New chancellor seeks to protect the MU brand

March 15

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
The Kansas City Star

COLUMBIA — About 1 p.m. Friday in the University of Missouri Student Union, the MU Tigers were battling the Florida Gators on a giant screen in the busy dining hall.

Below it, the university’s new chancellor, R. Bowen Loftin, was holding court, teaching a group of students the newest campus fashion trend — how to tie a bow tie. It’s a sartorial touch Loftin brought with him to campus about six weeks ago. More than a handful of students in the Union sported bow ties, and more students wearing them strolled on campus.

Spending time with students and making sure their needs are being met are among Loftin’s top priorities, he told The Star in an interview in his office later that afternoon.

“I’ve talked with about a thousand students so far, one or two at a time,” Loftin said. “I asked each of them, ‘Where are you from, are you happy here?’ And 999 of them have said pretty quickly, ‘Yes.’ Only one hesitated.”
During the hourlong conversation, Loftin talked about online education, collaborating on degrees with other University of Missouri System campuses, protecting MU’s image, raising private funds and using social media.

Loftin, 64, a native of Hearne, Texas, announced his retirement from the presidency at Texas A&M University in July and in February took the reins as chancellor at MU. He’s so new that unpacked boxes still fill a corner in his office on the first floor of MU’s Jesse Hall.

Loftin had planned to return to the classroom after leaving the A&M presidency, but when the MU job came along, he couldn’t refuse. And so he came to Columbia with his bow ties and a host of ideas for moving the university forward.

Consider online education, which is changing the way students access knowledge in a big way, Loftin said.

“I’m a very big proponent of online instruction,” he said. For the 18- to 22-year-old undergraduate, he said, it’s a tool that allows students on campus to take needed courses they might not otherwise be able to fit into a packed schedule.

“We want students to graduate on time,” Loftin said. “We want students to manage their time well. So one key provision that online instruction gives them is flexibility.”

Between 35 percent and 40 percent of the students on MU’s campus are taking some type of online course. About 3,000 of MU’s online learners are seeking a degree from a distance.

For now, though, few undergraduate degrees can be acquired fully online at MU.

“If we were to offer degrees totally online, we would begin to lose some of what makes us special,” Loftin said. College is not solely about academics, he said; it’s about acquiring social and leadership skills, too.

On the other hand, he said, “A big part of what we want to do here at Missouri is grow the access to online master’s programs for individuals who are working and can’t relocate here … but they want a name-brand degree.”

And although Loftin said he’s all about keeping tuition costs down and increasing access, don’t expect the cost of online education to drop any time soon at MU. The $269.40 per credit hour tuition for Missouri residents is the same whether a student is sitting in a classroom in Columbia or with a laptop at their dining room table.

The same faculty teaches both. “Their salaries don’t change whether online or in a classroom,” Loftin said.
“We want to make sure that our brand is not damaged ... and that we have a quality graduate. If we turn out graduates who are not capable, that hurts our brand.”

As the nation’s educators experiment with new ways of delivering and measuring higher education, Loftin said protecting MU’s brand is a big part of his $450,000-a-year job.

For example, he said, competency education — which allows a student with real-world experience in a particular field to fast-track to a degree in that area — is not something he’s ready to push for MU. Some other universities and colleges are trying it.

“I believe that in principle, it’s doable. But how do you contain the value of your brand? That is the problem I have,” Loftin said. “It is our asset. It’s what makes us who we are.”

And it’s key to persuading private donors to support the university.

Loftin, with his bass-heavy voice — a hint of southern drawl and charm — admits he’s good at wooing benefactors. In his last two years at Texas A&M, the school raised $1.4 billion.

With state support for public colleges and universities shrinking, donor support is crucial. “There’s a limit to how much you can cut,” Loftin said. “There are real limits on how far tuition can go up. You can’t squeeze blood out of a turnip.”

He started cultivating donor relationships for MU — making calls to introduce himself — even before he was officially on the payroll.

His technique, he said, “is finding people who really want to change the world and have some money.”

Loftin said he’s likely to say to a donor: “Let’s get together and solve a really big problem. Let’s solve world hunger. This is an agricultural school: We can do that sort of thing.”

He’s talking too with the leaders of the University of Missouri System’s three other campuses and collaborating to offer more joint degree options similar to two already set with the University of Missouri-Kansas City, in pharmacy and public health. He’s talking about students walking away with a diploma that bears the names of two institutions or with two degrees from separate institutions attained at the same time. Such a dual-degree proposal, maybe even sharing faculty, is already in the works.

“No one school can be good at everything,” Loftin said. “So we can couple together assets. It’s good for the student.”

Loftin said everything that happens at the university comes back to the student.
“It is what we are here for,” he said. “It is very important to me, my highest priority.” It’s why Loftin spends a chunk of time each day connecting with and listening to students on social media. With the twitter handle @bowtieger, he has about 11,300 followers.

“What I really want is to make this the best experience possible for them,” Loftin said. “It gives me encouragement to do my job. It reminds me why I am here.”

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/03/15/4892579/the-man-protecting-the-mu-brand.html#storylink=cpy

Lists of top earners at university show few changes for 2013-14

Chancellor joins MU's top 10 list.

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, March 16, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (3)

There were not many notable salary changes this year at the University of Missouri, with the exception of MU's new chancellor, a couple MU football coaches and a few administrators.

MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who makes $450,000 a year, is the ninth highest-paid person at MU, according to salary information released by the university. And two MU football coaches, defensive coordinator Dave Steckel ($600,000) and offensive coordinator Josh Henson ($550,000), will become the second and third highest-paid MU employees, respectively, after it was announced earlier this month that they would receive raises.

Head MU football Coach Gary Pinkel isn't on the top 10 list even though he too received a raise announced earlier this month. Pinkel will make $3.1 million a year, but his base salary is only $350,000 a year.
At the UM System level, the biggest change was the addition of Hank Foley ($350,000), who last year was hired as vice president of academic affairs. This week, Loftin announced Foley would also serve as MU’s senior vice chancellor for research and graduate studies. Foley's salary will not increase with the new campus appointment.

A few other UM System officials received raises because they served in interim leadership roles.

Overall, MU and UM System officials are working to increase salaries to be competitive with similar schools. "We're always looking at our salaries as a way to attract and retain the best talent," interim Provost Ken Dean said. "So we have to be competitive."

Ideally, everyone that MU looks to hire comes from another research institution, Southeastern Conference institution or American Association of Universities institution — all competitors in the higher education realm.

The AAU is a prestigious organization that includes only 34 public universities. Part of MU’s strategic plan is to improve its AAU ranking from No. 32 of 34 to No. 28 by 2018. MU’s ranking determines how much money the university gets from the UM System.

Dean said it's "getting harder and harder" to stay competitive as state appropriations decline. "We see what the average raises are," he said. "We see what AAU salaries are. You might find an individual department on campus where the average is on par with the AAU publics," but Dean said MU faculty salaries rank between 75 percent and 92 percent of the average AAU public school faculty salary.

However, Dean said it takes more than the salary to stay competitive.

"It's not just money, but money is certainly one of the factors," he said, adding that many times faculty are interested in the caliber of their co-workers and students and the climate of support for their field of study.

For staff, the UM System is looking for ways to streamline and simplify its salary structures. A few years ago, the UM System had 1,100 employee pay ranges and about 5,000 titles, said spokesman John Fougere.

"We felt that was really unsustainable going forward," he said, adding that the university decided to consolidate and now has 19 pay ranges and 700 titles.

Last year, the UM System started using the Global Grading System, a type of job leveling software tool that determines the relative value of jobs in an organization and provides a foundation for determining promotions and raises. The system is being used for staff positions.

"This software also lets staff see what they can aspire to," Fougere said, adding that it also helps administration keep track of people who aren't performing up to standards.
Loftin offers update on search for medical school dean

By Ashley Jost

Friday, March 14, 2014 at 2:00 pm

University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said Thursday during an MU Faculty Council meeting that the effort to find a new School of Medicine dean is regrouping after the previous leg of the search didn't pan out.

"We ended up finding people we would have liked to have as dean," Loftin said. "We couldn't come to closure."

Loftin said the university brought three finalists to campus, and "more than one" of the candidates were engaged about becoming the dean, but none of the efforts worked out. He didn't go into specifics.

The next step is working with the search committee to look at the pool of people the group was already working with and add to it.

Loftin said he hopes the next steps will move quickly since the university already knows what it wants in a person to fill that role.

"We want to find good people and bring them in immediately," Loftin said. He has put an emphasis since arriving at MU last month on the importance of increasing research efforts out of the School of Medicine and bringing a leader on board who fosters those goals.

"This is not a failed search, just an ongoing search," Loftin told the Faculty Council.

Kattesh Katti, Curators' Professor of Radiology and Physics at MU and a Faculty Council member, said in an email he has concerns about the search and how long it has been since the school has had a permanent dean.
"Our immediate efforts must focus on recruiting a permanent Dean who would embrace dual missions of promoting clinical fronts and also strengthening our research in the basic sciences," Katti wrote, adding that he has additional concerns about finding a dean who will help boost MU's Association of American Universities ranking.

Regardless of whether the dean is an inside candidate or from another university, Katti said he hopes the search moves quickly.

"Not having a strong leader is detrimental to our progress," he said.

Les Hall has served as the interim dean since October 2012 after former Dean Bob Churchill retired as the school faced a federal fraud investigation. An internal investigation found two of the school's radiologists committed billing fraud.

This article was published in the Friday, March 14, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Loftin offers update on med school dean search."

© 2014 Columbia Daily Tribune. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Posted in Education on Friday, March 14, 2014 2:00 pm.

Razing the Village

A lesson learned the hard way

By Henry J. Waters III

Saturday, March 15, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (4)

Hindsight, that magnificent teacher, tells us the University Village student housing complex on Providence Road should have been torn down at least a month or so ago.
Since then Columbia firefighter Lt. Bruce Britt fell to his death when an elevated walkway collapsed, trapping him under debris. As usual in such cases, we wish we had locked the barn door earlier.

I can remember when these buildings were built soon after World War II on what was then the periphery of the University of Missouri campus near the intersection of Providence and Stewart roads, to accommodate a sudden glut of married and older students returning from combat. In the ensuing half-century-plus, the structures, never built for eternity in the first place, have outlived their natural healthy life. Earlier engineering inspections indicated aging, but in the wake of the Britt tragedy, a company that had done an investigation recently said nothing at that time indicated imminent disaster.

Let us not condemn the university for failing to take overt preventive action — though we all wish it had been so — but let us welcome its decision to close the complex June 30 and begin demolition. In the meantime, current residents can terminate their leases without penalty.

Given today's demand for student housing, University Village is a good site for a new high-rise building. It's located in a low spot near the Hinkson Creek and the Katy Trail. Maybe MU, as owner of the land but perhaps not in the mood to underwrite a multimillion-dollar apartment building, could collaborate with a private developer, a breed currently roaming the immediate countryside looking for opportunities. If MU contributes the land, it could work a deal to receive a steady flow of cash without having to make the entire investment or fool with rental management.

Or, an option that has distinct advantages, MU could build and operate the new structure itself. Student housing in that close-in location always will be in demand.

Either way, the venerable University Village will be no more — a good but slightly tardy move.

Campus Facilities will present updates to MU future plans

By Covey Eonyak Son

MU Campus Facilities will hold the 2014 Master Plan and Climate Action Plan open forum to present the updates made to each plan.

The forum — which will take place from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. March 17, in Memorial Union’s Stotler Lounge — is open to anyone, including MU students, faculty and staff. All attendees will
be given time to ask questions at the end of the presentation, Campus Facilities spokeswoman Karlan Seville said.

“(The forum) is an opportunity for people to hear about how the university is planning for the future,” Seville said. “We seek people’s input on the plans and let people see where the university is headed in terms of spacing planning and (reaching) carbon neutrality.”

Updates to the Master Plan will include addressing an expanding campus as well as the demand for various programs.

“We are addressing the need to expand facilities for different programs and how we can improve upon buildings that already exist,” Seville said. “Both the university and the state are starting to put a focus on science technology, engineering, math and medicine programs … we are beginning to address (those needs) in our facilities.”

For an example, the 2014 Master Plan will include the Trulaske College of Business Center, which is in the planning stages, and the Tiger Welcome Center, which will be located near Memorial Stadium and contain an expanded Tiger Team store, Seville said.

The updated Climate Action Plan will include measures the university will take to reach its goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 48 percent by 2018.

According to the plan, MU will install solar panels at the MU Power Plant. Once the solar panels are implemented, Seville said, the power plant will be able to use solar energy to heat the water in the boiler and reduce energy use at the facility.

In addition, MU will look at ways of increasing its use of wind power, Seville said.

“We have increased our wind power purchase last year, and we are looking into increasing that again next year,” she said.

Seville said the university has also created the Energy Strategies Student Advisory Group, which is comprised of members of Sustain Mizzou, Coal Free Mizzou, the Missouri Students Association and the Graduate Professional Council.

“Those students meet with people from the power plants and the Sustainability Office to look at what exists on campus and what direction the university should be (taking), in terms of renewable energy use,” she said.

The presentation of updates to both plans will be made by the Master Plan consultant Linda Eastley from Sasaki Associates. The Climate Action Plan consultant, Meredith Elbaum from the Elbaum Group, will not appear at the forum, but Campus Facilities is looking at ways for Elbaum to speak remotely, Seville said.
To accommodate for interested parties who miss the forum, Campus Facilities and Eastly will answer any questions at a table set up at the MU Student Center between 10 a.m. and noon March 18.

The new plans will also become available after the presentation.

FAIR: Needed, a Legislature the football team can be proud of

March 07, 2014 2:45 pm

FAIR: Last Wednesday, Gary Pinkel, the University of Missouri’s head football coach, took a dozen or so of his Cotton Bowl champion players to the state Capitol to bask in the glow of lawmaker love.

Ironic bounced around like an onside kick. Here were Coach Pinkel and his players, who finished No. 5 in the country with a record of 12-2 and treated the issue of All-American defensive end Michael Sam’s sexuality with dignity and respect, and there was the Legislature, which is not Top-10 in anything good and not only continues to permit public discrimination against gays, but may allow more of it.

Elsewhere in the Capitol last Wednesday, House Appropriations Committee Chairman Rick Stream, R-Kirkwood, proposed giving state employees (average annual pay: $42,588, roughly what a legislator makes in salary and expenses during his 5-month work year) a 1 percent raise next year. With a princely 1 percent raise, they would still be among the lowest-paid of any state in the union.

The next day, the university gave Coach Pinkel a 14 percent raise and extended his contract through the 2020 season. Mr. Pinkel’s nine assistant coaches also saw their salary pool increased by 41 percent to $3.2 million.

Taxpayers are on the hook for only 11.2 percent of Mr. Pinkel’s new annual pay of $3.1 million. The rest comes from boosters, broadcast revenue, apparel contracts and the like. Several university employees, including university president Tim Wolfe, men’s basketball coach Frank Haith and Dave Steckel, one of Mr. Pinkel’s assistant coaches, are paid more taxpayer money than the $350,000 paid to Mr. Pinkel. Still, that’s $216,179 more than the state pays its governor.
By the weird standards that govern college athletics — his players get a scholarship worth roughly what a legislator is paid, but that’s not his fault — Mr. Pinkel is a bargain.

But the different classes of treatment on display at the Capitol last week called to mind what a University of Oklahoma president said back in the early 1950s: “We want to build a university our football team can be proud of.”

Missouri deserves a Legislature its football team can be proud of.

— Kevin Horrigan

Elizabeth Smart emphasizes moving forward, overcoming past at MU lecture

BY KELLIE MOORE

Eleven years ago – almost to the day – Elizabeth Smart was found. After nine months of captivity, abuse, and rape, endured after being abducted from the bed she shared with her sister, she could finally go home.

In the years that have passed since then, she’s gone through high school and college, done mission work in France and gotten married. She also started the Elizabeth Smart Foundation, and works as an advocate for families with missing children.

There’s a saying her grandpa lived by that has influenced her in doing all this: “Where much is given, much is expected.”

She has been given a lot, she told reporters in Columbia on Friday (March 14). ”I mean, I have had the ultimate miracle in my life: I survived,” she said. “I am alive.”
She was in Columbia to speak at MU, as the featured speaker of this spring’s Delta Gamma Foundation Lectureship in Values and Ethics.

She recently wrote a book, “My Story,” and has been doing speaking engagements around the U.S. for about three years.

Throughout her travels, she’s noticed a common thread: Everyone has problems.

But everyone also has a choice every day, she said – we can make the choice to stay in bed, pull the covers over our heads, and hide. Or, we can get up and do what needs to be done.

For her, part of that choice involves continuing to share her story.

Elizabeth's story

On June 5, 2002, Smart crawled into bed next to her little sister, Mary Katherine Smart, in the room they shared in their Utah home, as usual.

Later that night, she heard a strange man’s voice.

“I have a knife at your neck,” he began, then commanded her to get up and come with him.

Terrified, she followed his orders – she didn’t know what else to do.

“I was prepared for lots of things,” she said – things like earthquakes and fires. But this? She had no idea.

“I didn’t know in that moment that I could fight back, or do anything,” she said.

She told her Columbia audience about some of her memories from that night: walking up the mountain away from her home, seeing the camp where she would be held captive, noticing a cable that ran through the camp – which would later be fastened around her ankle, meeting her captor’s wife.

She remembers being forced to take off her pajamas and put on a strange robe. She remembers sitting on an overturned bucket, and feeling so alone and scared that she didn’t hear what the man who abducted her was saying – until he got to the last line. The line about sealing her to him as his wife.

“No,” she cried out. He threatened her: If she did that again, he would kill her. And now, he said, they had to consummate their marriage.
She described her life until that point as “sheltered” – not only that, but she was still a young girl who hadn’t even hit puberty yet. She had an idea what he meant, but didn’t know for sure.

“I remember just praying so hard, and hoping so much, that it wasn’t what I thought it was,” she said.

But it was – and despite her protestations, her captor proceeded to rape her, then got up, smiled and left her lying there.

“I will never forget how I felt lying on the ground,” she said. She felt broken.

The next morning, she was tied to a cable – she was trapped.

She began to think about how she might get away. If nothing else, she could outlive them, she thought. But suppose it took 30 years for them to die. Would she still remember who she was?

She began thinking of all the things she didn’t want to forget. Eventually, she came to the voice of her mother, Lois Smart. And in those memories, she recalled a time when she’d come home from school upset because one of the popular girls had invited everyone at the lunch table to a party – except Smart. She was not invited.

Her mom asked if they were really her friends, and told her that there were only two opinions she ever needed to worry about.

The first opinion was God’s – he loved her, and that would never change. And the second opinion – that was her mother’s. She would always be her mother, and nothing could change that.

It was then that she realized: Yes, her family would always love her. And in that moment, she found determination to survive. She would get home. She would see her family again.

Nine difficult months followed, and Smart said there were days when she would have been happy to give up – but she didn’t.

Finally, on March 12, 2003, in Salt Lake City, everything changed. She was walking with her captors, and police cars surrounded them. At first, she answered questions as her captors had told her too. “In my mind, they were indestructible,” she said. “They were invincible.”
But a policeman pulled her aside, and told her that her family loved her, missed her, and had been looking for her. In that moment, she finally felt safe enough to say who she was: She was, indeed, Elizabeth Smart.

The officer handcuffed her and put her in a police car – “They think I’m guilty,” she thought. They brought her to the police station, and put her in a small room, where her imagination ran wild.

The door opened, and her dad, Ed Smart, came in. He took her in his arms, and they wept with happiness. And then, they returned home to the rest of the overjoyed family.

Her captors, Brian David Mitchell and Wanda Barzee, are now in prison – Mitchell for life, and Barzee for 15 years at the federal level, before facing state charges.

**Moving forward**

The morning after Smart was found, her mom gave her some advice. “What this man has done to you is terrible,” she began. Words could not describe the wickedness. He had stolen nine months of her life.

But feeling sorry for herself would only mean he was stealing more. “The best punishment you could ever give him is to be happy,” her mom said.

And that’s what she did.

After her nine-month ordeal, she craved normal life again. She decided not to seek professional counseling, but found healing in her family, and in being back to a normal routine. She also found comfort in her music – she plays the harp – and in getting out in nature and going horseback riding.

At the afternoon press conference, she shared how her Mormon faith has helped her, as well: ”Knowing that I’m not alone is really important to me – and knowing that God knows who I am, and that He loves me even when I make mistakes.” She also loves knowing she can turn to him for comfort. “That helps me – probably every day,” she said.

The book, too, was cathartic, and she saw how much she was blessed.

“I am grateful for what has happened to me because it has allowed me to do so much,” she said.
If she hadn’t been kidnapped, she would be “just another blonde girl from Utah,” she said – though popularity or the spotlight have never been her aim. (When she was a child, she was “the ultimate definition of a wallflower.”)

Had she not been kidnapped, there are many people she never would have met.

Had she not been kidnapped, she never would have realized how many people were willing to reach out and help someone they had never even met.

“We all have problems,” Smart re-iterated to her audience – and in those hard times, know one else really knows exactly what each of us is feeling.

But, she repeated, “We always do have a choice.”

*This story was produced in partnership with Columbia Faith & Values, mid-Missouri’s source for religion news.*

---

**Elizabeth Smart tells audience at MU that she’s now ‘grateful’ for her ordeal**

By **Ashley Jost**

*Saturday, March 15, 2014 at 2:00 am*

When Elizabeth Smart was growing up, her mom would ask her, "Are you going to let them steal your happiness?" when she let her peers get her down.

She still thinks of that question more than a decade after she was abducted from her home, held captive for nine months, subjected to physical abuse and threatened regularly.
Smart spoke to a packed auditorium in Jesse Hall last night as part of the Delta Gamma Foundation's Lectureship in Values and Ethics. The endowed lecture is given every fall, but every five years the Delta Gamma Foundation provides additional funding for a speaker such as Smart.

During her speech, Smart didn't read from prepared remarks. She walked to the podium with nothing in tow. Her story isn't one she needs to read — though she has written about it in a book — because it's still very much in her mind. But even though it's there, she hasn't allowed it to ruin her. In fact, she has reached a point in her life where she is "grateful" for what happened.

"I would never have realized how many good people are in the world if I hadn't been kidnapped," she told the audience.

Smart travels, tells her story and explains what she is now doing to advocate for educating children about their safety in an effort to prevent abductions.

She describes her abduction, waking up to a knife at her throat and a man telling her to stay quiet and come with him or he would kill her. Smart was 14 at the time and says at that age she understood how to stop, drop and roll in a fire, and what to do in an earthquake. But she had no training on how to prevent being abducted.

Smart now aims to empower children to understand they don't have to participate in uncomfortable situations, and she wants to teach them to fight back if they find themselves in those situations.

"We know her talk is going to do a lot for the campus and for the survivors here," said Lauren Rutherford, member of the Missouri Students Association/Graduate Professional Council Speakers Committee, which also contributed to bringing Smart to MU.

When she was found by police 11 years and three days ago, Smart said one of the first conversations she had with her mother was about the best way to punish her abductors, Brian David Mitchell and Wanda Barzee. Both are still in prison.

Being happy after everything the couple did to her was the best punishment, Smart recalls her mom saying. Being upset "only allows him to steal more of your life away from you."

The fall Delta Gamma Foundation speaker will be Jane Goodall, an anthropologist who is best known for her work studying chimpanzee social and family life. Goodall will speak Sept. 17.
Bill Nye uses humor to boost science literacy during talk at MU

By Andrew Denney

Sunday, March 16, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (2)

Inspiring passion for science historically has been a tough job, but Bill Nye — best known as the affable, bow tie-clad host of the PBS program "Bill Nye the Science Guy" — has put his money on using humor to get the message across.

Nye was the featured guest for the 10th annual MU Life Sciences and Society Symposium, a well-attended lecture yesterday morning at Jesse Auditorium on the University of Missouri campus. The symposium's theme this year is "Decoding Science," which focuses on improving the public's scientific literacy.

Nye cited the popularity of the CBS sitcom "The Big Bang Theory" as evidence that science is "cool again," and he said educators must build on that popularity to foster a greater appreciation for science. "We've got to take this opportunity," he said. "We've got to take this passion for science and change the world."

Nye said he is optimistic that the young scientists sweating it out in laboratories now are going to provide solutions to some of the toughest problems, including developing batteries that can store solar or wind energies and protecting Earth from an asteroid collision that could cause an extinction-level event.

"I'm still waiting for you to change the world," Nye told the audience, gesturing toward his wristwatch.

Nye jokingly questioned whether sending Bruce Willis to save the day would be the best solution if Earth were in danger of getting slammed with a gigantic asteroid (Willis starred in the 1998 big-budget blockbuster "Armageddon," in which NASA sends deep-sea drillers to space to destroy an asteroid headed for Earth).
Despite Nye's levity, The Planetary Society, an organization for which Nye serves as CEO, takes the threat of asteroids seriously and has partnered with two universities in Scotland on a project called "Laser Bees," in which researchers are studying ways to use concentrated light to gently nudge asteroids off a collision course with Earth.

Nye studied mechanical engineering at Cornell University in New York. One of his professors was famed astrophysicist Carl Sagan, who was a so-called "pop" scientist who sought to improve society's understanding of science. Nye and Sagan acolyte Neil deGrasse Tyson, who currently hosts a reboot of Sagan's PBS series "Cosmos" on FOX, are friends and fill the same type of role Sagan did in his day.

Sheldon Slade, an information technologies professional who works for IBM, brought his three children to Nye's lecture to emphasize the importance of science. Citing NASA's recent decision to cease its space shuttle program, he said that scientific accomplishments are too often judged by dollars and cents.

Rock Bridge High School juniors Zack Jimenez and Rachel Kirchhofer sported bow ties to the lecture. Kirchhofer, who said she has an interest in biomedical engineering, said Nye's lecture encouraged her to get back to work on an idea she's been cooking up to fix shattered bones, which she said she was inspired to do after her father was injured in an accident.

"I don't think it can wait," Kirchhofer said.
COLUMBIA — His hair was grayer than it had been when he rose to fame more than 20 years ago, but Bill Nye still had the same energy, simplicity and humor that made him so accessible on his show.

Nye, a scientist and educator most famous for his show, "Bill Nye the Science Guy," lectured for an hour to a packed Jesse Auditorium on Saturday as part of the weeklong MU symposium on "Decoding Science."

Although the symposium brought speakers to discuss how to communicate science to the public effectively, Nye focused more on why that communication should happen. He spoke generally about the importance of science in the future.

His message throughout the talk was simple: Use your passion for science and your joy of discovery to change the world.

As Nye took the stage, he was greeted with thunderous applause and a gift from MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. He gave Nye a bow tie with maps of Missouri on it, which the Science Guy, who's known for his tweedy look and penchant for bow ties, promptly switched out with the one he was already wearing.

In his talk, Nye often directly addressed the younger generations in the crowd and combined heavy topics — climate change, evolution and the possibility of an asteroid strike — with his signature wit and theatrics. He used a mocking, feigned scholarly voice when using scientific jargon, and a wheezing, nostalgic voice when referencing historical events. Whenever he used the catchphrase for the lecture, "change the world," he spoke in a booming, epic voice reminiscent of a movie trailer.

Although his tone was light and parodic at times, Nye had a heavy message for the crowd. To illustrate that point, he showed the crowd a picture of a van in Columbia that had "Bill Nye The Science Lie" written on its back window. Both he and the crowd were able to share a laugh at the van's message, but he also wanted to make a point about how that vision of science had serious consequences.

"It would be OK, but this is a family vehicle," Nye said. We don't want to raise a generation of people that don't accept science, he said.
But if we want people to take science seriously, we need to be passionate about it, especially in the way it's taught. It's a teacher's passion that makes them our favorite because it's what best engages students, he said.

"You want to show and then tell," Nye said. "My claim is that when you can see it, that's when it becomes compelling."

Nye, who never formally trained as an educator, built his career by teaching a generation of American children about science on his show “Bill Nye the Science Guy,” which aired from 1993 to 1998 on PBS. It was famous for making science simple and enjoyable for millions of children.

But television was not where the Science Guy started out. Nye started out as an engineer at Boeing. He later hosted a “Bill Nye the Science Guy” show on a local Seattle radio station in 1986 before the idea took to the television screen. He said he made the show because he wanted to get people excited about science.

His lasting impression on young people drew many to his sold-out lecture Saturday.

"I've always been interested in his videos," MU senior Elizabeth York said. York, who is majoring in biology at MU, said Nye's show is what fed her interest for science.

Nye's lectures and debates have kept him in the public eye more than a decade after his show ended. In February, he made news by sparring with creationist thinker Ken Ham.

During the question-and-answer period, Nye was asked about how he deals with trying to convince people like Ham to accept evolution and science. He said it's something you have to chip away at.

"You have to accept that people won't get what you’re driving at the first time," Nye said. "You have to act like it’s going to be a process."

Nye told another person that he was a bit nonplussed at why he'd become a "science rock star." But, he said he wanted to cultivate that persona for something good.

"I just try to get the PB&J, the passion, beauty and joy (of science) across to people," Nye said, but the rest is up to his audience. "I'm still waiting for you guys to change the world."
Councilman says city staff ‘betrayed and let down’ developer

By Andrew Denney

Sunday, March 16, 2014 at 2:00 am Comments (22)

Two Columbia City Council members have indicated they will support a development agreement with St. Louis-based Collegiate Housing Partners, that wants to build a complex with 350 beds near the University of Missouri campus, in part because they think city staff members misled the developer about the availability of infrastructure downtown.

The council will hold public hearings on agreements with Collegiate Housing Partners, Austin, Texas-based American Campus Communities and St. Louis-based The Opus Group at its regular meeting tomorrow night.

If the agreements are approved, the developers would be able to move forward with their projects in exchange for paying part of the cost of improving public infrastructure that serves downtown.

Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas issued a statement yesterday saying he supports Collegiate Housing Partners' project because he thinks the developer, which has been in contact with the city for more than a year, has been "betrayed and let down" by city staff.

The city council approved rezoning property at Fifth Street and Conley Avenue — where Collegiate Housing Partners wants to build — in July, but there was no mention of infrastructure issues at the time.

In December, City Manager Mike Matthes called for a freeze on downtown development, saying the city needed a downtown tax increment financing district to pay for critical infrastructure improvements. The TIF district effort ended last month when the council rejected a resolution detailing projects that could be funded via proceeds from the proposed district.
Thomas, some of his fellow council members and residents have criticized city leaders for what they consider to be a lack of transparency regarding the push for a TIF district and the process of negotiating the development agreements.

"The frenzied rush to schedule noon-time meetings and squeeze the process into the letter (but not the spirit) of the law, along with the absence of clear explanations to the public about what's going on, has created deep suspicion and opposition," Thomas wrote in his statement.

Third Ward Councilman Karl Skala also supports the development agreement for Collegiate Housing Partners.

He said the company built some political capital last year when it withdrew its proposal to demolish the historic Niedermeyer building at Tenth and Cherry streets.

"They did the right thing," he said.

As for the other two development agreements, Thomas has concerns about both.

Opus is proposing to build a complex with 256 beds on Locust Street between Seventh and Eighth streets.

In his statement, Thomas wrote that Opus' proposed project does not conform to the vision for Eighth Street as laid out in the Sasaki plan and Columbia Imagined, both of which call for more mixed use in the area. The Opus project doesn't include any commercial components.

American Campus Communities is proposing to build a complex with 718 beds on property south and west of the Collegiate Housing Partners project site.

In his statement, Thomas says American Campus Communities has not committed to purchasing bus passes for its tenants and that it is proposing too much parking, which will encourage the use of automobiles.

Skala said he also is not inclined to vote for the American Campus Communities agreement because the company is not buying transit passes.

As for Opus, Skala said he is inclined to support its agreement because he likes the fact that the company plans to market its complex to non-students.

The council will vote on the development agreements at a special meeting scheduled for noon Wednesday.

If the agreements are approved, American Campus Communities and Collegiate Housing Partners would contribute $300,000 and $150,000, respectively, to build connections into a trunk line sewer running along the Flat Branch watershed, and Opus would pay $250,000 to improve water mains and $200,000 for sanitary sewer improvements.
Skala said tomorrow night's public hearing will be a good opportunity to address concerns about the city manager's handling of the situation.

"Nobody knows what page anyone else is on," he said.

In honor of national nutrition month, dietitians share tips for making healthful foods tasty

By Caroline Dohack

Sunday, March 16, 2014 at 2:00 am

Each year, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics declares March National Nutrition Month. This time around, the theme is "Enjoy the Taste of Eating Right."

Although there's no denying the importance of eating well, it's no fun if food doesn't taste good. And let's be real: If it's not fun, you're not going to stick with it for very long.

But, as three local dietitians tell us, tasty doesn't have to mean boring.

MAKE TRYING NEW FOODS FUN FOR THE FAMILY

When it comes to eating well, it's hard to be an army of one. The trick is to get the family involved.
"I think the focus should be on just being healthy, not on, 'Oh, we're going to get rid of this,' or, 'We can't have this anymore.' We want it to be a positive focus," said Elizabeth Freeman, a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator at University of Missouri's Women's and Children's Hospital. "I always encourage moderation. You can still have any food, but it might be something you want to choose less often."

Kristy Lang, a registered dietitian at Boone Hospital Center's diabetes and weight-management office, said getting the kids involved with choosing new foods to try over the course of a week makes it a fun event for everybody.

And with local farmers markets gearing up for operation — the Columbia Farmers Market will move back to its outdoor location behind the ARC on Saturday; the Boone County Farmers Market will get going April 5 at 1005 W. Worley St.; and the North Village Arts District Farmers and Artisans Market will start up at 126 N. Tenth St. on April 27 — there is ample opportunity for trying new tastes.

In addition to the sheer variety of fruits and veggies available, farmers markets are conducive to culinary adventure in other ways.

"Produce always tastes best when it's in season. Every tomato lover on the planet knows this phenomenon: When you cut up a tomato that's mealy on the inside and still kind of white, it's not enticing. When you get things that are in season, it's able to ripen, and it's not being carted from far away. Food is going to taste better," Lang said.

And though summer still is a ways away, there is no shortage of in-season produce to add to the crisper.

"Just coming out of winter, the things that are in season are mostly citrus fruits, leafy greens, some of your winter squash. One of my favorite winter vegetables is butternut squash, and I love to roast it in the oven," said Ashley Ritzo, a clinical dietitian at MU Health Care. "I peel it and dice it up into cubes — you could dice it into shapes similar to french fries — and bake at 415 to 425° degrees "for 25 minutes."

Lang also likes CSA — that's "community-supported agriculture" — boxes, which are weekly pre-assembled packages of locally grown foods. Many farms in the area have their own CSA box subscriptions, and Root Cellar, 1023 E. Walnut St., curates foods from a variety of local producers. Because someone else picks what goes into the box — it might be leeks one week, kohlrabi the next — subscribers are forced to be flexible with their recipes.

**LEARN TO COOK NEW FOODS**

Obviously, finding new fruits and vegetables to try is not an issue. What can be daunting, though, is figuring out what to do with them.

Lang said it's important first to think about your approach to learning and then go from there.
"For those people who really love how-to books and learning new things, I really like Mark Bittman's books. He's written a couple of books called 'How to Cook Everything.' Let's say Lucky's has squash on sale. You decide to bite the bullet and try something new. You can look up the ingredient, how to cook it and then four or five different ingredients," Lang said.

For "the lofty dreamers," Lang loves Pinterest. "You could just search 'healthy asparagus recipes' and find different ways to use them. The big thing I always tell my patients is to pick recipes that match your cooking style. If you're a quick and dirty Rachael Ray cook, don't go to Epicurious or Bon Appétit," she said.

Ritzo said Fruits & Veggies — More Matters, a campaign spearheaded by the Produce for Better Health Foundation, also is a good source of inspiration on its website, www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org.

"They have a pretty big database with fruits and vegetables and lots of tips," Ritzo said.

When looking at recipes, it's OK to dream big. However, Lang said it's also important to dream realistic. At one time or another, we've all chosen some 20-ingredient recipe that necessitated the purchase of several spices we've never used since. That's expensive and discouraging.

"Start with stuff that you have 75 percent of the ingredients that you have at home," Lang said.

Although it's fun to try new recipes, getting too ambitious about it can lead to burnout and pizza delivery. So, instead of looking for five new recipes each week, aim for one or two. As Ritzo pointed out, even one new recipe a week really contributes to a culinary repertoire over time.

And if that recipe isn't a hit? Lang said not to be discouraged.

"Maybe your family didn't like the cooked carrots you made that night, but maybe you find they like raw carrots if you dip them in hummus. Don't rule out a whole vegetable just because of one recipe," Lang said.

It's also possible to train our taste buds, Ritzo said.

"All tastes are pretty much learned tastes. Over time, if you're exposed to a food often enough, you learn to like a food," she said.

**BIG FLAVOR, LOW CALORIES**

It's easy to add flavor without adding a lot of calories.

"Seasoning blends are always great. It kind of takes the guesswork out of what kind of spices to use. If you're not the Emeril or the Bobby Flay of your household and don't know when you're supposed to use marjoram or oregano, I personally like Cavender's Greek seasoning blend," Lang said.
Other options include Jane's Krazy Mixed Up blends and Mrs. Dash's salt-free seasonings.

"I call them magic meal' because I'll take a piece of fish or chicken and just kind of sprinkle that, give it a good toss with the seasoning and put it in the oven. It adds a lot of flavor without having to do a lot of thinking," Lang said.

For salads, vinaigrettes are generally lower in calories than other dressings, though Lang points out that the sweeter ones still will be high in sugar.

Ritzo also likes to work with alternative condiments, swapping olive tapenade or pesto for mayonnaise or salsa for salad dressing.

**PLANNING AND PREP**

Planning ahead is an important part of sticking to goals.

"If you stick to the things that you're always making, you get into that habit of just doing the same things over and over, and that's when people veer off and eat out a little more often," Ritzo said.

Freeman said when she goes to the store, she makes sure to look for healthful but easy-to-prepare foods she knows everyone in her family will eat. For example, she likes to stock up on steam-in-the-bag frozen vegetables at Sam's Club. Cherry tomatoes and cucumbers are staples for her daughter's lunchbox, and the standard apples, bananas, grapes and berries are the snack of choice.

Lang said she likes to spend part of the weekend prepping for the rest of the week.

"Maybe on the Sundays when you're really ambitious, cook some kind of protein, double it and use it the rest of the week. I roasted a chicken on Sunday in my Crock-Pot. The bigger chunks I am having just as lunch. Toward the end of the week, I'll make chicken salad," Lang said.

Ground beef or ground turkey also are versatile.

"Do a taco night, do hamburgers, do spaghetti," Lang said.

Some vegetables, including potatoes, carrots, onions, Brussels sprouts and parsnips, also lend themselves well to roasting ahead of time and reheating, Lang said.

And if time-savers mean better eating, that's OK.

"Sometimes I spend the extra money to buy something that is already ready," Freeman said.

When it comes to sticking to a plan, sometimes seeing is believing.
"Write out the meals you are planning to do for the week. Then on Thursday when you look in the refrigerator, 'Oh yeah, we were going to make tacos with the leftover turkey meat and other half of the head of lettuce. I just have to cut up some tomatoes,' " Lang said.

**DRINK MORE WATER**

It's true that you are what you eat, but the liquids you consume also matter.

Limiting sweet drinks, including sodas, sweet tea, Kool-Aid and sports drinks, is an easy way to eliminate extra calories and sugar from the diet.

"I always really encourage water. Sometimes we think we're hungry, but really we're just dehydrated," Freeman said.

The amount of water one should consume is based on a number of factors, including weight and activity level, but Freeman said 6 to 8 cups per day is a general rule of thumb.

For those who don't like water, a slice of lemon or cucumber can add a bit of flavor. Another option is to add part of a Crystal Light packet and gradually reduce the amount so that you can wean yourself from flavored beverages, Freeman said.

**EXERCISE**

Oh, sure, you might think National Nutrition Month is about food. But food is fuel for the body, so using that fuel still is important. Freeman said the general recommendation is to get about an hour of activity a day.

"Even if they can get up and take a 10-minute walk a couple of times a day," Freeman said.

**FROM READERS: African-American women are beautiful, have value**

Monday, March 17, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT
BY BRITTANY KING/MISSOURIAN READER

Brittany King is a junior communications major at MU. She also is the co-founder of Anti-MU 22, an organization on campus that encourages students to love their bodies and themselves.
I am a black woman, but that’s not all I am. I’m stubborn, I’m loud, I’m a writer, I’m independent and I’m beautiful.

It’s not often you hear twenty-something black women in college proclaiming how beautiful they are. Do we exist? Absolutely, but that doesn’t mean we still don’t have our insecurities.

Yes, I am black, I am also a woman, but I am not the face of every black woman everywhere and this submission is not a compiled list of the way all black woman in college feel.

Growing up, I was a beauty pageant brat. I knew I was beautiful because the judges and trophies I won told me I was. A lot of people are quick to judge and ask parents how they could put their child through long days like that, but I loved it. I loved every minute of it. I think it’s where I got my competitive spirit from. I wanted to win, I needed to win. So during my childhood I never even questioned if my skin color was beautiful, or if it meant that I was worthy of winning a beauty pageant or becoming famous or anything like that. My color was not a problem and the people around me didn’t find it to be problematic either.

It actually wasn’t until I got to college that I started to question whether or not I really was beautiful, whether black women in general were beautiful. In fact, I didn’t just wonder if I was beautiful enough for society’s standards, I wondered if I was strong enough, and smart enough to rise above the majority in anything I did on MU’s campus.

I’m attracted to men from different walks of life and colors, but they do not seem attracted to me. Not only that, but being black seemed toxic. When I would apply for jobs and go in for the interview, managers would try to hold back the shocked looks on their faces. As if a black woman couldn’t be named Brittany and have a phone conversation without “sounding black,” insinuating that my qualifications were no longer valid because of my skin color. I hate it. I’m followed around in stores, ignored by classmates and overlooked by guys saying, “I’m not really into your kind,” as if we’re all the same (spoiler alert: we’re not).

It’s funny because with all of that mistreatment, people from outside the black community still question why we need programs such as “Black Women Rock,” why Lupita Nyong’o winning an Oscar was such a big deal for black women from all over the world. I’ll tell you why: because we aren’t supported. We can’t get upset or loud without
being called ghetto, we can’t just simply work hard to earn our 4.0, we must have cheated. Because even when one of us gives the performance of our life in a movie that brought in over $140 million, Twitter still explodes with tweets about how Jennifer Lawrence should have won and the editors at People Magazine give Matthew McConaughey the post-Oscars cover and Nyong’o a tiny sidebar.

The truth is, according to the Pew Research Center, black women are enrolling in college at a higher rate than any other race or gender. Oh, and this might come as a surprise, we’re graduating. We’re becoming doctors and lawyers and journalists and actresses and we still aren’t seeing the respect we deserve. We’re typecast as the girl that sleeps around, the girl that has a baby out of wedlock and can’t pay the rent as if we’re the only ones, as if black women in those situations can’t bounce back and turn it around. I’m sick of it.

My skin color is not a problem that needs to be corrected with lightening creams; it’s not something that fits into one of the three shades offered in the makeup aisle. My hair is not something that needs to be tamed by a hot comb or covered by a wig. I don’t "speak well for a black girl," and I’m not "cute for a black girl," either.

We are strong, beautiful, smart woman and I don’t say that to say that other women aren’t, I say it because we need to hear it. We deserve to hear it.
COLUMBIA — Residents of East Campus popped open champagne Sunday afternoon to celebrate the unveiling of the first of four neighborhood gateway sculptures.

The sculpture is an eight foot-tall metal pillar, with "East Campus" written down each side and features a writing quill bisecting a letter C to make it both an "E" and a "C."

**The artist who created the sculpture, Don Asbee, said the quill on top of the sculpture is meant to show the neighborhood's connection to MU and knowledge.** The sculpture is located at the corner of Cliff Drive and South Ann Street.

Asbee said he wanted it to have a classical look, which involved "blacksmithing" to create.

"I wanted it to look like something that had been here a while," he said.

Asbee also said there are three more identical sculptures that will hopefully be up by the end of the week — two mirrored sculptures at the eastern corners of the University and College Avenue intersection and one at the corner of William Street and Bouchelle Avenue.

East Campus Neighborhood Association member Betty Wilson thought the gateway was important to the neighborhood because it showed an appreciation of the arts and reminds people that East Campus is historically a neighborhood of university faculty. Wilson said the project was funded through the neighborhood association's treasury and its dues.

Although East Campus is historically a faculty neighborhood, many students currently live there, too.

"We like living in a mixed neighborhood," resident David Mehr said. "It keeps things interesting."
Although he is not always a fan of late night fireworks and lawns littered with beer bottles, Mehr has made friends with many of the students that live nearby him.

Rachel Brekhus, secretary of the neighborhood association, said she would even like to see some of the student residents be a part of the association.

Neighborhood association chair Janet Hammen also thinks the project would serve as an example to other neighborhoods, as many other gateway projects have started to spring up for Stephens College and downtown.

With its proximity to MU's campus, the neighborhood is heavily populated by students and faculty and their families. East Campus resident Ann Mehr thinks the sculptures encapsulate the feel of the neighborhood.

"I think there is a good sense of the neighborhood identity through these sculptures that will carry on for the next generation," Mehr said.