University Village walkway collapse blamed on deteriorated concrete

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 1:35 pm Comments (7)

Engineers said a concrete failure likely caused the partial collapse of a walkway at Building 707 of University Village apartments that killed Columbia firefighter Lt. Bruce Britt two weeks ago.

The structural engineering firm hired to investigate the building after the walkway collapse found the failure likely can be attributed to freeze-thaw action and water and chlorides on the walkway, which “combined to deteriorate the concrete to the point where its shear strength could no longer support even only the self-weight of the walkway,” according to documents obtained via a records request.

The “Cause of Failure Report,” dated Tuesday, was written by Patrick Earney, a structural engineer with Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc., a local engineering company the university often uses for contract work.

In the report, Earney writes that the support beams, metal deck and concrete slab that made up the walkway were “significantly deteriorated” after the collapse. Because of the state of the components, he writes that it was “very difficult to pinpoint precisely what happened based solely on the observed debris.” The report states that the firm is “confident” the collapse was caused by the concrete shear failure.

A shear failure is a sudden, vertical failure, said Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw structural engineer John Smith.

Portions of the concrete slab were delaminated, meaning the concrete didn’t settle completely when it was set, leaving excess air inside of the slab. That can be damaging depending on the size of the delaminated area. The concrete also showed signs of severe weathering, the report said. Because the walkway flipped over when it collapsed, the concrete slab was not easy to examine, the report said.

The loud noise heard by the person who initially called 911 the morning of the Feb. 22 collapse likely was the sound of the concrete failure, according to the report. After the failure, the
walkway likely sagged, as witnessed by the 911 caller, but didn’t completely collapse because of the remaining support, the report says.

“Once the load surpassed the bond and tension strength of the mesh reinforcing then the slab broke free from the ends and the front edge dropped,” the report states.

Another report from the firm, made Feb. 23, immediately after the collapse, outlined some conditions after investigations of the other 12 University Village buildings. Inspectors found "immediate needs" at Buildings 602, 604 and 709.

The engineer said walkway framing was “questionable” and said “a catastrophic collapse could be imminent.” Engineers recommended installation of wooden supports, which were added to walkways of all University Village buildings post-collapse.

Engineers also found significant issues with six other buildings in the complex at 601 S. Providence Road.

Other documents released by the university show building 707’s deck received about $4,000 in work last summer, but the documents provide no details on the nature of the work, and MU spokesman Christian Basi said he didn't immediately have more information.

The university's Graduate and Family Housing Master Plan, a document from 2008 that was never finalized, said decks created a "public safety hazard" in their deteriorated state.

The authors of the master plan recommended that the complex, built in 1956, be phased out of the university’s housing stock and demolished by 2011 because of the expense of renovating or rebuilding the complex and the fact that most of it sits in a floodway.

“There is significant structural damage and deterioration in all buildings except 702 and 703, which have been rebuilt,” the authors wrote.

The master plan estimated the cost of demolishing and vacating the complex at $1 million — in 2007 dollars — and about $28 million to rebuild the structure.

Basi said the university kept the complex open despite the master plan’s recommendations because of the complex’s proximity to the MU campus. He said renovating the complex would have been cost-prohibitive.

Basi said engineers told the university that predicting last month's collapse wouldn't have been easy.

"We have specifically consulted with them and they told us that, had they inspected the walkway a week before the collapse, they could not have predicted the failure," Basi said.

Engineers were able to identify walkway problems on other University Village buildings after the Feb. 22 collapse because they knew what they were looking for, he said.
Concrete shear failure caused walkway collapse at University Village, documents say

Wednesday, March 5, 2014 | 1:24 p.m. CST; updated 3:48 p.m. CST, Wednesday, March 5, 2014

A walkway at the University Village apartments collapsed on Feb. 22. The MU-run apartment complex was built in 1956 and houses students with children, married students, single graduate students and students older than 21.

JOSH BACHMAN
BY MISSOURIAN STAFF

COLUMBIA — Concrete shear failure caused the walkway collapse at University Village that resulted in the death of Columbia firefighter Bruce Britt.

A report from a structural engineering firm hired by MU to investigate the cause of the accident found that "water and chloride, and expansion from freeze-thaw action" contributed to existing problems, which could indicate that the harsh winter weather exacerbated the deterioration of the structure.

Emails show that the university housing staff were aware of cosmetic and structural problems with the walkways in 2010. Repairs were made later, although the exact date wasn't immediately clear from the documents.

According to the report, the outside edge of the walkway fell and pulled the rest of the structure down.

MU has released documents related to the Feb. 22 walkway collapse at University Village apartments that killed Britt and displaced residents.

The information released contains reports from Trabue, Hansen and Hinshaw Inc., the structural engineering firm hired by MU to inspect all facilities owned and leased by the university. The documents include the inspection report regarding the cause and the structural engineering evaluation of the collapse.
The documents also include information related to property inspections for University Village and information on the contractual relationship between the university and Trabue, Hansen and Hinshaw Inc.

**MU's buildings, including University Village apartments, are not subject to regularly scheduled structural inspections, according to previous Missourian reporting. The buildings are checked by maintenance workers during routine work requests, MU spokesman Christian Basi said last week.**

He said at the time that the walkways at University Village had "had some issues" that were addressed sometime in the past three years.

University Village, located near the southwest corner of Providence and Stewart roads, was built in 1956 and houses students with children, single graduate students and students older than 21. There are 14 buildings in the complex.

The MU Department of Residential Life has been considering renovating or rebuilding the apartment complex since 2008, according to previous Missourian reporting. In 2012, Residential Life Director Frankie Minor told the Missourian he had spoken to private developers about rebuilding the complex but that it had been difficult to find a financially feasible way to do so.

*The Missourian will continue updating this story as more information becomes available.*
Concrete failure blamed in fatal walkway collapse

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - An engineering review of a fatal Columbia walkway collapse near the University of Missouri has found that a concrete failure was to blame.

Twenty-three-year city firefighter Bruce Britt died after he fell from the second-floor walkway at University Village apartments in late February.

The lieutenant was going door-to-door looking for trapped residents in what was initially believed to be a roof collapse.

A structural engineering firm working for the university attributed the collapse to weather damage and a construction flaw in which excess air remained inside the concrete slab.

UPDATE: Missouri House budget proposes two-tier school funding

Wednesday, March 5, 2014 | 4:36 p.m. CST
BY DAVID A. LIEB/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEFFERSON CITY — A state funding increase for public schools would be partly contingent upon a strong economy under a new spending plan outlined Wednesday by the top budget writer in the Missouri House.
The proposal by House Budget Chairman Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, seeks to bridge the gap between differing revenue projections embraced by the Republican-led legislature and the Democratic governor.

If Missouri revenues come in as Republican lawmakers expect, Stream's budget would provide a $122 million increase on top of the current $3 billion of basic aid for public K-12 school districts. If revenues meet Gov. Jay Nixon's more optimistic projections, public schools could get a total of a $278 million increase under Stream's budget plan.

"It's a lot of money for education," Stream said. "We basically have taken the governor's recommendation for K-12 funding and put it in the budget."

Nixon had proposed a $278 million increase in basic school aid without any contingencies. But lawmakers have criticized Nixon's proposed budget as overly optimistic.

The 2015 fiscal year begins July 1 in Missouri and runs through the following June 30. Although multitiered budgets have been used in other states, they are not common in Missouri.

Under Stream's plan, school officials would have to wait until near the end of the budget year to know whether state revenues exceed the legislature's projections and thus trigger the additional funding. That means schools probably could not plan on spending the extra money during the 2014-15 school year and could have to carry over the money to the following year.

A Nixon spokesman did not immediately respond to a request for comment about Streams' budget plan.

Stream's proposal, which is to be considered next week by the House Budget Committee, also includes numerous other differences from Nixon's recommendation. Public colleges and universities would get a smaller funding increase in their operating budgets than proposed by Nixon. Instead, Stream would redirect some of that money toward university construction projects that would require the institutions to raise matching funds from donors.

Stream's plan would allot a total of $25 million to fund one construction project at each of the four campuses of the University of Missouri System.
with an additional $38 million going to other university construction projects contingent upon state revenues meeting Nixon's higher projections.

Nixon had proposed a $20 million increase in preschool funding and an $8.6 million increase in the state's main financial needs-based college scholarship dubbed Access Missouri. Stream essentially reverses that. He proposes a $20 million increase in Access Missouri funding and $8.2 million targeted only to preschool programs in schools lacking full state accreditation. Stream also proposes $3.5 million for reading programs in those poorly performing schools.

Stream's plan would provide a 1 percent pay raise for state employees instead of Nixon's proposed 3 percent increase.

His budget plan omits Nixon's recommendation to draw down $1.7 billion of federal funds by expanding Medicaid eligibility to about 300,000 low-income adults.

But Stream proposes to add dental coverage for adult Medicaid recipients at a cost of about $17 million in state funds. Adult dental coverage was eliminated when Republicans scaled back the state's Medicaid program in 2005. Stream said the state nonetheless has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to treat dental problems in hospital emergency rooms. He described the provision of dental coverage as "Medicaid reform and transformation."

"All of us have had toothaches and dental problems — it affects our other health, too," Stream said.

Among other things, Stream's budget includes $4 million for Kansas City if it succeeds in winning a competition to host the 2016 Republican National Convention. Stream said the money was requested by Kansas City officials to help them reach a local fundraising goal of $10 million.
MU may add gender identity to non-discrimination policy

Policy change will need curator vote.

By Ashley Jost

Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri’s student government in Columbia followed suit with the other three campuses in passing a resolution supporting inclusion of gender identity and expression to the UM System's nondiscrimination policy.

A change to the Collective Rules and Regulations would require a vote from the Board of Curators, which the outgoing student representative thinks is "completely possible."

Amy Johnson, student representative to the board and a University of Missouri-Kansas City student, said UMKC was the first campus to pass the resolution, and other schools have followed suit. Resolutions in support of an issue are necessary before the issue is brought to the Board of Curators.

Johnson said she anticipates the curators will hear this issue as early as the June meeting in Columbia. Until then, she and a group of other student supporters are contacting board members to gauge their thoughts before June in hopes of getting a vote.

"So far we're just building our case," she said. "I don't think it will be a slam dunk by any means, but I don't think anyone believes that we shouldn't be inclusive."

Cathy Scroggs, vice chancellor for student affairs at MU, said she thinks students "are going to be heard on this one."

"Things are changing so much in our society," she said. "I suspect it won't take long before this gets through."

Mason Schara, president of the Missouri Students Association at MU, said getting Faculty Council support is the next step in the MU effort to change the nondiscrimination policy.
Tim Evans, student affairs committee chair on the Faculty Council and an associate professor of veterinary science, said the executive committee has yet to discuss the issue, but he hopes the change to nondiscrimination rules garners Faculty Council support when the time comes.

Scroggs said MU is already making changes to the student information system so students who are transgendered and transitioning can change their names in class rosters to their preferred names. Students will be able to change their names in the campus system as early as this fall.

The add-on application required for the change was too expensive and installation too time consuming last year, she said, but this year it's possible systemwide.

"I teach a class, so now when I get there I can call the roll and call the student by the name they prefer because that's the name that I will see on my list," Scroggs said. She said while the LGBTQ community supports this update, international students who want to use an Americanized name also are advocating for the change.

Economist promotes single-payer health care system

Economist said the system lowers cost.

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Wednesday, March 5, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (7)

A single-payer health care system that eliminates "monopoly profits" for pharmaceutical companies and reduces "administrative bloat" would boost the economy, lead to job creation and make Americans healthier.

That's the summary of an analysis by University of Massachusetts economics Professor Gerald Friedman, who said the Affordable Care Act is simply one step in the direction of a single-payer system.

Friedman, a consultant to the Missouri chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program, spoke last night to a group of physicians, students and others at the University of Missouri School of Medicine.

"The Affordable Care Act does a lot of good things," Friedman said. "But because the ACA does not effectively control cost, it's not sustainable. The solution is single-payer."
Friedman suggests an 8 percent payroll tax and an 8 percent tax on dividends to finance a single-payer system in Missouri. He compared that method with a general example of current health insurance costs. A family that has around $44,000 in annual income might pay $11,000 for health care — premiums of $9,000 and a $2,000 deductible. A single-payer system with an 8 percent payroll tax would save that family roughly $7,500 each year.

"That money goes back into the economy," Friedman said.

Applying that model on a national scale would reduce health care costs by $592 billion in 2015, he said.

"This is the single best economic policy we could adopt," Friedman said.

Conservatives have long opposed a single-payer system in the United States, citing the strain it could place on already stretched federal and state budgets and warning it could lead to a lack of individual control over health care choices and rationing of treatment.

Friedman presented myriad examples of how costs would come down if "administrative bloat" is eliminated. He noted that Massachusetts General Hospital has more employees in its billing department than the number of beds in the hospital.

"Get the profit out of health care," he said. "Everybody wins."

Friedman also presented figures comparing the cost of U.S. health care with the costs from other countries. Health care in Austria and the Netherlands, for instance, costs half what it does in the United States, yet life expectancy there is longer. He said the life expectancy in Italy, which spends one-third the amount the United States puts into health care, also is higher.

He cited a Health Affairs study from November that found that a quarter of Americans did not get a prescription filled in 2010 because of the cost.

"This is making us sicker. It's causing us to miss days of work," Friedman said. "It's making us miss years of life."

Ed Weisbart, chairman of the Missouri chapter for Physicians for a National Health Program, is a family physician in St. Louis. He said he has experienced patients "choosing between their blood pressure medication and eviction."

Weisbart said the Missouri chapter is "sort of laser-focused on fixing Medicare," with the hope that an improved Medicare program with lower deductibles and also provides dental and vision plans would be provided for everyone in the country.

Friedman conceded that the quest for a single-payer system won't be an easy fight, considering the lucrative salaries paid to pharmaceutical and insurance company executives.
"It will take a national mass movement," he said, comparing such a movement to the abolitionists who took on slavery more than 160 years ago.

"A small band of people transformed the country," he said.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

March 6, 2014

Cost and Financial Aid Increasingly Influence Students’ Choice of College

By Taylor Harvey

Academic reputation and graduates’ job prospects are still the top reasons students choose which college to attend. But cost and financial aid are increasingly influencing enrollment decisions, according to the annual Freshman Survey, released on Thursday by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program, part of the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles.

The largest share of students on record were not at their first-choice college in 2013, having enrolled elsewhere for financial reasons, survey responses showed. Just 57 percent of freshmen at four-year institutions enrolled at their first choice, although 76 percent of students had been admitted there. By comparison, 69 percent of freshmen in 2003 and 72 percent in 1993 were at their first-choice institutions.

Among freshmen who had been accepted by their first-choice institutions but enrolled elsewhere this academic year, 60 percent said their current college’s offer of financial assistance was a very important factor in their decision. A similar share (62 percent) said the cost of their first-choice college was very important; a quarter of students cited a lack of financial aid there.
"Students are becoming savvier shoppers," said Kevin Eagan, interim director of the research program, in part because of the national conversation about rising student-loan debt. They are "searching for the best package," he said, "the best deal."

Campus officials who worry that current tuition-discount rates are unsustainable may not find much relief in this year’s data. Academic reputation and job prospects matter most to students—with 64 percent and 53 percent, respectively, labeling those factors very important in their college choice—but nearly half of freshmen this year said the same of financial aid.

The share of students identifying aid as very important has risen significantly over time, from 19 percent in 1973 to 33 percent in 1993 to 49 percent in 2013.

Likewise, more students are reporting the cost of attendance as very important in their enrollment decisions. This academic year, 46 percent of freshmen said that, a jump from 31 percent in 2004, when the survey began asking the question.

**Comparison Shopping**

Among students who are the first in their families to go to college, financial factors are even more influential. Fifty-four percent of first-generation students said the cost of attendance was very important in choosing their current college, and more than 60 percent said that of financial aid.

During the recession, several groups polled students or high-school guidance counselors about the influence of financial factors on college plans, finding, for instance, that more students were considering community colleges and other public institutions. This year’s freshman survey shows "college costs and financial aid playing an increasingly decisive role," the research program said in a written statement.

As attention to cost and aid have increased, the program reports, so has the proportion of students submitting more college applications. In 2013, 55 percent of first-time,
full-time freshmen said they had applied to more than four colleges, up from 45 percent in 2008.

The report attributes that increase in part to the rise of the Common Application, which more easily allows students to apply to several institutions. Also, the report says, students may perceive greater competition in college admissions.

That competition goes both ways, said Mr. Eagan, as more options help students shop around.

A greater share of students attending four-year public colleges (54 percent) than four-year private colleges (39 percent) said cost had been a very important factor in their choice. But more students at private institutions (65 percent) than public institutions (42 percent) said that of financial aid.

**Politics and Health**

Researchers advocated more counseling for prospective students, especially those who will be the first in their families to go to college. Outreach by colleges, said Mr. Eagan, is important to help first-generation students understand the financial-aid process and aid awards.

The report calls on colleges to "continue their efforts to simultaneously constrain costs and craft financial-aid packages that adequately address students’ financial needs." Institutions must look for new ways to provide need-based aid to first-generation and low-income students, Mr. Eagan said, especially as those students "tend to be a bit more skeptical of relying so heavily on loans."

Over all, about half of students (51 percent) said they planned to take out loans to help cover educational expenses in their first year. Nearly three-quarters of students (73 percent) were counting on grants, while 78 percent planned to draw on family resources and 62 percent their own savings.
The report, "The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2013," is based on responses from 165,743 first-time, full-time freshmen at 234 four-year colleges who were surveyed during registration, orientation, or the first few weeks of classes.

Among the report’s other findings:

- Sixty-nine percent of students reported having used an online instructional website frequently or occasionally to learn something on their own, while 42 percent said they had done so for a high-school class.
- Just 7 percent of students over all said there was a very good chance they would take an online course, but that proportion was higher (14 percent) among students at historically black colleges.
- Most students (81 percent) identified tolerating others with different beliefs as a personal strength, but fewer (63 percent) said the same of openness to having their own views challenged.
- About half of freshman (52 percent) thought affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished.
- The lowest percentage of students to date say they support denying "undocumented immigrants" access to public education (41 percent in 2013, compared with 56 percent in 1996).

Missourian Minute: MU freshman practices wheelchair basketball

Wednesday, March 5, 2014 | 5:00 p.m. CST

BY CAROLIN LEHMANN, ELIAN PELTIER

The Missourian Minute is a regular series of scenes from around mid-Missouri. These visual slices of life capture the sights and sounds of people and the activities they love.
COLUMBIA — **MU freshman James Bohnett wakes up at 4:30 a.m every weekday. A double-leg amputee, he practices wheelchair basketball from 5:30 to 7:30 a.m. at the MU Student Recreation Complex, warming up, stretching and playing games before and after tournaments on the weekends.**

“Each team of five players use a classification system of points that vary with disabilities of the players,” Bohnett said. Players are classified from 1 – highly disabled – to 4.5 – minimally disabled – and a team cannot have more than 14 points on the court. Wheelchair basketball is about speed and control. Players cannot push their wheels more than twice if they don’t pass the ball or bounce it.

“I love speed,” Bohnett said. “But sometimes I spin with my wheelchair, or I just fall. That’s part of the game.”

Video clip can be found at:  

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**MU Circle of Sisterhood to build school in Nicaragua**

*Wednesday, March 5, 2014 | 9:37 p.m. CST; updated 7:02 a.m. CST, Thursday, March 6, 2014*

**BY VERONICA DESTEFANO**

COLUMBIA — **A dozen women from MU will build a school in Nicaragua this summer to ensure that more girls are educated in the rural community.**

The women belong to Circle of Sisterhood, a collaborative Greek philanthropy that fosters access to quality schooling. All of them belong to
campus sororities affiliated with the MU Panhellenic Association. They will spend a week on the project.

MU Panhellenic gave the Circle of Sisterhood $20,000 toward the $55,000 needed to build the school.

In addition, each woman going to Nicaragua will have $875 from Panhellenic to spend on building supplies, food and living costs. Women will be paired up to live with host families.

They represent six Greek chapters on campus. Applications could be submitted from any women who belong to a sorority. Eighteen applied for the 12 spots, said Jamie Beard, vice president of public relations for the MU Panhellenic Association.

The Circle of Sisterhood raised money for other expenses through a crowdsourcing site called CrowdRise and a 5K held in September. The Circle of Sisterhood Foundation is a national group of sorority women who help uplift women around the world from poverty and oppression, especially in education, according to its website.

The school in Nicaragua must have 50 percent female enrollment. In the last three years, the national organization has served other women and girls in 16 countries on four continents, most recently in Senegal, West Africa. Nicaragua will be the first trip for the MU Circle of Sisterhood, Beard said. The Panhellenic Association adopted Circle of Sisterhood as its councilwide philanthropy in March 2013.