Something will have to be subtracted from the $493.8 million in spending increases Gov. Jay Nixon proposed for public schools and higher education in the coming year. But so far, Chairman Mike Lair said yesterday, he is not sure what that something is.

Legislative estimates for tax receipts next year are $320 million less than Nixon wants to spend, or about 3.5 percent of the general revenue fund. Overall, Nixon asked lawmakers to approve $588 million in increases for general revenue spending.

How the impending cuts will be allocated among agencies hasn't been decided, said Lair, R-Chillicothe. "I would think a fairly good percentage would be" in education, he said. "Look where the money went."

The House has seven committees that look at portions of the budget in detail before an overall spending proposal is crafted by the Budget Committee. Each committee will receive instructions soon to guide its work and will report to the Budget Committee by Feb. 20, Lair said.

Four-year state universities, under Nixon's spending plan, would receive a base budget increase that averages 5 percent and targeted funding for science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. Community colleges are slated for an increase that averages 4 percent, and all schools would share one-time funding to expand programs to educate healthcare professionals.
The University of Missouri System would receive $45.8 million for those increases. Lawmakers appropriated $407.5 million for UM this year.

Lair’s committee yesterday finished two days of testimony from top state college and university officials. Lair directed the schools to answer three questions: how they measure the success of their graduates, how much they devote to student aid and how often they allow non-Missourians to pay in-state tuition rates.

"If you don't give them focused questions, all you get is cheerleading," Lair said.

System treasurer and interim Vice President for Finance Tom Richards testified for the university. He brought answers to Lair's questions, but before he got to them, he did a little cheerleading for the university to show it has kept costs low.

The university is spending essentially the same amount per student that it spent a decade ago, Richard said. If tuition and state aid had kept pace with inflation, Richard said, the university would have $275 million more for operations than currently budgeted.

"We have been forced to cut, and this is an illustration in a sense that we are doing more with less," Richards said.

On the Columbia campus, he said, administrative costs are less than half the national median for similar schools. To keep costs low throughout the system, he said the university has put off $1.3 billion in maintenance needs.

"That was the right choice at the time, but we can't continue to make that choice," he said.

To answer Lair's questions, Richards provided information on student success showing that the university monitors how many students leave between freshman and sophomore years, how many graduate in six years and how many pass graduate school entrance exams. The university meets or beats all its benchmarks, he said.

The system provided $201 million in scholarships and discounts in the 2012-13 school year, he said, up from $119 million in 2004. For determining tuition, he said, the university uses statewide guidelines on residency, which require a petition from students moving to the state to show they have made a permanent move.

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Posted in Politics, Education on Thursday, January 30, 2014 2:00 pm.
COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri System Board of Curators spent much of Thursday talking and hearing about alternative sources of revenue. Fundraising was first on the list.

"Fundraising is a team sport," UM System President Tim Wolfe said early in the board development session. "It's an opportunity to connect to alumni and donors. It's a necessary ingredient to fund the resources for the future."

In his opening remarks, board Chairman Don Downing said tuition can't be the only method used to make up for the long-term decline in state support for higher education.

Carol Cartwright of the Association of Governing Boards of universities and colleges, a former president of Bowling Green State University and Kent State University, led curators through a presentation about university fundraising and the board's role in it.

"Fundraising goals must be aligned with the institution’s priorities," Cartwright said.

Cartwright noted emerging trends in fundraising:

- It is donor centered; that is, what do donors want to achieve?

- Private funds are important, but equally important are mission, purpose and trusting relationships.

- The new mindset is human, engaged and flexible.
She also cited social media and crowdsourcing as ways to engage young alumni and donors with UM System institutions.

Tom Hiles, MU vice chancellor for university advancement, updated the curators on MU’s progress in reaching out to donors.

Hiles said an outside consultant was hired to conduct a feasibility study last summer and meet with 80 of the school’s top donors. The study gathered feedback and data on how donors thought their money was being spent.

New to the curators' meeting was R. Bowen Loftin, who officially starts his job as MU chancellor on Monday. In an interview during a break in the meeting, Loftin said MU will be in the early stages of a new fundraising campaign.

"This is something I’ve been doing a long time, so I’m very familiar with it," Loftin said. "This particular campaign (at MU) is roughly in the same place as the one I walked away from (at Texas A&M University) in terms of its maturity right now."

Loftin said MU is looking at a diverse set of fundraising methods, "which includes philanthropy as well as capitalizing on the discoveries made at this institution. They’re all important ways to help broaden the base of funding that’s necessary to support this institution."

Curators hold tuition steady for in-state undergraduates

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (1)

The University of Missouri Board of Curators on Wednesday unanimously voted not to increase in-state undergraduate tuition for the 2014-15 academic year.

UM System President Tim Wolfe recommended the move after Gov. Jay Nixon in his State of the State address proposed a 5 percent state appropriation increase for higher education in exchange for colleges and universities not raising tuition.
The appropriation increase, if approved by the General Assembly, would mean a $20.7 million jump in core funding for the UM System. Previously, the curators discussed increasing in-state undergraduate tuition by the cost of inflation, now at 1.5 percent. Officials had estimated that tuition increase, plus an expected 1.5 percent inflation increase in state appropriations, would have brought in just less than $10 million — or less than half the boost proposed by Nixon.

After the vote, Wolfe said he thinks keeping tuition flat for in-state undergraduates "signals that focus is on the right thing."

Curators yesterday also voted to increase tuition for nonresident undergraduates and resident graduate students. The board approved a 3 percent increase for nonresident undergraduate students at MU and Missouri S&T and a 1.5 percent increase for those students at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Resident graduate students will pay 1.5 percent more in tuition at each of the four campuses. The changes take effect this summer.

The curators also increased resident and nonresident tuition for specific graduate school programs, including a 6 percent hike for resident veterinary medicine students and a 2.5 percent hike for nonresidents. Tuition for MU law and medicine students, residents and nonresidents, was increased by 1.5 percent.

The board also addressed and approved new and increased supplemental fees for students on the Columbia, Rolla and Kansas City campuses. UMSL didn't request any fee increases that were higher than the cost of inflation. Requests for fee increases that are equal to or less than the cost of inflation are considered separately from requests for fee increases that are higher than the cost of inflation.

MU requested two new supplemental per-credit-hour fees for undergraduate and graduate engineering and arts and sciences students. The fees, which were approved, are $30 for resident engineering students, $70 for nonresident engineering students and $25 for arts and sciences upper-level courses.

Before bringing the requests to a vote, Curator Wayne Goode said he "found this to be a pretty depressing experience." He said supplemental fees are not a good way to finance the university. During the meeting, Curator John Phillips said funding the university through fees takes the focus off dwindling state support.

"I personally feel we shouldn't continue to load this on the backs of students and parents," Phillips said after the meeting, adding that eventually it could make higher education less affordable.

The supplemental fees for engineering students would generate $1.5 million that would go toward hiring new tenure-track faculty and the renovation of laboratories. The arts and sciences fee would generate $1.8 million that would go toward new tenure-track faculty as well as funding $1.2 million in renovations to science-, technology-, engineering- and mathematics-related laboratories and $400,000 for merit-based salary increases for faculty.
The University of Missouri is pulling out as the anchor of a planned “innovation park” in Blue Springs, prompting city leaders Thursday to talk about redefining the goals for the project.

The university announced it will vacate leased space near the Missouri Innovation Park site by the end of September to “consolidate and streamline operations” in Jackson County.

The city purchased about 24 acres at the southeast corner of Interstate 70 and Adams Dairy Parkway for about $2.3 million. Officials expected in 2012 to break ground for a 60,000-square-foot building to house university operations by the first quarter of this year.

But the land remains vacant and no ground has been broken. A city spokeswoman said Thursday the city had made no significant investment in the project since buying the land.

MU’s participation in the innovation park was part of a 2008 memorandum of understanding between the university, the city and the Blue Springs Economic Development Corporation. The plan was eventually to create a business park focused on science technology and research that could be home to dozens of companies.
In a statement posted on the city’s website Thursday, the university said things had changed.

“Technology has changed the way we deliver our services, the economy has continued to challenge us financially, and some traditional funding sources have become less dependable,” the statement said.

Mayor Carson Ross said on the Blue Springs website that officials were disappointed but optimistic.

“Retooling our economic development goals for the Innovation Park and engaging new partners will strengthen our strategy going forward,” Ross said.

Brien Starner, president of the economic development corporation, said in the same statement that “now is the time to refocus and redefine the development strategy of the Missouri Innovation Park.”

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January 30, 2014 by Jennifer Howard

Mold Outbreak Threatens 600,000 Books at U. of Missouri Library Facility

Mold has invaded a remote-storage facility used by the University of Missouri Libraries, putting hundreds of thousands of volumes at risk, the Columbia Daily Tribune reported.

All the books in the facility are affected, according to a university spokesman. “We have learned that the entire collection of approximately 600,000 printed volumes in the storage facility is contaminated and must either be treated to eradicate the mold or be disposed to ensure that contamination cannot spread to other collections,” Christian Basi told The Chronicle via email.

The mold does not present a threat to human health, according to Mr. Basi. The books aren’t so lucky. Many probably will not be salvaged.

“Cost to treat the entire collection is estimated to be $1.8-million, which MU does not have,” Mr. Basi said. “At present, we are identifying those materials that are most readily accessible to our users either online or via interlibrary loan so that we can focus our limited funds on treating and retaining materials that are unique, of special value, or held by few libraries within the region or nationally.”
It’s not clear how the mold problem began at the facility, which is operated by a third party, ConAgg. But the problem dates at least as far back as October, when library staff members “discovered signs of active mold growth on books and bound journals” in the remote-storage facility, Mr. Basi said. The problem was immediately reported, and librarians “have been working to identify the extent of the infestation,” he said.

*The Chronicle* wasn’t able to reach Jim Cogswell, director of the University of Missouri Libraries, for comment. He told the *Tribune* that the library has an insurance fund, but it isn’t big enough to pay for all the books to be treated. “We don’t have that kind of money,” he told the newspaper. He said that underfunding had driven the library to rent offsite space to house some of its collections. “We are in this predicament because we had to find a cheap alternative place to put our books in,” Mr. Cogswell said.

“Most academic libraries,” she added, “really are caught in a serious dilemma right now: still need to acquire new print books, campus libraries out of space, administrations loath to expand libraries or build/expand library-shelving facilities, and faculty saying don’t remove any existing books.”

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**Title IX expert thinks MU didn't violate law in Sasha Menu Courey case**

By [David Morrison](#)

*Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (2)*

**At a news conference Wednesday, University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe repeatedly stressed how committed MU officials have been to his recommendations in the wake of ESPN’s report on former Tigers swimmer Sasha Menu Courey, who committed suicide in June 2011, about 16 months after she was the alleged victim of a sexual assault at the hands of one or more football players.**

On Sunday, hours after ESPN's "Outside the Lines" special on Menu Courey aired, Wolfe called for MU to launch an independent investigation into the university's handling of the situation, as well as an appeal to the chancellors at all four campuses to lead an intensive review of how each school handles sexual-assault allegations and mental-health issues among students.

When asked why MU Athletic Director Mike Alden had yet to answer questions from reporters on the issue, Wolfe said only that “Mike is in full support.” When asked if he would have liked to have seen more response from MU's athletic department or other campus officials before his
Sunday call to action, Wolfe said he will wait to see "what comes back from the investigations and findings" before he makes a judgment.

Wolfe has been pretty clear about what he feels is the path forward for MU.

Now, the question remains, was the school's response to the matter before ESPN's intervention appropriate? Did it fulfill its federal Title IX obligations to Menu Courey and its student body?

Title IX, a provision in the Education Amendments of 1972, prohibits sex discrimination in education. That extends to instances of sexual violence, which the U.S. Department of Education views as a form of sexual harassment.

An April 2011 letter from the Department of Education informed all entities that receive federal Title IX funding that schools are obligated to investigate and attempt to resolve sexual-assault claims once they "reasonably should know" of an incident, regardless of whether it has been reported by the student, his or her family or a third party.

Documents obtained by ESPN through open-records requests in 2012 found that at least six campus health providers had knowledge of, or signed documents containing information about, Menu Couey's alleged rape before her death.

Menu Courey's journal included a passage about a phone conversation with MU athletic academic adviser Meghan Anderson in May 2011 in which Menu Courey said she mentioned the assault. Her parents revealed in a February 2012 Tribune article that Menu Courey wrote in her journal that she had been sexually assaulted. ESPN found that article was e-mailed to a number of athletic department officials at the time.

Throughout the course of fulfilling the open-records request in late 2012, MU found a chat transcript from two years earlier in which Menu Courey outlined the incident to a rape crisis counselor.

ESPN's report contended that series of events should have been enough for MU to launch an investigation. MU said officials were not aware of the incident until late 2012 and, partly because of an unreturned letter to Menu Courey's parents asking for permission to proceed, "was unable to go forward with an investigation due to no request for an investigation and a lack of specific information."

Brett Sokolow, executive director of the Association of Title IX Administrators, said he didn't believe MU violated Title IX.

"More could have been done by the campus, but I don't necessarily think we have a Title IX issue on the level ESPN was making it out to be," Sokolow said.
The health professionals who knew of the alleged incident before Menu Courey's death were bound by confidentiality, Sokolow said, unless they felt an "imminent threat of harm."

MU officials contend they had scarce information on where the alleged assault occurred until the ESPN report came out, an important distinction because Title IX doesn't have an obligation to regulate off-campus behavior, except when it impacts campus life, Sokolow said. Further, Sokolow said he found it curious that Menu Courey's parents — Mike Menu and Lynn Courey — chose to ignore MU's letter seeking to launch an investigation in January 2013.

Menu and Courey said they chose not to respond because they felt MU had enough information to start an investigation on its own and the school's delayed response felt disingenuous. The letter came five to six months after ESPN and Menu Courey's parents first requested information from MU.

"I think that failure to respond is very unreasonable, especially now that they're saying the university should have done something," Sokolow said. "Basically all they needed to do was green-light the investigation at that point, and I think the university would have acted.

"But I'll fault the university slightly for not reaching out more than that, or tracking them down and looking at other ways. It would not have been hard to talk with Sasha's swimming teammates to find out if anybody knew what had happened to her, or talked to her former boyfriend to see if they knew of anything that had happened to her. I think they could have done more there."

Menu Courey's May 2011 phone conversation with Anderson is another possible piece of the puzzle.

If the swimmer told Anderson of the assault, as she wrote in her journal, it would have been an admission of the incident to a university official who was not bound by confidentiality. Anderson, who now works at Tennessee, denied to ESPN that Menu Courey ever mentioned the assault to her.

"The timing of things is very tricky in there," said W. Scott Lewis, partner at the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management. "It would also play a role that," if "she was made aware of the sexual assault, was she made aware it was by another student? That would kick in some different responsibilities. The detail of that would matter.

"If Meghan Anderson knew that Sasha said, 'You should know a football player raped me,' that would change the requirements of the institution to look more into it, ask more questions and report it to the Title IX coordinator. If she simply told Meghan, 'I was raped,' then it's not a Title IX issue."

The school is not currently starting a Title IX probe, MU News Bureau executive director Mary Jo Banken wrote in an email, and is awaiting developments in the Columbia Police Department criminal investigation into the matter before making further decisions.
Sokolow said the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights can choose to investigate a school that it feels did not investigate a possible breach of Title IX properly or one that has campus policies that do not conform with the legislation. Such investigations usually end in recommendations for how schools can change behaviors going forward. If a school failed to implement those recommendations, Sokolow said, the Department of Education could choose to restrict federal funding or litigate against the campus.

Department of Education spokesman Jim Bradshaw wrote in an email that the Office of Civil Rights has not received any Title IX complaints about MU in the Menu Courey case, and the office can not comment on possible investigations.

Now, MU begins the process of finding out exactly what happened in the school's actions regarding Menu Courey and what it can possibly improve upon in the future.

"Was she aware of where she could go to report these issues on campus? Is the climate there one where students would be comfortable going to the Title IX coordinator or the Office of Student Conduct or the deputy coordinator in athletics and having a conversation?" Lewis said. "I think there are some climate questions that could be raised at Missouri. If this alleged assault occurred, what made her not come to other officials for adjudication? It could just be that she just was not ready emotionally.

"How could this have happened, and how do we make sure nothing like this happens again?"

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Mike Alden speaks about Sasha Menu Courey case
On Thursday night, Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden spoke for the first time about the ESPN “Outside the Lines” report on former MU swimmer Sasha Menu Courey, who committed suicide in June 2011 after battling mental-health issues that were possibly exacerbated by an alleged rape by one or more Missouri football players. The ESPN story suggested MU made questionable decisions dealing with Menu Courey’s mental illness and said the school might have violated the federal law Title IX by failing to launch an investigation of the alleged rape.

After the story first appeared on ESPN’s website Friday, the athletic department released two letters that athletic department spokesman Chad Moller wrote to the ESPN staffers working on the story. The athletic department subsequently issued news releases that took issue with ESPN and defended the university’s actions. On Saturday night, the university turned over information about the alleged rape to the Columbia Police Department, which opened an investigation of the alleged crime that is now nearly three years old. On Sunday, University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe announced there would be an independent investigation into the university’s handling of Menu Courey and the rape allegation. On Wednesday, Wolfe answered questions from reporters, taking a more compassionate tone toward the Menu Courey family than was expressed in the weekend’s prepared statements.

Until Thursday night, Alden, who was in Florida at a National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics meeting over the weekend, had not consented to interviews. That was particularly troubling because the recent spate of high-profile MU athletes accused of sexual assaults — including the cases of football player Derrick Washington and basketball player Mike Dixon — has called into question whether he is serious about investigating or disciplining athletes unless the media forces his hand.

Alden spoke individually over the phone to a few reporters who regularly cover Missouri athletics, including Tribune sports editor Joe Walljasper. Here is the transcript of Alden’s interview with Walljasper.

Q: You have now had three high-profile cases of sexual assaults with athletes in the last few years. In your mind, how has your department handled the aftermath of each of those?

A: You certainly think that all of your kids are doing things well, everything is going well. However, when you see something like that, it makes you step back and want to make sure that you’re doing things the right way. I think for us, when we’ve had those issues and they’ve come up, after we’ve identified them, we’ve tried to respond in an appropriate fashion comprehensibly throughout the institution. You would hope that you have, certainly. But what I want to make sure is we don’t see those instances continue to come up and we continue to deal with them better going forward. I think overall we’ve tried to address them in the best fashion we could. I think going forward, if those ever come up again, you want to see what you can do to even improve how you respond.
Q: In the case of Michael Dixon, it wasn’t until the media reported the details of the police report (of his first alleged sexual assault) that you announced that he was parting ways with the university. In the case of Sasha, it wasn’t until the ESPN report that you passed the information on to the police and announced this internal investigation. What is your response to the idea that it takes the media reporting these things before you take action?

A: Oh, that’s not necessarily the way I’ve seen that. When you look at these types of situations, when you talk about student-conduct issues, whether they have to do with a student-athlete or whoever, it’s really a comprehensive effort by the institution. Whether that has to do with student affairs, or student conduct, or the chancellor’s office or athletics or MUPD or wherever that may be. There’s a whole group of folks who do that. So, I think for us, we do a solid job of communicating internally. And how we’re able to address those, I think we’ve been able to do those in the appropriate fashion. The point is, whenever those things happen, whenever those things are discussed and taken care of, it’s always going to raise questions about things. But I think overall we’ve done as good a job as we can as an institution.

Q: I felt like, particularly with the Dixon case, if you knew what we all knew two years before we did, why was it not until the details came out publicly that any action was taken?

A: I think the thing is, all those situations are unique. A lot of people work on those together. It’s not necessarily just the athletic program. There’s a whole team of people that are able to do things. When you’re making decisions, you’re making those together as a team effort, as a group effort. On the surface, it may appear that those should have taken place earlier or at a different timeframe, but there’s a lot of parts of those equations. There’s confidential information. There’s other information you do share and you’re not able to share and stuff like that. On the surface sometimes people would say things should have taken place earlier, but sometimes through the process it just ends up playing out the way that it does.

Q: In terms of the Sasha, there is some question about when anyone in the athletic department would have known about the alleged rape. I guess the first time it was suggested that someone in the athletic department knew about it was when Sasha supposedly told (academic advisor) Meghan Anderson in 2011. Have you talked to Meghan Anderson to find out whether that is what she was told? What can you tell us about that?

A: I think now that we’re involved in this process where it’s really a criminal case — MUPD has passed this over to the Columbia Police Department — I know they’re looking at all those types of things. For us, on those specific types details, I don’t know if it’s appropriate to comment right now, given that CPD is going through all that.

Q: You, personally, when was the first time you heard the possibility of a rape with her?

A: When Dave (Briggs) did that article. When was that?

Q: He wrote one in February 2012, where her parents mentioned that she might have been raped?
A: Yeah, the one article that Dave Briggs wrote was a real expansive article, wasn’t it? In there, there was a reference about her journey, her life, and how sad and tragic all of that has been certainly, there was a part in there that said she had been sexually assaulted. I don’t believe that it mentioned names or places or different things other than she had had this terrible experience as part of her life. As far as any further information beyond that, when I learned of some of that was when I believe ESPN had been doing that sunshine request and she had had an online chat as part of her information. I believe that information was shared with the general counsel’s office because of the open-records thing. They informed people. They informed, I believe, MUPD, student affairs, student conduct, other areas on campus, athletics. That’s when I became aware of that from the sunshine request.

Q: And when that happens, then what is your first move? Do you say, “Now we need to investigate this”?

A: I think the thing that’s so important is that while clearly Sasha was one of our kids and a student-athlete for us, as a student, this is a comprehensive effort on behalf of the institution. It’s not an athletic department alone issue. While you have a student-athlete, as far as looking into that, doing investigations, that’s a comprehensive deal — MUPD, student affairs, student conduct, all these areas. For us, as one of the departments that’s part of that, we would look to the leaders that would usually do those types of things, which in essence would be student affairs, student conduct, MUPD. I don’t think you’d necessarily say, “Athletic department, go off on your own.” That would be a group effort.

Q: In the statements from the athletic department, it was made clear that a letter was sent to Sasha’s parents asking if they wanted you to do a rape investigation and didn’t get a response.

A: And that was from student conduct.

Q: Your thoughts on why, if the parents didn’t respond, there wasn’t more of a follow-up?

A: I don’t know the answer to that. I know when it was uncovered through the sunshine request that there was a sexual assault that Sasha had referenced in all of her records and that online chat, then that information was shared with student conduct, student affairs, MUPD, and we were made aware of it. I think given the fact that Sasha had passed, now the question is, to initiate something like that, usually the victim has to initiate it. The victim obviously had passed tragically. My belief would be that Donnell Young (the MU senior director of the office of student conduct) and his team and Cathy Scroggs (the MU vice chancellor of student affairs) determined that then we need to go to the parents, because that’s who would make the decision on sunshine requests on behalf of Sasha. I know that Donnell at that time — you’d have to ask him directly — but I believe that he decided that we need to reach out to Sasha’s parents, which he did. As far as any follow-up is concerned, that would be him. I don’t know if or when or why or if he did or didn’t follow up with them or what the decision was on that. I do know he tried reach out to them and didn’t hear back, but any follow-up on that, I don’t know why he wouldn’t have done that.
Q: What about when you learned that the alleged perpetrator might be a football player? At what point did you know that and why not an immediate investigation once you knew a football player might be involved?

A: It is the same process. Sasha had passed. We knew from the online information shared that she had been sexually assaulted and it was referenced “by football players.” Even with that information, once again, to pursue something like that, there’s a process. There’s MUPD, student conduct, student affairs, all these people have to make a determination, “OK, with a victim who has passed now, we’re looking to the parents to give us direction to go into some time of pursuit of this.” That’s why Donnell was reaching out. That would include not only the victim but the perpetrators. That would be my understanding. MUPD would be better to answer those questions, but that’s my understanding.

Q: Some of the issues brought up in the ESPN report involved how Missouri managed an athlete with mental-health issues, some of the decisions made along the way. A few of the things they brought up were that she was sort of removed from the team — Coach (Greg) Rhodenbaugh said she wasn’t kicked off the team, although I guess she said in a text message that she thought she was — and then the decision when she was under suicide watch to have her withdraw from school altogether. Were you involved in making those choices? And, if so, could you walk me through why you thought they were the right things to do?

A: I was not involved with that. It would not be unusual for me to or not to be involved. (Senior associate athletic director) Sarah Reesman would have been involved with that at least from a knowledge standpoint. I know Meghan Anderson, as the academic advisor, would be involved with that. It may depend on the sport, the student-athlete, the circumstances. Those are the folks that were involved with that at that time. But if you look at that, it’s not unusual if we see a student — any student, not a student-athlete, any student at Mizzou — that could miss an appreciable amount of time, you want to try to provide them with an opportunity. “Look, if you stay in class and continue to miss a lot of class, you may flunk a lot of classes. If something like that happens, you’re put in a better position to save your grades if you withdraw.” At least from my understanding from Sarah, that information was shared with Sasha and her parents. They were all together in Columbia and talked about that together. “Here’s the options. If we’re going to miss a lot of class, then we probably want to look at the option of withdrawing from classes so you don’t get an F in all the classes.” … From my understanding from Sarah and her communication with Meghan and understanding that situation, that was presented. I don’t think it was portrayed that way in the story, but I think the full story would indicate that’s the way that was portrayed.

Q: Were you comfortable with that decision?

A: If we know a student in Sasha’s case had the possibility of missing a lot of class — a significant amount of class — would I be comfortable with any student, knowing they would miss a lot of class, providing them with the opportunity to withdraw from classes that semester vs. flunking all the classes? Absolutely I’d be comfortable with that. It’s in their best interest academically to help them with that.
Q: Overall, the ESPN report, what were your feelings on it? Did you feel like your department was portrayed fairly or unfairly? What was your reaction?

A: My first reaction to seeing that was I was just very sad. It’s a sad story, when you look at that and see a young lady has passed away. As a parent myself, Rockie and I as parents, those type of things hit home. I didn’t really approach it from a standpoint of, “Did it put the athletic program in a bad light or the institution in a bad light or whatever?” I’ve really got to tell you, I didn’t look at it that way. I did look at it as I don’t know if the full balance of the story was presented. Perhaps more of the information they had received could have been shared instead of some selectively not shared. But it’s not fair for me to judge whether it put athletics in a bad light. To me, the focus on all of that was we had a young lady who tragically took her own life and a sad situation. That was my take-away. It wasn’t about whether it made the department look bad. It may have. But if it did, that was something I was not focusing on.

Q: In one of the news releases after the fact, it said that the university went to ESPN after you heard there was a rape and asked if they could give you information but didn’t get any cooperation from ESPN. Is that accurate? Did you feel like if you did want to investigate a rape that ESPN didn’t cooperate enough?

A: It is my understanding that we had repeatedly requested information that could help us, help guide us, but access to that information was denied.

Q: It’s six days later, why did you wait until now to speak?

A: As you know, I was in Florida for a NACDA (National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics) meeting. That’s the group I’m president of. That’s where I was through Monday night. Had I have been in Columbia, Mo., I don’t think there would have been any question I would have been right here to be able to respond as I normally would. When I was talking with our staff from Florida, I think they felt, “We’re trying to respond to this through some of this information that Chad had already put together that we sent to ESPN.” I think they felt that at least that was being responsive to some of the requests. For us, that was a misread on our part. I should have been out there earlier. I could have been out there earlier, at least no later than when I got back Monday night or Tuesday or done something over the phone. But our team thought they were addressing it appropriately. Then President Wolfe came out, and I thought he did a good job. He called me on Saturday in Florida and says, “Hey, I want to run something by you.” My thought is, “I think we need to have an outside set of eyes and take a look at all of these things, not just athletics.” I remember him reinforcing that, saying, “Mike, this isn’t an athletic department issue. This is an institutional issue. There are a lot of support areas that are involved in this. It just happened to involve a student-athlete. But it’s a lot of departments that have to work together — MU health care, the counseling center, student health. I’m thinking about getting an outside set of eyes.” He asked my advice, “What do you think?” I said, “Tim, I can’t see the downside to that. I think it’s a good thing.” He came out the next day, Sunday, and put out a statement that this is what we’re going to do. We were trying to respond, at least with the information we had from ESPN that we were trying to put out to balance the story a little bit. I get back on Monday night, I communicated with all of our student-athletes on Tuesday, and today I met with all our coaches and our whole staff. I’ve been meeting with a bunch of people. I think what we thought
was we had already responded in an appropriate manner, but looking back, we weren’t. I should have been available earlier, and I wasn’t.”

Q: Aside from whatever is going on with the internal investigation, are there steps you guys are taking to figure out how to make it easier if any athlete hears something (about a sexual assault), whether the alleged victim wants to press charges or not?

A: We’ve been talking about that constantly, particularly over the course of the last few days. I met with soccer, I had a squad meeting with them this week, and it’s nothing more simplistic than reminding kids that if you see it or you hear it, you own it. That’s kind of our mantra: If you see it or hear it, you own it. That means you have to share it. You can’t withhold it. I’m not telling you that’s the end of anything at all. That’s just something we talked about and we’re trying to communicate. As you look at that, with the people we work with on campus — our women’s center, our rape crisis center, all our areas we work with regularly — our thoughts are we’re going to keep reaching out to them to give us an even better idea of things we could be doing, how we can communicate better with our kids, how can we make sure we have a safe environment where people feel like they can report, and on and on. So something like this clearly is such a tragic situation, but it forces you to take another look at what are those things we can get better at. That’s a long answer to tell you we have been talking about that a ton.

Q: Is there a way where the athletes could bypass the coaches if they’re worried about playing time and report it anonymously if need be?

A: I think that’s absolutely one of those considerations. Again, that’s actually a good point that you’re making that we’ve got to make sure we look at the climate, the safety, the respect, the transparency, all the things you can do. Wherever you need to get that information, wherever they feel comfortable that they can do it, you want to try to identify those avenues. Even when you do all that work, there still can be some hurdles, and we understand that, but for us, we’ve got to look at that and say, “There’s no way that we’re infallible.” We understand that.

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mizzou's Alden calls investigation 'the right thing to do'

By Dave Matter dmatter@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8508

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Late Thursday night, Missouri athletic director Mike Alden broke his silence. After avoiding the media following news of sexual assault allegations made by former Mizzou swimmer Sasha Menu Courey, Alden reached out to discuss the situation
Alden apologized for not publicly discussing the news initially. When the story broke, Alden had been in Florida attending meetings for the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, of which he serves as president.

Until Wolfe spoke to reporters Wednesday, the university and athletics department took a defensive stance toward the ESPN “Outside the Lines” story that first appeared last Friday, offering only press releases, some of which harshly criticized ESPN’s reporting.

Alden struck a more compassionate, reflective tone Thursday.

In a lengthy interview with the Post-Dispatch, Alden said he embraces the upcoming investigation and that MU will approach its role with “compassion for the victim” while looking at the school’s handling of Menu Courey’s situation with “a very critical eye.”

Menu Courey committed suicide in June 2011, 16 months after she was allegedly sexually assaulted in February 2010 by MU football players, according to records obtained by ESPN. On Monday, the Columbia Police Department announced it had opened a sexual assault case after receiving information from University Police about the alleged assault. ESPN reported that records indicate Menu Courey spoke about her assault in 2010 to campus personnel, including a rape crisis counselor, a campus therapist, a campus nurse and two doctors.

“I’ve known about this for quite some time, but when the story finally comes together and it’s told, your first emotion is sadness,” Alden said. “It’s a tragic situation that a young lady took her life and had so many challenges. As a parent you look at things like that through a different lens. It’s just very, very sad. As you look at it, the second part of it is then you have to step back and say, ‘Let’s take a look at all the things that surrounded the situation. Do we need to take a look and see if there are areas we need to enhance, whatever that may be?’ That’s the investigative part.”

Alden said he took a call from Wolfe Saturday night. Wolfe asked Alden about launching an independent investigation. On Wednesday, the UM System Board of Curators approved the president’s recommendation and will hire legal counsel to review MU’s handling of Menu Courey’s case.

“What I appreciated,” Alden said, “is he said, ‘This isn’t an athletic apartment deal. Even though we’re talking about a student-athlete, this is a university deal, whether it has to do with MUPD, Student Affairs or Student Conduct or Student Health or health care or athletics, what do you think about an outside set of eyes taking a look at this?’

“What I told President Wolfe was, No. 1, I appreciate him calling me. No. 2, I appreciate that this needs to be a comprehensive review, an institutional thing not an (athletics) department thing. No. 3, I told him, ‘Absolutely. That’s the right thing to do.’”

Alden said it’s important that MU is transparent during the investigation and prepares itself to “analyze everything.” He said he doesn’t fear that the investigation will reveal university officials made mistakes.
“I wouldn’t approach that from a fear standpoint as much as I would … that this is the right thing to do,” he said. “To do that, you want to make sure you’re transparent and do that with sympathy and compassion for the victim in this situation, a woman that has lost her life, and do it in a way that we’re confident that we look at it with a very critical eye. That takes the fear away from it.”

Asked if he believes everyone involved in Menu Courey’s situation acted appropriately, Alden praised the work of campus leaders who work with athletics, from the Student Affairs and Student Conduct departments to MU police and campus health care.

“You think you work together as well as you can in these types of challenging situations,” he said. “But do you still want to take a look at that as you’re working together that there are areas you want to enhance? Certainly you want to do that. But am I confident with the people that I work with, that they’re professionals, that they communicate and they work really hard for the betterment of the student every day and they’re looking out for the student’s best interest? Yes, I do feel confident in that.

“At the same time, you’ve got to review it and see areas that you can enhance.”

Alden said he found two parts of ESPN’s story especially troubling. First, ESPN reported that Menu Courey was approached with a university withdrawal form while she was involuntarily hospitalized after a suicide attempt in April 2011. Alden didn’t doubt the story’s accuracy — swimming coach Greg Rodenbaugh told ESPN she was given the form to preserve her grades for that semester — but Alden thought the process was “more coercive than … it could have been.”

“That’s not the way that would happen,” he said. “If we had a student that’s going to miss an appreciable amount of classes — a student-athlete or anybody, especially in this case Sasha, a very good student — you want to take a look at all options. … I think the way that was presented seemed to be more coercive than what I understand it could have been. The way it could have been is the way I’ve seen it done several times when a student is going to miss a lot of class: You have an option to withdraw from classes — not get out of school, just withdraw from classes.”

Former assistant director of academic services Meghan Anderson was the athletics official who presented Menu Courey the withdrawal forms. She’s also the athletics official Menu Courey told about the sexual assault, according to her personal diary, ESPN reported. MU has disputed that Anderson knew about the rape.

Alden said he was also surprised by the revelation of former Mizzou football player Rolandis Woodland, who told ESPN that Menu Courey mailed to him a video of her being raped by three MU football players. Woodland, a close friend of Menu Courey, said he later angrily confronted his three teammates shortly after her suicide.

“I’ve never heard that before,” Alden said of Woodland’s account. “And that’s a young man we all know and all of us worked around and all of us appreciated being in our program. And that information that he shared on that, to my knowledge, he never shared with anybody. To me, that was a big surprise. That was a surprise to a lot of people, because none of us had ever heard that. That had never been shared with anybody that we know of in our program.”
Menu Courey is not the first female at Mizzou to accuse a high-profile athlete of sexual assault. In 2011, former football co-captain Derrick Washington was convicted of sexually assaulting his former tutor. Former basketball player Mike Dixon was accused twice of sexual assault but never charged with a crime. He left the program in 2012 immediately after the Post-Dispatch reported the details of the first alleged incident.

Asked if Missouri needs to do more to educate its athletes about sexual assault, regardless if the Menu Courey case leads to criminal charges, Alden acknowledged more can be done.

“Maybe more so,” he said. “The President of the United States is talking about this: mental health issues, sexual assaults on college campuses and binge drinking. Those are major issues we’re all dealing with. In particular he was talking about sexual assault. It has become such a flashpoint and a major issue. It’s one of the most under-reported crimes in our country. You certainly have the confidentiality aspect of that. How to get information? How do you make sure it’s communicated? How do you give people the comfort level and the safety so they feel like they can report? So, you look at that broadly and that’s a big issue for all of us.

“Certainly, we’re not immune to that. That’s something, for us, we’ve got to find ways to clearly communicate at a higher level and educate at a higher level and provide a more welcoming environment to make sure reporting (of assaults) is there and people are doing what they need to do.”

In late 2012, Missouri became aware that Menu Courey shared information about the sexual assault with a rape counselor during an online chat when the transcript turned up during ESPN’s record request. Missouri did not report the allegations to law enforcement and instead, three months later, sent a letter to her parents telling them about the chat transcript. Donell Young, senior coordinator of the Office of Student Conduct, sent the letter and never heard back.

Should the university have done more to discuss the situation with Menu Courey’s parents?

Alden said the allegations from the chat transcript were shared with several campus departments: Student Affairs, Student Conduct, MU police and athletics.

“Normally the victim is the one who has to file something like this,” Alden said. “Without the victim, we need to go to (parents). That’s not athletics. That’s according to Donell Young and Student (Conduct). They’re determination was, ‘We need to go to the parents.’ When Donell wrote that letter to them and he never heard back from them, the question you’re asking is, ‘Should he have done more? Should he have followed up?’ That’s something for Donell to answer. I can’t answer for him. But I know they determined they wanted to reach out to the parents. They did that and didn’t hear back from them.”

Of all the incidents Alden has dealt with in nearly 16 years as Missouri’s athletic director, he said there’s no precedent for this situation, one that involves an athlete who committed suicide, a rape allegation levied against multiple athletes, issues of mental health and medical privacy laws — all under the glaring spotlight of the national media.

“You’ve got all these different types of things, so that means you’re dealing with so many different units within a campus community. So many different units,” he said. “So, how do you get your hands around all
of that and ascertain how the process worked? What are the things that are going well? What needs to be enhanced? That’s a long answer to tell you this is very unique.

“First of all, I hope it’s something to never deal with again. You’ve got a young lady who took her life. My heart goes to her parents and family and loved ones. As a parent to see that, I can’t imagine that. You’ve got all these emotions and dynamics that it’s such a unique situation. My hope is, as we analyze it and review it, we can identify things we can provide even greater enhancements for our students going forward. Because chances are, something like this, you never know, you could confront it again someday. You never want to, but what you want to do is make sure you’re doing everything you can to improve the situation.”

VAHE GREGORIAN

MU’s Alden finally speaks up on ex-swimmer’s case

January 31

BY VAHE GREGORIAN
The Kansas City Star

COLUMBIA — In his first public statement on the piercing, tangled case of former University of Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Courey, MU athletic director Mike Alden late Thursday night offered conciliatory and sensitive remarks on the matter.

This represented a stark change of tone from what had been a defensive posture by his department.

The tragedy of Menu Courey’s 2011 suicide has become the catalyst of two investigations in the wake of an ESPN “Outside The Lines” report that amplified a previous sexual-assault allegation printed in the Columbia Daily Tribune.

Her death and what can be learned from it “needs to be the focus,” Alden said in a phone interview. “It doesn’t need to be (us) turning around trying to defend what one person’s doing or another person’s doing or whatever.

“If that’s the way that came across, then I would apologize.”
Part of the perception that fending off blame was more meaningful to MU than resolutions stemmed from the absence of Alden, who during the first few days after the report came out was in Florida, performing his role as president of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics.

Alden said he wished he hadn’t been tied down with that, though he stressed he was in regular contact with the department.

And when it was suggested to him that a swift and compassionate personal stance from him might have changed the tenor of the last week, Alden said, “It may have, frankly.”

As for not offering a statement along the way, Alden said he had believed Mizzou’s responses to the report, via posting email exchanges with ESPN and rebuttals, would be seen not as unseemly but as offering balance to what MU felt was an incomplete and skewed presentation.

Plenty of MU’s points were valid, and ESPN insinuated negligence on the university’s part. It’s reasonable that the school should stand up for itself.

But the resounding tone came off tin-eared, and it repeatedly seemed to put a cringe-inducing onus on Menu Courey’s parents to have initiated any investigation of the alleged rape of their daughter.

That’s why it almost certainly would have come off differently from the start had Alden found a way to be visible and vocal right away.

That was MU’s chance to own the message instead of chasing it or tilting at it. Instead, it wasn’t until Wednesday that the school’s approach began to change.

That’s when MU system president Tim Wolfe stepped into the void and within the first minutes of his news conference at the Reynolds Alumni Center expressed everything that had been missing in Mizzou’s hollow approach to Menu Courey.

In particular, Wolfe offered openness, accountability, humility and empathy.

“Words probably don’t adequately express ... my sympathy and prayers and thoughts (that) go out to Sasha Menu Courey, her family, her friends and her teammates,” Wolfe began, speaking with what came off as firm sincerity. “It’s unfortunately a tragic situation that’s kind of personal to me since I’m a parent of a female freshman student athlete myself.”

Asked if he believed the university failed Menu Courey, Wolfe paused and said, “What I feel as a parent is one of our students is dead. And I don’t want to feel that any more.
And our goal is to help (the) Sashas of the world ... in a way that we can never let this happen again.”

There are those who believe Wolfe overstepped. But if he did, he had to because of all the understepping that had taken place before that.

Alden said he was enthusiastic about the intervention of Wolfe, with whom Alden said he spoke over the weekend. They agreed, Alden said, “this isn’t an athletic department issue. This is an institutional issue; this is a comprehensive issue” about “support mechanisms” and “safety nets” for students at Mizzou.

When Wolfe said he thought it would be good to “get an outside set of eyes on this whole issue,” Alden said he told him, “I think that’s the right thing to do, President Wolfe.”

It also was imperative with no one in the athletic department saying the most fundamental things that needed to be said — words that came easily enough to Alden on Thursday night.

“There will be lessons to be learned, absolutely, as you look at all this,” he said. “But I just don’t know what all those are yet.”

One should be this: Going forward, Alden has to find a way to be visible sooner when MU is in crisis mode.

Otherwise, he might appear to be distancing himself from controversy or leaving his staff to face up to a mess that it’s unfair to saddle them with.

Wolfe may believe that, too.

He declined to respond to a question about whether he would like to have seen the athletic department take a similar path before he had to, but not before making it clear that’s part of what he wants to learn from the investigation.

“I will wait to see what comes back from the investigation and the findings ... ” he said. “And I will make some observations post-that.”

But Alden already could observe this for himself: Whatever it would have taken, being around and accessible for this situation could’ve made a major difference in perception from the beginning.

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/01/30/4788316/silence-on-swimmers-case-not-golden.html#storylink=cpy
University of Missouri board votes to hire outside counsel to investigate handling of Menu Courey case

Review of case moves forward.

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (11)

The University of Missouri Board of Curators voted Wednesday night to hire outside, independent legal counsel to investigate how the school addressed the alleged rape of MU swimmer Sasha Menu Courey.

The board will next select and hire a firm to conduct the inquiry, according to a news release distributed after last night's closed-session meeting. The counsel will report findings no later than April 11 at the curators' next meeting in Rolla.

The vote comes after a recommendation by University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe, who said at a news conference earlier yesterday that the counsel would report to curators in part because the counsel might want to interview him about the case.

"Ms. Courey's story is very tragic and sad, and our sympathy and prayers are with her family, friends and teammates," board Chairman Don Downing said in a statement. "The board wants to take an independent look at what happened here. Separately, our chancellors are promptly reviewing their campus policies and procedures concerning the prevention and reporting of sexual assaults and availability of mental health services, and President Wolfe has rightly committed to devoting additional resources to the extent those policies and procedures are found to be lacking."

Downing added that sexual assaults are "all too common" on campuses, as noted in a White House report on sexual assault released last week.
"We need to do all we can do to address these issues at the University of Missouri and provide appropriate assistance to those who are victimized," Downing said.

John Fougere, chief communication officer for the UM System, said in an email this morning that the curators plan to hire the counsel within the next few weeks to "take the time to perform the due diligence necessary in selecting the correct firm." Fougere said there has not been a budget established for payment of the counsel.

At his news conference, which came before yesterday's start of the three-day curators meeting, Wolfe refused to answer specific questions about the criminal investigation into Menu Courey's reported rape, which is being conducted by a special victims unit of the Columbia Police Department because the incident took place off campus.

Columbia police said this week the incident possibly took place in the 600 block of Huntridge Drive.

Wolfe said he didn't make any recommendations on who the curators should hire, to avoid a conflict of interest.

"What I feel as a parent is, one of our students is dead, and I don't want to feel that anymore," Wolfe said during the news conference, adding that the UM System's goal is to help "the Sashas of the world" get mental health support as well as any other assistance they might need.

Menu Courey battled borderline personality disorder, a mental illness that can cause unstable moods, behavior and relationships, the National Institute of Mental Health said.

Wolfe declined to comment on the ESPN "Outside the Lines" story, published last weekend, that questioned how MU dealt with Menu Courey in the weeks leading up to her death and the university's response to her reported sexual assault. Wolfe said giving his thoughts on the ESPN story would be a "waste of time."

The ESPN story brought national attention to Menu Courey. She committed suicide in 2011, about 16 months after the alleged rape.

MU has said it had no way to know about the rape allegations until more than a year after Menu Courey's death, and at that point school officials were "unable to go forward with an investigation because there was no complaint brought forward from the alleged victim or her parents, and there was otherwise insufficient information about the incident," an MU News Bureau statement said.

This article was published in the Thursday, January 30, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Board votes to hire counsel: Review of case moves forward."

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Posted in Education on Thursday, January 30, 2014 2:00 pm.
MU swimmer's death casts light on campus sex assaults

COLUMBIA — Colleges and universities are struggling with sex assaults on campus, even as they spend more time and money to comply with stricter enforcement of gender discrimination laws.

But the case of a University of Missouri swimmer, who said she was raped in an episode her parents say led her to suicide, presents a challenge: How do schools balance protecting their student populations with the needs of victims like Sasha Menu Courey, who chose not to go to police?

A police investigation is now underway, but Menu Courey’s parents say the university and its athletics department should have already investigated their daughter’s alleged off-campus rape by as many as three football players in February 2010.

University leaders said they didn’t learn about the purported attack until after Menu Courey committed suicide 16 months later. They said they followed the law and didn’t have specific knowledge of the incident or a victim to interview. But late Wednesday, the school’s Board of Curators voted to hire a law firm to review the school’s handling of the case.

President Barack Obama last week announced a new task force on college sex assault, citing statistics showing that 1 in 5 females are assaulted while in college but only 1 in 8 report attacks. The White House called it a public health epidemic.

At least 50 schools have bolstered their efforts in recent years. Complaints of Title IX violations related to sexual violence are also increasing, a sign that Catherine Lhamon, assistant secretary for civil rights in the Department of Education, attributes to vigilance on campus.

“Obviously, there are all too many that still need prompting,” she said.

Lhamon’s department recently announced an investigation of Penn State University’s handling of sexual harassment and assault complaints. The University of Colorado and California State University-Fresno have been ordered to pay millions for Title IX violations asserted in victim lawsuits.

At the University of Missouri, extensive efforts have been made to reduce sexual violence on campus. An equity office led by a lawyer oversees compliance with Title IX, the federal anti-
discrimination law more commonly known for ensuring equal gender participation in college sports. Counseling and help is available through two campus agencies.

Students who eschew legal intervention can seek a campus disciplinary hearing. The university can also help students switch dorms or classes, or bar contact outright.

The university didn’t immediately investigate after Menu Courey, who was from Canada, killed herself in June 2011. She had by then withdrawn from classes at the university’s urging and lost her financial aid.

The 20-year-old, who had attempted suicide two months earlier, was in a Boston psychiatric hospital after being diagnosed with borderline personality disorder.

“There are many resources out there, but there’s not really any (sense) that she was provided with those resources,” said Zachary Wilson, development director of the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. “It’s difficult for sexual assault survivors to go at it alone.”

The school said in a statement Tuesday that a 2012 Columbia Daily Tribune article about Menu Courey’s suicide briefly alluded to the alleged assault, but didn’t meet the legal standard that the school “reasonably should know about student-on-student harassment that creates a hostile environment.”

The school also said Menu Courey’s parents ignored its request for more information a year ago after it discovered an online chat transcript with a campus rape counselor in which Menu Courey mentioned an earlier attack.

Missouri initially responded to an ESPN story about the swimmer by defending its handling of the case, then said it was turning over information to Columbia police.

University President Tim Wolfe wants the school’s governing board to pay for an independent legal review of how officials handled the case.

Wolfe said the university was committed to bolstering its mental health services. He also noted his own daughter was a first-year college athlete.

“One of our students is dead,” Wolfe said. “Our goal is to help the Sashas of the world.”

Other sexual assault cases have been linked to Missouri’s athletic department, including former running back Derrick Washington’s 2010 conviction for sexually assaulting a tutor in her sleep.

Basketball player Michael Dixon transferred in 2012 after two sex assault claims against him went public, though he was not charged.
In suburban Toronto, Mike Menu and his wife, Lynn Courey, have channeled their grief into a mental health foundation named for their daughter. They aren’t looking for money from the university, just accountability.

“We just want to make sure that changes are made,” he said. “We need more than Band-Aids. We need a transformation.”

Missouri College Advising Corps works to expand statewide

Thursday, January 30, 2014 | 6:39 p.m. CST; updated 6:58 p.m. CST, Thursday, January 30, 2014

BY THOMAS DIXON

COLUMBIA — When Jared Launius applied to work for the Missouri College Advising Corps in 2012, he saw it as a temporary position while he transitioned between college and his next career move.

"I was unsure exactly what I wanted to do with my journalism degree, and I felt like this was an opportunity to spend some time doing something I believed in while I figured out what my adult life would look like," Launius said.

He said he started feeling rewarded by working with students and helping them navigate the process of going to college.

"I thought eventually the warm feeling would subside a little bit or slow down, but it really hasn’t," Launius said. "I enjoy being 'Mr. Launius,' and I really didn't know I would ever say that.”
Launius is one of 25 advisers in 26 schools for the Missouri College Advising Corps. The program plans to double those numbers in the next two years, executive director Beth Tankersley-Bankhead said.

The expansion will establish new partner schools in the program's current regions of St. Louis, Kansas City and south-central Missouri as well as in central, southeast and southwest Missouri.

Tankersley-Bankhead said the program likes to establish at least six schools at once in a new area and would eventually like to do this in northern Missouri.

"We know there are many students across the state who can benefit from having a full-time college adviser, so our mission is to make that service available to as many students as we can," Tankersley-Bankhead said. "Missouri has this goal, the United States has this goal, and expanding lets us do that."

To fund this expansion, the program has looked to two new sources, AmeriCorps and the state of Missouri, for grants of $524,000 and $3 million respectively. The advising corps' operating budget for the year is $1.3 million.

Tankersley-Bankhead said the program will focus more on its "persistence component," which helps students transition to college and supports them throughout to ensure they follow through on their post-high school.

**The component originated in July 2013 and consists of two college transition and retention coaches who work with students at MU, Missouri University of Science and Technology, University of Central Missouri and Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley.**

The Missouri College Advising Corps is based at MU, which is one of 10 founding institutions of the National College Advising Corps.

As "Mr. Launius," a college adviser at Winnetonka High School in North Kansas City, the 2012 MU graduate said he wears many hats. The biggest chunk of his work day is direct one-on-one advising with students researching colleges, applying to colleges and then paying for college, he said.
"I'm serving students who are more historically underserved: low-income, underrepresented minority and first-year college students in a school that's under-resourced," Launius said.

When the program's 2013 annual report by the National Student Clearing House comes in, Launius will be able to officially measure the quantitative effects of his first full year on the job.

But he knows he's made a difference.

"I hear (from teachers) that the conversation surrounding college is growing in the building," Launius said. "But this isn't anything special that I'm doing. It's the position. The average percentage point increase of students going to college with an MCAC adviser is a hair over 10 percent, which is compared to, in that same time frame, less than a 1 percent increase in schools that don't have an adviser."

Launius added, "As a lifelong Missourian and someone that wants to eventually have a family in this state, I feel like this is a program that can really, really benefit both our secondary schools and our institutions of higher education across the entire state."

The advising corps is selecting advisers. The deadline to turn in an application, which can be found on the program's website, is March 7.

Mizzou WR friends takes blame for pot found in car

Two men arrested along with Missouri wide receiver Dorial Green-Beckham have told police the estimated one pound of marijuana found in their car did not belong to the star football player.

The case remains under investigation, and criminal charges have not been filed after the Springfield native and two friends were arrested in January on suspicion of felony drug distribution. Police say they found the pot and other drug paraphernalia in the trunk of a Jeep Cherokee driven by John McDaniel that was initially pulled over because of an expired license and searched after the officer smelled marijuana.
A probable cause statement submitted to Greene County Circuit Court with a search warrant request shows that Patrick Prouty said he owned the drugs but said his supply was for personal use. McDaniel said he had hidden one gram of marijuana in the car’s glove box. Police found no drugs in the possession of Greene-Beckham, who denied McDaniel’s assertion that the three men had just smoked a marijuana cigarette in the car before being pulled over. The Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader first reported the details of the police documents on Thursday.

Green-Beckham was charged in October 2012 with marijuana possession in Columbia and later pleaded guilty to second-degree trespassing. He and two teammates were reportedly smoking pot in a campus parking lot near Memorial Stadium.

In a written statement, attorneys Tyson Martin and Ryan Cole said their client has "been nothing but completely cooperative with law enforcement throughout this entire process."

"Dorial very much regrets putting himself in this situation, and he is anxious to put this ordeal behind him," the statement said.

Green-Beckham led Missouri with 59 receptions as a sophomore last season and scored 12 touchdowns. The 6-foot-6, 225-pound receiver was considered the top prospect in the nation when he signed a letter of intent with Missouri after setting national prep records at Springfield Hillcrest High.

Court document indicates Green-Beckham wasn't selling pot

By Dave Matter dmatter@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8508

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Lawyers representing Missouri receiver Dorial Green-Beckham released a statement to the Post-Dispatch in light of a court document that indicates there’s no evidence Green-Beckham was selling the marijuana found during his arrest Jan. 10 in Springfield, Mo.

Green-Beckham, 20, and two others, Patrick Prouty, 22, and John McDaniel, 20, were arrested that night on suspicion of felony distribution of a controlled substance after Springfield police smelled marijuana in McDaniel’s Jeep Cherokee during a traffic stop.

Officers found about a pound of marijuana and assorted drug paraphernalia in the vehicle.

According to a search warrant affidavit filed in the Greene County Circuit Court, McDaniel told the officer that he, Prouty and Green-Beckham had just smoked a marijuana cigarette before they were pulled over.
While searching the vehicle, officers found two scales, a marijuana grinder and various containers and bags filled with marijuana.

Green-Beckham and McDaniel consented to a search and nothing was found on either. Prouty denied consent but was later found to be carrying $1,873 in cash in his pocket. He told police he smokes up to an ounce of marijuana a day but has never sold the drug.

Green-Beckham told police he smelled marijuana when he first got in the Jeep but never saw it or smoked it while in the vehicle. He said the marijuana didn’t belong to him and he didn’t know whose it was.

“Throughout this entire investigation, Dorial has denied, and continues to deny any knowledge, or any connection with a large amount of suspected marijuana that was found in the back of a vehicle in which Dorial was a passenger,” his lawyers, Tyson Martin and Ryan Cole, said in a release. “The vehicle was not Dorial’s nor was it discovered in an area that he was occupying. ... Dorial has been nothing but completely cooperative with law enforcement throughout this entire process. Dorial very much regrets putting himself in this situation, and he is anxious to put this ordeal behind him. We are hopeful, in light of what this investigation has uncovered, that this matter will quickly be resolved in a positive manner for Dorial.”

Green County prosecutor Dan Patterson said the case is still under investigation and has not been turned over to his office.

Missouri coach Gary Pinkel declined to comment on Green-Beckham’s situation earlier this month.

In October 2012, Green-Beckham and two Mizzou teammates were arrested in Columbia outside of Memorial Stadium on suspicion of marijuana possession. He later pleaded guilty to amended city violations of trespassing.

Ball python loose in MU Residence Hall
Thursday, January 30, 2014 | 8:44 p.m. CST; updated 8:59 p.m. CST, Thursday, January 30, 2014
BY KYLEE GREGG

COLUMBIA — The ball python that escaped its cage more than a week ago still slithers through Defoe-Graham Hall.
“The snake is most likely still in the student’s room,” Director of Residential Life Frankie Minor said. “Considering its size, it couldn’t have made it under the door.”

Residence hall staff declined to identify the owner of the snake, citing privacy policies. Staff did not know the snake's name.

Residence hall staff have posted fliers around the hallways and lobbies alerting residents that the non-venomous snake is loose. These fliers listed the python as being 18 inches long.

The snake was registered with Residential Life, Minor said. Residence halls permit lizards, turtles, rodents and other animals that weigh less than 5 pounds, according to Residential Life’s student pet policy.

Snakes have escaped in MU residence halls in the past. Minor said the last snake escape he remembers happened more than 10 years ago.

The name, "ball python," refers to: "The tendency this reptile has to curl into a ball when stressed or frightened," according to the flier.

The snake was still missing as of Thursday afternoon.

ANY QUESTIONS: What's the MU residence hall policy on pets?

Thursday, January 30, 2014 | 3:00 p.m. CST; updated 9:00 p.m. CST, Thursday, January 30, 2014
BY SHAINA CAVAZOS

Have a question about goings-on around town? This is part of a project called "Any Questions?" that takes on community curiosities and tries to address them. Submit
Columbia resident Renee Hulshof tweeted a question about the MU residence hall policy on holding pets. Her question stemmed from an incident in which a python escaped from its cage in Defoe-Graham Residence Hall. ABC17 News reported that it had not been caught as of Thursday morning. The snake, which is at least 1 foot long, is a nonvenomous baby ball python, the report says.

The Tiger Guide, from MU’s Department of Residential Life, explains university policy to residents. Regarding pets, it says any animal less than 5 pounds that can be kept in a cage, aquarium or similar container is allowed in a residence hall. Pets are not allowed to roam the halls or a student’s room, and any individual hall community can agree to further rules and restrictions for pets.

If pets damage any university or student property, the pet owner is responsible for paying for that damage.

Director of the Missouri Theatre talks architecture and the future

John Murray, director for the Missouri Theatre and Jesse Auditorium, has a degree in theater from East Central University in Oklahoma.

BY LINDSAY PIERCE
JANUARY 30, 2014 | 12:00 A.M. CST

A first-time visitor would never guess that an 85-year-old theater is tucked neatly into the parade of shops on Ninth Street. An unfamiliar passerby could not dream of the ornate, Baroque-style opulence of the theater just beyond the glass doors. One step
inside the Missouri Theatre is met with the plush comfort of crimson carpet — fitting for a theater with a history of vaudeville, cinema, Broadway plays and high-society functions. John Murray has been the director of the Missouri Theatre since MU took it over from the Missouri Symphony Society two years ago to help pay the debt from renovations. He is operating the theater in conjunction with Jesse Auditorium. Together, the two venues see hundreds of events per year. For a theater concealed between buildings downtown, that's no small feat.

Describe the architecture of the Missouri Theatre.
It's Baroque Rococo — gilded frames and over-the-top decadence. It was built primarily as a film palace, and that was bringing a type of culture to a segment of America that hadn't ever seen it. It was fancy in the middle of the Midwest — a lifestyle that people weren't expecting when they opened the door and saw it. Many times, people came to the theater because it was air-conditioned. It provided an escape.

How would you describe the environment of the theater?
It's just pristine. In many ways, it's ghostly. Many of my staff feel that it is a bit haunted, and most good theaters would be haunted. Think of the hundreds of thousands of people who have been through the building — performers and ladies of high society.

Within the first week that we were operating the building, about 1:30 or 2 a.m. on a Friday, I got a call from the alarm company that there was an alarm going off. By the time I got here, the police officers had been called away for something else. I came in, and I have no fear, but there were some lights that shouldn't have been on. Most of the lights are on motion detectors, so once no one has been around, they should go off. I looked around, didn’t find anything, and I came out to the lobby to wait for the officers. I then heard a very distinct sound of the women’s restroom door closing. I knew I was the only one in here.

What has changed the most in the past two years under your leadership?
I think the building is a living, breathing entity again. In two years, we were able to do 250 events here. It has to be a great boom for the downtown economy to get that many people coming those days or nights a year. We do weddings. We’ve done smaller rehearsal dinners on the patio. We just really try to do as much as we can to keep the building going.

Because the contract for the theater ends in June 2014, what actions will MU take?
I think everyone would agree that we want to continue the arrangement. At that point, the property becomes available for purchase. I certainly don’t speak for the university, but I think MU will execute its option to purchase the building, and I think we’ll continue to operate in the way we have. The university master plan, before we got into this arrangement, had a performing arts center. Because the Missouri Theatre became available, we were able to reprogram the design of a performance hall and knock $50–60 million off the original plan.

How has MU approached the historical aspects of the Missouri Theatre?
Sometimes the university has this big bad bully kind of thing, coming in and stealing land, but we made it very apparent through the whole negotiation process that we intended to keep the Missouri Theatre operating as an important part of Columbia. We weren’t going to turn away the civic groups that had been able to perform. If you talk to anyone in Columbia who has lived here for any length of time, it’s been an important part of everyone’s lives. They remember going to their first date here to see a movie, or people worked behind the concession stand selling popcorn or selling tickets. It’s been a part of the culture of the town. We didn’t want to change that, and we don’t. We never will.
MBS Direct partners with Blackboard on new textbook offering

Columbia company to gain exposure.

By Jacob Barker

Thursday, January 30, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Blackboard's brand is ubiquitous when it comes to higher education learning management systems, the online portals that allow students to access assignments, syllabuses, grades and class discussion boards. With the help of MBS Direct, it's hoping that adding textbooks to that list of services will keep it that way.

The Washington, D.C., company announced this week it would be working with MBS Direct, the unit of MBS Textbook Exchange that sells directly to students.

The locally headquartered textbook wholesaler launched MBS Direct in 1992, mainly as a way to get course materials to students — many of whom were in the military — who were taking classes off college campuses. As the Internet grew up, MBS Direct migrated online in lieu of phone and fax ordering services.

MBS Direct now offers a whole array of textbooks and course materials — new and used books, digital books and textbook rentals — to K-12 and higher-education students at 950 institutions.

It's that suite of textbook ordering services that Blackboard wants to offer to its customers via its learning management system that millions of students — including those at the University of Missouri — use every day.

"A virtual bookstore within the" learning management system "is the latest step in our evolution of creating a comprehensive learning experience that fully meets the expectations of today's learners," Blackboard CEO Jay Bhatt said in a statement.

Depending on how many of Blackboard's customers begin using the new offering, MBS could gain access to thousands more potential customers.
"You get more eyeballs," MBS Textbook Exchange CEO Bob Pugh said. "With what we have developed, we've got a really good logistics system in getting books out the door — shipping them — and we've made a huge investment in digital."

Although Blackboard is a strong brand in the learning management system industry, it has been facing more competition from lower-cost alternatives in recent years. Selling textbooks, it will be going up against established companies such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble, in addition to brick-and-mortar bookstores on campuses.

To start, Blackboard and MBS will roll out the new offering at less than a dozen institutions both companies were already working with, Pugh said.

Blackboard's hope is that a system that offers everything might make it less likely for clients to switch to competing services, the Washington Post reported. For MBS, the partnership continues its evolution from a wholesaler to a company that directly sells to consumers.

"We're trying to make our company more retail-facing," Pugh said. "I think we're headed in the right direction."

This article was published in the Thursday, January 29, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "MBS, Blackboard partner on texts; Columbia company to gain exposure."

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Posted in Business on Thursday, January 30, 2014 2:00 pm.

'Bully' screening at Columbia youth summit moves students, parents

Thursday, January 30, 2014 | 7:06 p.m. CST
BY KYLEE GREGG

COLUMBIA — Tears filled the eyes of some parents and educators Wednesday evening as they watched "Bully" at Columbia College.

The documentary about bullying in the lives of five students was shown as a supplement to an annual UMatter two-day youth summit that takes place in Columbia public middle
schools. The free screening was intended to benefit parents and education staff but was also open to the public.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, middle school students participated in assemblies and smaller sessions led by teachers. Topics included substance abuse, suicide prevention, and healthy and positive decision-making by young people.

UMatter was started by Columbia Public Schools to provide information and resources about the effects of drugs and alcohol use. The organization also raises awareness about other social issues such as bullying and dating violence.

The purpose of screening the film was to "open up the door for discussion," district spokeswoman Michelle Baumstark said. The screening was sponsored by UMatter, Columbia Public Schools, Columbia College and the Youth Community Coalition.

A panel discussion mediated by Teresa VanDover, associate professor of education at Columbia College, was held after the film. The panel included six representatives of MU, Columbia College and Columbia Public Schools.

The documentary evoked strong emotions from students and parents, and the discussion gave them a chance to voice their questions and concerns about bullying and other social issues.

Panelist Carla London, supervisor for student and family advocacy in the district, was disturbed by the film.

"We want better for our kids," London said.

Another panelist, Sara Tyler, a crisis counselor at Oakland Middle School, said bullying has three criteria:

- The behavior is intended to cause harm (physical or emotional).

- The behavior is repetitive.

- The behavior creates a power position between the two parties, or the behavior gives the bully power over the victim.
Panelists answered questions about integrating bullying awareness into the curriculum, the bus culture and giving kids the skills to deal with the situation at hand.

One mother, Andrea Fischer, attended the film so she could educate herself about what her children would face in the future.

"I have two elementary-aged children in Grant Elementary, and that school is a tight-knit school so I don’t think bullying is a problem there," Fischer said.

A portion of the film focused on the violence and bullying that occurs on school buses. Fischer, whose children will ride the bus later, had a particularly emotional response to that.

"The bus needs a monitor present," she said. "The bus acts as an incubator for problems."

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One Bloody Business

Each fall, thousands of students, faculty, staff and community members flock to the Hearnes Center to donate blood at the annual University of Missouri Homecoming Blood Drive — one of the largest blood drives in the world.

Last year’s drive, along with the spring Greek Week blood drive, provided more than 7,400 pints of blood for the American Red Cross.

It is said that the best gifts come from the heart — literally, in this case — but it is also said that nothing is free. Collecting and maintaining blood is expensive. There are goals to be met, contracts to fulfill, volume discounts to utilize and reimbursements to be made. And eventually, patient bills to be paid.

The bottom line, though, is not measured in earnings; it’s measured in lives saved. This is the business of blood.

Staffing donations and reaching goals
Although other blood product providers, including Community Blood Center, Mississippi Valley Regional Center and Community Blood Center of the Ozarks, operate in the mid-Missouri region, the American Red Cross provides blood products to more than 2,700 hospitals and transfusion centers across the country — 40 percent of the nation’s supply — and nearly 80 facilities in its Missouri-Illinois Blood Services region.

Its Columbia Donation Center organizes and staffs blood drives in 33 counties, with four or five mobile units deploying from its 1511 S. Providence Road office each day to collect blood in Kirksville, Jefferson City, Sedalia and more, according to American Red Cross Spokesman Dan Fox. In fact, there are approximately 60 staff members in Columbia and Jefferson City alone, he says.

Three to six months prior to a blood drive, sometimes even a year or more, donor recruitment representatives such as Craig Jackson begin to fill their calendars. Although he says he has a number of accounts to rely on and will schedule well in advance, he is also responsible for garnering new accounts.

“It’s very much like any other sales position,” Jackson says. Once a date for the drive is set, Jackson and the coordinator from the business or group hosting the drive will set a time.

“The time of day is up to the group because they know the population better than I will,” Jackson says. He does, however, provide suggestions based on experience. For example, if a factory has a day and night shift, he would recommend setting the blood drive from 2 to 6 p.m. A church, he would suggest, should host the drive right after its service.

Once those details are set, it’s time to determine goals. Fox says there are many factors included in setting goals: dates, size of facility, time of day, previous drives and season. Winter is often a more difficult time of year, Fox says, because people are busy with the holidays, there are more opportunities for cancellations due to inclement weather, and it is also cold and flu season.

Incentives also play an important role, Jackson says. He estimates that between one-fifth and one-fourth of his accounts offer some sort of incentive for donating blood. Although these incentives must be approved by the Red Cross, in accordance with FDA guidelines, some common incentives a company might offer to presenting donors include paid time off for donating so many times within a year, a tie-in with the company wellness program or raffles for gift cards, tickets and more.

The amount of supplies, staff and other resources depend greatly on these goals. Jackson says, on average, a four-hour drive expected to collect 25 units of blood would need five staff members. Even still, those numbers vary depending on the type of drive. For example, a drive at a high school may require more staff because of a higher rate of deferrals.

**Meeting demand**

Although local blood drives first meet local needs, those blood donations can also be sent across the country, particularly when goals aren’t met. According to the 2011 National Blood Collection and Utilization Survey, the total number of collections has decreased nearly 10 percent from 2008 to 2011.

“Meeting individual blood drives’ goals doesn’t impact supply to hospitals,” Fox says. “We can always rely on the shelves of our neighboring regions.” But unmet goals do add burden to other drives, he says.
According to Anita Smith, the laboratory director at Moberly Regional Medical Center, there are fewer direct effects in times of abundance than in times of scarcity.

“If something has happened where there aren’t as many blood drives, we’ll see notifications that supplies are running low and the request that more blood drives be held,” she says. “We see more of an effect when there hasn’t been some huge blood drive.”

When blood is successfully donated within the Columbia Donation Center’s 33 counties, it’s taken to a Red Cross facility, most likely in St. Louis, where the Red Cross has one of its five main national facilities. There it is broken down into various components such as red blood cells, plasma, platelets and cryoprecipitated antihemophilic factor, or AHF. It’s tested for diseases such as HIV, syphilis and hepatitis. In total, this process can take two to three days. It’s then either shipped or stored at the facility, depending on demand.

The Columbia facility can hold up to 400 units of blood and acts as a distribution point for local hospitals and transfusion centers.

Based on costs accrued during the collection, testing and distribution — including everything from staff salaries to facilities, vehicles and equipment — the Red Cross sets its cost recovery fee, or the price hospitals and transfusion centers pay for blood products.

**Providing services**

Not all hospitals and transfusion centers utilize the Red Cross. Many have service contracts with other providers, depending on what exactly that facility is looking for in a blood product provider.

For example, the University of Missouri Health System has had contracts with the Red Cross for many years, according to Derek Thompson, media relations coordinator. Not only is it essential that the blood provider meets its need for the type and quantity of blood products, Thompson says, but a local distribution site within the city to allow for immediate deliveries is also important.

Boone Hospital Center, as a part of BJC HealthCare System, also utilizes the American Red Cross, according to Jacob Luecke, media relations specialist. Moberly Regional Medical Center, also contracted with the Red Cross, made its selection in large part due to location.

“Turnaround time is much better,” Smith says. Also key: being able to meet demand and offer technical consultation if and when questions arise.

Diana Inman, laboratory director of Cooper County Memorial Hospital, for which Boyce & Bynum has provided lab management since 1992, says CCMH receives its blood from Community Blood Center because the amount charged for blood products is not based on quantity.

“Cooper County has a low utilization rate, and so the number of units stored at Cooper is relatively small,” she says. “Other blood providers are charged less per unit for a higher number of units.”

In addition to cost per unit, technical support for difficult cross-matches and availability of product also top CCMH’s list when determining a supplier.
According to Dan Fox, other than larger hospital groups requesting a higher quantity of blood products, there are “no major differences in working with hospital groups of varying sizes.” However, on that same note, Fox says “volume, number of deliveries and other variables are factored into the service contract.”

According to the National Blood Collection and Utilization Survey, hospitals on average paid $225.42 per unit of red blood cells, around $57 for plasma, $535.17 for platelets and $62.41 for cryoprecipitate in 2011, the most recent year of completion for that survey.

**Setting requirements**

The number of required units of blood for the MU System (150), Boone (75), Moberly (30) and Cooper (12) depend on a number of factors.

Smith, with Moberly Regional Medical Center, says its 30 units are based on historical usage and are annually reviewed by medical staff. According to Luecke with Boone, the blood type ratio of its 75 units depends on general population percentages.

“The most common blood types are O positive and A positive, so those are the types we stock at the highest volume,” he says. But he says Boone Hospital Center also accounts for patient population; if they have more patients with a certain blood type, those circumstances will affect the ratio of blood types in inventory.

Blood for each of these hospitals is delivered and processed in a similar manner. For Boone, an American Red Cross courier delivers the products to the hospital laboratory in the basement of Boone Hospital’s south tower. The MU Health System receives its blood to two labs, one within University Hospital and the other, Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

Deliveries are received daily — often more than once a day, in the case of the MU Health System.

Once received, the blood products are checked for quality, entered into an inventory database and stored in a secure area with limited access, refrigerated between 33.8 and 42.8 degrees F. Regulatory agencies require that blood bank refrigerators have an alarm system in case temperatures were to deviate from the appropriate range.

“If the temperatures are ever out of range, the blood products are moved to a different refrigerator to avoid loss of inventory,” Thompson says.

For some medical groups that offer infusion services, such as Jefferson City Medical Group, it isn’t practical to maintain an onsite blood bank.

“When we do have a patient in need of a blood transfusion, we send them to a local hospital where special processes are in place to ensure the well-being and safety of the patient,” says Emily Mantle, community relations coordinator.

Every day, the American Red Cross calls Moberly Regional Medical Center to ask if it needs any units.
“If we’ve used any of our supply, we’ll order replacements,” Smith says. “If we had a massive transfusion in the middle of the night, we can always call them and have our supply replenished more quickly.” This system of daily inventorying is similar across the board — and all must watch out for expiration dates.

The most common type of red blood cell unit expires after 42 days, with platelets lasting only five days. According to Thompson, “the time a unit stays in the blood bank varies greatly, depending on need.”

Even hospitals that perform fewer transfusions have a system to efficiently utilize blood products. Smith says Moberly Regional Medical Center has a program for which blood products 10 days from expiration are rotated to the MU Health System “because their transfusion rates are a lot higher than ours.”

“These blood products can be used there, and ours is replenished with a longer out-date product,” Smith says.

**Serving patients**

Some of the most common patients in need of blood products include people with gastrointestinal bleeding, oncology and surgery patients and patients in the neonatal intensive care unit.

When a patient needs a blood transfusion, lab professionals check the patient’s blood type and conduct an antibody screen and cross-match test. Either a nurse will go to the lab and check out necessary blood products, or, in the case of University Hospital, Thompson says, blood bank personnel deliver the products to the emergency room or operating room or utilize a pneumatic tube system (similar to those in the drive-thru at banks).

“We always try to give type-specific blood products,” Smith says. “In an emergent situation, if we don’t have the time or know their history, we will give O negative, but that’s not typically the way we like to operate.”

O negative is a more rare blood type — it’s a universal donor — so though it’s safe in an emergency, because it is also a rarer type, it’s a harder product to keep on shelves.

“We don’t just want to give those out; we want to save them for circumstances that really warrant their use,” Smith says. “Something most people might be surprised to know is that we really prefer not to transfuse blood at all if possible.” It’s possible for patients to have a transfusion reaction against the donor’s body, as well as develop antibodies that might make it harder to receive blood in the future.

In cases when a patient may have multiple antibodies, antigen negative products may need to be delivered from the Red Cross reference lab in St. Louis, says Thompson with the MU Health System. Couriers for both the Red Cross and Community Blood Center can deliver 24/7.

But for outlying hospitals such as Cooper County, critical needs are assessed.

“If the transfusion can be delayed for a day or so, a blood sample is sent to Boone Hospital or Community Blood Center…to find suitable units for this patient,” Inman says. If it can’t wait, the patient will be transferred to either Boone Hospital or the university.

And if it really can’t wait? “We’ll give them the unit that is most compatible,” Smith says.

**Determining cost**
Even though blood is given freely, the cookies, juice and T-shirts donors receive aren’t free. Neither are the staff, tests and transportation. Those are the hard costs to the blood product provider that determine how much hospitals need to reimburse for each product.

However, the maintenance and administration of blood products also don’t come free — and they certainly don’t come standard.

Luecke: “As will all hospital charges, charges patients receive for blood vary depending on insurance carriers or payment methods.”

Inman: “Reimbursement rates are based on standard fee schedules.”

Thompson: “Charges for blood products are based on the actual cost of the product, plus the costs of storage, monitoring and distributing the blood products.”

The University of Missouri Health System does, however, use Medicare fee schedules as a guideline in determining the charges, as does Cooper County Memorial Hospital. The 2013 Medicare fee schedule, for example, sets the price on whole blood at $169.83; red blood cells, $151.79; platelets, $91.61; and plasma, $78.71.

“Medicare, Medicaid and the insurance companies reimburse at standard rates for the testing that is done and the procedures that are performed,” Inman says. “The reimbursement rates are less than the amount billed. The amount reimbursed does not cover all of the costs, but to be classified as an acute care hospital, you must have a blood bank and stored blood available to meet the needs of patients.”

The 2013 fee schedule also sets lab procedures. On the low end, it’s $9.67 for blood typing. On the other, it’s $34.30 for blood freeze or thaw. The procedures range drastically from $260.44 for a transfusion to $950.65 for apheresis (when particular constituents of the blood product are removed) and $2,888.70 for some forms of apheresis and photopheresis (a form of apheresis when blood is treated with photoactivable drugs).

“There are a lot of expenses associated with testing, processing, transporting and storing blood,” Luecke says. “People often assume that blood is very inexpensive, or free, because donors voluntarily donate the blood.”