A recent study painted a dreary picture for women on America’s college campuses. One in five, it said, will suffer sexual assault while in college. Getting drunk makes them more vulnerable to attacks. That makes parties prime hunting grounds for sexual predators, who often know the women they rape.

The January report by the White House Council on Women and Girls found a cadre of particularly dangerous men. Two-thirds of admitted rapists told researchers they’d raped six women each.

Against that backdrop, Sen. Claire McCaskill said Thursday that her staff has launched a national survey of college campuses to see what protections against sexual attacks are in place and how the institutions support women coming forward after assaults.

Meanwhile, the University of Missouri is contemplating changes to its employee policies for sexual violence in the wake of the suicide of a former swimmer. She was the alleged victim of an off-campus rape by as many as three football players in 2010.

Campus rape has drawn increased national attention. California lawmakers are considering rules requiring college officials to take rape cases to police.

Schools already have begun to attack the problem, even as federal officials cite increased violations of Title IX. That portion of the Civil Rights Act ensures women have equal access to a higher education — including safety on campus.

The University of Colorado and California State University-Fresno recently were forced to pay millions stemming from Title IX lawsuits filed by assault victims.

McCaskill, a Missouri Democrat, ushered a bill through the Senate this month that looks to rework the prosecution of sexual assault cases in the
military. She met recently with MU officials and said she’s determined to make college campuses safer for women.

That might mean tying federal funding for colleges and universities to how well those institutions report rapes and deliver certain services to female students, she said.

“It’s never a good idea to minimize this problem because you’re worried how it might look,” McCaskill told The Star’s editorial board Thursday. “We’ll look to see if we should require, in return for federal funds, some kind of minimal reporting standards and minimal services available.”

On Thursday, University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe received an inventory he ordered campus leaders to conduct on all the resources available to students regarding campus sex crimes.

It’s the first phase of a three-pronged initiative to prevent sexual violence, improve reporting of sexual assault and rape and bolster the process for handling complaints.

“This is a top priority for me and the entire system,” Wolfe said, “since the suicide of Sasha Menu Courey” — the deceased swimmer and purported rape victim.

Wolfe and University of Missouri curators are still waiting for results from an independent counsel investigation judging how the university dealt with Menu Courey. The university learned about the sexual assault allegation after her death. That report, Wolfe said, will be made public April 10.

Wolfe has said he’s prepared to throw university money behind any needed improvements.

In Columbia, MU announced this week it’s considering a policy for training faculty and staff on how to handle reports of sexual harassment or violence. Both are covered by Title IX.

Michael Bates, the Title IX coordinator at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, welcomed McCaskill’s focus on sexual assault on college campuses. He thinks sex crimes are underreported by students at UMKC.

“If they (become) aware of all the avenues that are available to them,” Bates said, “that may bring more reporting.”

In working to overhaul the handling of sexual assault cases in the military, McCaskill came under fire from fellow Senate Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, who had pressed competing legislation. Gillibrand’s bill, unlike McCaskill’s, would have taken
authority over prosecutions of such cases out of the hands of military commanders.

Gillibrand’s measure stalled, partly because of a filibuster by McCaskill.

McCaskill now wants to shine more attention on what colleges do to protect their students against sexual attacks.

“Hopefully, legislation won’t be necessary,” the senator said. “Hopefully, we can do this through a large national effort.”

After her staff completes its research, McCaskill said, she plans to gather college presidents, the Association of University Women and others in higher education to create a consensus for reforms.

“Many times a sexual assault occurs in an environment where (victims) do way too much self-blaming and they shouldn’t,” she said. “No one, just because you had too much to drink, no one deserves to get criminally assaulted.”

In Warrensburg, University of Central Missouri police chief Kim Vansell said the school recently ramped up its “effort looking at how we handle victims who report, how we handle offenders and our process.”

She said many sexual assaults go unreported partly because the “criminal justice system in general is not victim-friendly.”

“I welcome anyone looking at the process,” Vansell said. “Are we doing things effectively? Are we doing the right thing for campus safety, and is it the right thing for the victim?”

Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/2014/03/20/4904693/mccaskill-mu-look-to-curb-campus.html#storylink=cpy
MU LOOKS TO REVISE SEX ASSAULT REPORTING RULES

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The University of Missouri is considering changes to its employee policy for reporting suspected sexual violence amid the fallout from the suicide of a former swimmer.

The parents of Sasha Menu Courey have said their daughter killed herself 16 months after an alleged off-campus rape by as many as three football players in February 2010. School officials have said they didn’t learn about the attack until after Menu Courey’s death but have hired an outside law firm to review the university’s response. No charges were filed.

The university has no reporting requirement and offers no training for faculty or staff on how to handle possible violations of Title IX, a federal anti-discrimination law covering sexual harassment and violence, the Columbia Missourian reported. The federal education department recommended such a requirement nearly three years ago.

“There needs to be clear guidelines for what we as faculty do when this happens,” said Joan Hermsen, chairwoman of the department of women’s and gender studies.

Noel English, the campus Title IX coordinator, said the Columbia campus is finalizing a policy that mandates certain “required reporters” inform the university of student complaints. Reporting requirements also are under review at the system’s campuses in Kansas City, Rolla and St. Louis.

“We are doing our best to come up with a policy that fulfills the institution’s obligations under Title IX while not deterring individuals from seeking assistance from those they trust,” she said. “We are concerned about the possibility that students will feel less inclined to seek help because of the reporting requirement.”

The University of Louisville is among the schools that have implemented a required reporting mandate for possible Title IX violations. Any employee in a supervisory or management role and any faculty member supervising programs that include direct contact with students outside of the classroom are covered by the policy, said Mary Elizabeth Miles, Louisville’s associate Title IX administrator.
“This is such a complicated and gray area, but we tried to make our policy as clear to our faculty, staff and students as possible,” Miles said. “Our mandatory reporters tell the student upfront they will have to make a report, but that doesn’t mean the student has to be a part of an investigation or loses control of the situation.”
Residents of Tara Apartments at the University of Missouri received email notices Thursday morning that their back decks will be sealed off until likely the end of next week while structural engineers "look at them a little more closely," MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

The Tara Apartment complex, on Ashland Road near Stadium Boulevard, is for graduate students, married students, those with children and those who are older than 21. The complex was constructed between 1982 and 1984.

Basi said the engineers hope to finish evaluating the decks by the end of next week, which is spring break. Any suggested actions would be taken afterward.

Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc. is the structural engineering company that has been examining all of the university buildings during the last month after a partial walkway collapse Feb. 22 at MU's University Village apartments that killed Lt. Bruce Britt of the Columbia Fire Department. The university announced last week that the University Village apartments and the Student Parent Center housed in the same complex will be demolished this summer.

Basi said the company is almost finished inspecting all of the university-owned buildings in Columbia. All of the MU Extension offices, barns and any other off-site facilities also will be inspected.

After the walkway collapse at University Village, THH Inc. inspected all university-owned residential buildings and prepared a report dated Feb. 23. In that report, the engineers note that no distress was found on the back decks of the building, but there were "isolated areas" where "the end connection is irregular." The company did some work on one unit at Tara, but no other problems were observed, and there was "no need for remedial action."

Colin Chastain, an MU student who is subleasing in the Tara Apartment complex, said he thinks it's "a good thing" that the university is inspecting the decks after what happened at University Village.

"I was hoping to renew for next year," but the university is saving spots at Tara for University Village students whose apartments will be demolished, Chastain said. Temporarily closing the back balconies doesn't bother him.

The MU Graduate Professional Council will host two forums on issues related to University Village after spring break. The council has scheduled a forum about child care for graduate and professional students from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 2. This forum addresses concerns some students with children have about their day care options after the Student Parent Center at University Village is demolished in June. MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin assigned several groups, including the graduate council, to gauge the need for another day care center and report back to him.

The second forum is from 7:30 to 10 p.m. April 3 and will address housing for graduate and professional students. Both forums are open to the public.
MU to seal off rear decks at Tara Apartments

Thursday, March 20, 2014 | 2:08 p.m. CDT; updated 7:22 p.m. CDT, Thursday, March 20, 2014

COLUMBIA — Almost a month after the walkway collapse at University Village, MU has told residents of Tara Apartments that it is sealing off access to the complex's rear decks.

An engineering firm, Trabue, Hansen and Hinshaw Inc., completed an inspection of buildings on campus after the University Village collapse in February. MU spokesperson Christian Basi said the engineering firm took a closer look at the Tara Apartments and recommended the decks be sealed off as a precaution to get detailed look at the decks. The decks will be sealed off Friday and evaluations will begin next week. Engineers will evaluate the decks for signs of weathering, according to an email sent to Tara residents Thursday that was forwarded to the Missourian.

"We are sealing those decks off so that residents will not access the deck," Basi said. "It will allow engineers to finish by next Friday."
Brackets will be used to secure the storm doors leading to the decks on the second and third floors. The decks will be accessible only in the case of an emergency, the email said. Basi said sealing the decks now would be less disruptive for residents as classes end for MU’s spring break.

Tara Apartments is one of four university-owned apartment complexes, including University Village, designed to house graduate students and students with families. The 16-building complex is located off Stadium Boulevard on Ashland Road. It was built between 1982 and 1984, Basi wrote in an email Thursday.

MU does not perform regularly-scheduled structural inspections of its buildings, according to previous Missourian reporting. The buildings are checked by maintenance workers during routine work requests made by residents, Basi said in February.

NEW CHANCELLOR SEeks to Protect Missouri Brand

By MARA ROSE WILLIAMS

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — About 1 p.m. Friday in the University of Missouri Student Union, the Missouri 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 Missouri’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 Missouri. He’s so new that unpacked boxes still fill a corner in his office on the first floor of Jesse Hall.

Loftin had planned to return to the classroom after leaving the A&M presidency, but when the Missouri 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 campus are taking some type of online course. About 3,000 online learners are seeking a degree from a distance.

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

"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. 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 Missouri'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. 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 — 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."
Bow-tied: MU chancellor speaks up
Q&A with MU's favorite Twitter celebrity

BY ADRIENNE DONICA
MARCH 20, 2014 | 12:00 A.M. CST

He's personable and outgoing, but don't let his many lighthearted tweets fool you — R. Bowen Loftin is serious about higher education. He has devoted nearly 40 years of his life to it.

The new chancellor was once the director of the NASA Virtual Environments Research Institute at the University of Houston. Photo courtesy of Christian Basi

He took office as MU’s 22nd chancellor less than two months ago. Since then, MU has made headlines with controversial events such as the Sasha Menu Courey investigation, Michael Sam announcing he is gay and a structural collapse at University Village that killed Lt. Bruce Britt, a local firefighter.

“He’s had some tough issues to deal with since he’s arrived, and I think he’s dealt with them very well,” says Cathy Scroggs, MU’s vice chancellor for student affairs.

Missouri Student Association President Mason Schara says Loftin is interested in getting to know the students he represents. “He’s very approachable, which I think, when it comes to chancellors, you don’t get very often,” Schara says.

Loftin’s interest in education has been constant over the years, and it’s his dedication to students that allows him to focus on his long-range goals and deal with challenges as they come.
What was your dream job when you were growing up?
At about age 16, I had this crystallizing time when I thought, “I want to be a college professor.” I’m not sure where it came from; probably reading a book gave me an image or an impression that said, “This might fit me.” That was the first time I had clarity about where I wanted to go, and it never really diminished, which is unusual for a teenager, I suspect.

How would you characterize your leadership style?
I try to empower people to do their jobs. I don’t want to do their jobs for them, and that was hard for me to learn. I’m a perfectionist by nature. I like things to be just right. It was a hard transition. When I worked with people at the NASA Johnson Space Center near Houston ... I began to realize I was the least important person in the room, and that’s what I’ve tried to remember. That guides me every day.

What is something people would be surprised to learn about you?
I think they’re surprised by the fact that I’m an only child. People have a perception that only children are introverted. Because you don’t have siblings to squabble with or interact with, maybe you don’t have the social skills that would come from that family arrangement. But I’m pretty extroverted. I like people, and I’m fairly easy to get along with, so I don’t think that’s a problem for me.

When you stepped down as president of Texas A&M, you had plans to return to teaching and research. What convinced you to come to MU instead?
I was debating on whether to say yes or not, and that’s when the A&M-Missouri game happened in November. I came here to the game and saw the east side of your stadium was all students, and I thought, “Wow, I never knew that.” Any place else in the SEC or anywhere else, where do the students sit? They’re in the end zone or the corners. That kind of made my decision happen right there. I was pretty close to saying yes anyway, but really I was pushed over the edge by the recognition of how respected students are here. It does give you a sense of the character of the university and its priorities, and my priorities have always been for students.

American Campus Communities deal tabled because of questions about electricity

By ANDREW DENNEY
The Columbia City Council voted Wednesday to table a development agreement with the Austin, Texas-based American Campus Communities to build a 718-bed complex near the University of Missouri campus until the second week in May, but city staff said that won’t buy enough time to solve the infrastructure problems preventing the project from proceeding.

City staff had recommended the council deny the proposed agreement with American Campus Communities because of a late change to the estimate of how much electricity the development would need. The agreement called for American Campus Communities to contribute $300,000 to build a connection to a trunk sewer line.

The firm wants to construct two buildings located immediately west and south of an apartment complex the St. Louis-based Collegiate Housing Partners was cleared to build at Turner Avenue and Fourth and Fifth streets.

On Monday, Deputy City Manager Tony St. Romaine said American Campus Communities originally projected it would need about 2.5 megawatts of electrical capacity, but the developer told the city last week that it would need 5 megawatts, which he said far exceeds what can now be provided at the location.

City Manager Mike Matthes asked Robert Hollis, an attorney for the developer, whether it would be better if American Campus Communities withdrew the agreement so the firm would not be beholden to an "arbitrary" date.

Hollis said that although it is unlikely a fix for downtown infrastructure will be found by the second meeting in May, the developer needs to know by April 1 if there is at least a way to move forward with the project. If so, American Campus Communities can come back to the table to discuss the development agreement and a rezoning request it needs to proceed with its project.

"If there’s a solution with regard to how the project can move forward under the development agreement — great," Hollis said. "If not, we’ll be gone before that."

Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas said the vote should be held up further to prevent the council from making any hasty decisions and to allow time to restore "public confidence" and "trust" in city leaders.

McDavid said he supports the idea of building housing for more than 700 students near the MU campus rather than away from campus. He said the hold-up for the developer is a "math and physics problem for which we don't have a solution" and that solving deficiencies for electric capacity downtown will likely take a few years.

"We have a moratorium in place right now," McDavid said. "We all know that."

The council voted 6-1 to table the development agreement, with Thomas casting the dissenting vote.
Council approves development agreements for two projects

By ANDREW DENNEY

At a special meeting Wednesday, the Columbia City Council approved development agreements to allow the construction of two new apartment complexes near the University of Missouri campus that the city has been holding up as it looks for ways to fund downtown infrastructure improvements.

In return for the green light to build, Collegiate Housing Partners will pay $150,000 to build connections into a trunk sewer line running along the Flat Branch watershed, and The Opus Group will pay $250,000 to improve water mains and $200,000 for sanitary sewer improvements. All told, Collegiate Housing Partners is estimated to spend about $763,000 for the infrastructure improvements and various fees, and Opus is expected to spend about $920,000.

The vote on the Collegiate Housing Partners deal was unanimous. Before voting to support the agreement, Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas noted the city's Public Works Department does not currently have a plan in place to pay for a new trunk line sewer running through the Flat Branch Creek watershed that city staff says is needed to serve more growth in the downtown area. The new trunk line is estimated to cost about $7 million.

But Thomas said the company's willingness to pay for sewer improvements amounts to a "symbolic gesture" that "developers are willing to pay more and to essentially start the phasing in of a new paradigm" for paying for infrastructure improvements.

Council members also were sympathetic to the fact that Collegiate Housing Partners began working with the city more than a year ago, which put it first in line of the three developers with agreements before the council. The council approved a rezoning request for the Collegiate Housing Partners project in July.
Third Ward Councilman Karl Skala said although he supported the project, he did not approve of city administrators' decision to rush the three development agreements through via special meetings.

"I do not like this compressed and expedited process," Skala said. "I don't like the idea of having noon meetings."

The council voted 4-3 to approve agreement with Opus, with Mayor Bob McDavid, First Ward Councilman Fred Schmidt, Second Ward Councilman Michael Trapp and Fifth Ward Councilwoman Laura Nauser voting in favor of the agreement. Skala, Thomas and Sixth Ward Councilwoman Barbara Hoppe opposed the deal.

The council unanimously approved an amendment to the agreement before the vote stating that Opus would commit to purchasing 118 bus passes for its residents.

Before voting against the agreement, Hoppe reiterated the point that the city doesn't have a plan in place to pay for a new trunk line sewer. While she voted for the Collegiate Housing Partners project, which would be served by the same sewer line, she said it was "first in line, first served" in terms of getting its project approved and suggested the council "draw the line" at Opus.

"I feel very ethical, legal and fair drawing the line at Opus," Hoppe said.

Schmidt said before he voted in favor of the Opus agreement that he was pleased with the look and the details of the project and by the fact the developer has agreed to contribute to infrastructure improvements.

"I believe it is very consistent with what we want in the future if we waited," Schmidt said. "I see no reason to wait."

Residents and council members have said city management has not been transparent in its negotiations with developers and its talks on how to pay for downtown infrastructure.

The Downtown Leadership Council last month formed a subcommittee to explore new funding sources for upgrading downtown infrastructure. It has a meeting at 5 p.m. today at City Hall, and Brent Gardner, chairman of the Downtown Leadership Council, said it likely will recommend the Downtown Leadership Council host public input sessions on the topic. A timeframe has not been discussed, he said. "The sooner the better," Gardner said.

The Downtown Leadership Council's next meeting is Tuesday.

*This article was published in the Thursday, March 20, 2014 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Two deals are given the OK; Developers will pay for updates."*
Building A Pipeline Of Doctors To Help The Shortage In Missouri's Rural Communities

BY ROBERT JOINER

Part three of three

For someone who was clueless about what he wanted to do after finishing high school, Luke Stephens has done quite well in life.

He's now Dr. Luke Stephens, with a degree in cell and molecular biology from Missouri State University in 2004, and a medical degree from the University of Missouri at Columbia.

Stephens, who is in his early 30s, is a primary care doctor who specializes in rural medicine. He’s the product of a special University of Missouri program that trains more doctors to help Missouri plug some of the holes in its
primary care system in rural communities. He practices in Fulton, serving many patients in rural communities near the town.

In a state with more than 5,000 primary care doctors, it would seem easy to find at least one to set up practice in each rural county that has none. But the experience of the UM Rural Track Pipeline Program, of which Stephens was a part, shows how difficult it can be to recruit and train doctors for rural assignments, said Kathleen Quinn, who helps coordinate the UM program.

Fifteen years ago, the university committed to set aside 15 slots a year for what became known as the Rural Track Pipeline Program. Unfortunately, Quinn said, only about nine of those slots are filled each year.

The relatively low participation rate is due in part to a requirement that participating students must come from rural communities and are encouraged to return to rural areas to set up practices. Rural upbringings are part of the requirement, Quinn said, because researchers have found that such students are more likely to want to settle in a rural community after med school.

“A lot of times, some students from rural areas don’t think about becoming physicians,” Quinn said. “They might not have a physician role model in their town; they may not have a lot of advanced course work at their high school.”

Some of the recruits, like Stephens, learn about the program by accident. He admitted being “pretty uncertain about what I was going to do” after high school. The answer began to take shape the day he spotted a flier about the medical school program during a visit to his mother's office, a counselor at his high school in Iberia, Mo., population 600.

Perhaps the pamphlet caught his eye because it called attention to his small-town roots, mentioning that rural students like him could be part of a pre-admissions program that put them on the path to study medicine and increase the supply of doctors in rural communities.

“It’s one of those things where you find people with natural attractions to small towns and want to go back to small towns,” Stephens said of the program. “You feel comfortable with that setting.”

Quinn said she hopes to have an easier time finding recruits now that UM has expanded the number of universities involved in the pre-admissions program. The seven additional schools include the University of Missouri campuses at St. Louis and Kansas City.

Still unclear is how many rural students attend these universities and how many of them will be interested in careers in rural medicine. Quinn said she hopes the experience these students have in the pre-admissions program, “in medical school, and in going into rural areas to learn medical care will make them fall in love with it a want to go back to rural areas and practice it.”

The program has shown mixed results so far. Quinn said that about 57 percent of students who take part in the program decided to return to rural communities to practice medicine. That compares to only about 20 percent of medical students in general having an interest in rural medicine. The findings, Quinn said, suggest that the university’s program has made a difference even if it hasn’t met its recruitment goals each year.

Not the only game in town
A different strategy for adding students to the family medicine pipeline is occurring at Saint Louis University. It is partnering with in the St. Louis area with SSM St. Mary’s and the Family Care Health Center. The partnership is training about a dozen medical residents for family medicine careers, said Dr. F. David Schneider, chair of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Saint Louis University.

He pointed to another trend in the effort to encourage more doctors to go to rural areas. Several places are building medical schools closer to rural communities to attract more rural students. An example is Salina, Kan., where the University of Kansas opened a medical school in 2011 with a class of eight students. All are getting training in Salina, with free tuition and monthly stipends in return for starting careers in rural communities, Schneider said.

Across the river, SLU has a partnership with the U.S. Air Force to train about 42 residents. Schneider noted that SLU’s program wants to focus on people who want to stay in the metropolitan area. Some in the Air Force program will return here once they complete their military obligations. He said it’s conceivable that some residents in both programs might decide to work in underserved areas outside of cities.

Schneider said more patients will have access to care through the Affordable Care Act, and that Missouri needs to develop more data to figure out how many additional primary care doctors it will need.

“We know that people get better care sooner if they have health insurance,” he said. “They don’t wait until medical problems become dire if they have access to primary care.”

**The physical and economic cost of the doctor shortage**

That comment brings clarity to the relationship between poor health and longevity among women in particular. The Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington issued a report that mentions that life expectancy actually dropped between 1997 and 2007 among women in 34 Missouri counties, 27 of them rural.

Findings like these show the need for Missouri to pay more attention to the consequences of poverty and the doctor shortage in rural communities, said Martha Ray, a community services specialist with Central Missouri Community Action.

She mentioned several examples of the consequence of poverty and inadequate health services for children. She said school officials in her service area have told her that “many children, due to the family’s financial issues, who do not have access to the required sports physicals” and that are needed to take part in school sports.

Likewise, she said, “counselors tell us many of the children don’t have state-supported health care because the parents are unable to complete the application process due to literacy issues.”

Ray said a top school official “tells us that normal health screenings are not available to many of the children because their parents have transportation issues.”

Beyond the impact on people's health, there is an economic toll when rural communities lack doctors, according to the Missouri Hospital Association. A single doctor practicing in a rural county can be expected to generate an average of $1.2 million in annual revenue and 23 jobs. The loss of even a half-time doctor translates “into a community loss of more than half a million dollars and 14 jobs,” the association said.
To my fellow University of Missouri students, athletes, faculty, alumni and supporters:

From my first recruiting trip to the University of Missouri, I felt something extraordinary and special — something I didn't feel anywhere else.

I didn't have a name for it then; I do now. It's called family.

And to me that family is defined by unconditional love.

Certainly you cheered my successes, but you also picked me up when I fell.

Maybe most importantly, you gave me a chance to live my truth without judgment, without hesitation and with great discretion and respect.

When I came out last month, I did it with the confidence that my Mizzou "family" would always be there for me.

To put it mildly, the love and acceptance I felt was amazing.
The day after the announcement, my name was spelled out in the stadium; fraternities hung #StandWithSam banners; then when I went to the basketball game to honor the football team's Cotton Bowl victory, I worked hard not to cry because of the amazing reception.

I have a long journey ahead of me, a lot of hard work and many dreams I want to fulfill. But I do it with the confidence that my Mizzou family will be there for me every step of the way.

I will continue to work my hardest; I will strive to make you all proud.

And I will be a Tiger forever.

Love,

Michael

Michael Sam thanks University of Missouri for support in touching open letter

By Nina Mandell

In a letter printed in the Columbia Missourian on Thursday, former Missouri football player Michael Sam wrote a heartfelt thanks to his fellow students and the university for supporting him throughout his career.
and when he announced earlier this year that he is gay. Sam, the SEC Defensive Player of the Year, is expected to be the first openly gay football player in the NFL next season.

An excerpt from the letter, which you can read in its entirety here:

When I came out last month, I did it with the confidence that my Mizzou “family” would always be there for me.

To put it mildly, the love and acceptance I felt was amazing.

The day after the announcement, my name was spelled out in the stadium; fraternities hung #StandWithSam banners; then when I went to the basketball game to honor the football team’s Cotton Bowl victory, I worked hard not to cry because of the amazing reception.

I have a long journey ahead of me, a lot of hard work and many dreams I want to fulfill. But I do it with the confidence that my Mizzou family will be there for me every step of the way.

It is not the first time Sam has shown his deep appreciation for the university and its fans. After hundreds of students showed up before a basketball game to block protesters from the Westboro Baptist Church, he greeted the adoring crowd with a signature fist pump and cheer. He also has taken to Twitter to thank the community for its support often.

The letter was published the same day that Sam improved significantly on his 40-yard dash at Missouri’s pro day.

HOBBY LOBBY LAWYER STARTS MISSOURI ADVOCACY GROUP

Retailer is challenging a federal contraception coverage mandate before the U.S. Supreme Court.

By JORDAN SHAPIRO Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY • An attorney representing Oklahoma-based arts and crafts chain Hobby Lobby in its challenge of a federal contraception coverage mandate launched a nonprofit group in Missouri on Thursday that will focus on the issues of religious liberty and constitutional rights.
University of Missouri law professor Joshua Hawley is part of the legal team representing Hobby Lobby that is scheduled to argue its case before the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday. The company sued to overturn a federal mandate that requires most employers to provide health insurance that includes birth control.

Hawley said the new group, the Missouri Liberty Project, will focus on raising awareness about religious liberty and constitutional rights issues. He filed the registration paperwork Thursday with the Missouri secretary of state’s office.

“These are issues I am very passionate about and want to bring attention to Missourians,” he said. “People are worried about the Constitution and feel like it is being threatened.”

Hobby Lobby is challenging the federal mandate because the CEO says it would violate his religious beliefs to pay for contraception coverage for his employees.

Hawley, a former clerk to Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., said he does not expect his group to donate campaign funds to individual candidates. Instead, he said the nonprofit group will host public awareness events and lectures around the state to educate people on constitutional issues.

Hobby Lobby is asking the court to decide whether businesses may use religious objections to exempt themselves from birth control coverage.

Under the health care law, most insurance plans have to cover approved contraceptives as preventive care for women. Churches and other houses of worship are exempt from the birth control requirement, but affiliated institutions, including charitable organizations, universities and hospitals, are not.

The government came up with a compromise that requires insurers or health plan administrators to provide birth control coverage but allows the religious group to distance itself from that action.

New museum director will start in April

By JACOB BARKER

Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Chris Campbell is leaving the Missouri Symphony Society after a year as its executive director and taking the helm at Boone County Museum and Galleries.
Campbell, a veteran of the entertainment industry who was an events producer in Lexington and formerly worked as an executive at Paramount Pictures, confirmed he was leaving his position at the Symphony Society at the end of March. He plans to start as executive director of Boone County Museum and Galleries, overseen by the Boone County Historical Society, on April 1. Campbell declined to discuss the reason for his departure.

The move was not "totally unexpected," said Lili Vianello, president of the Missouri Symphony Society board. The board received Campbell's letter of resignation Monday, she said, and it met Tuesday to discuss filling the position.

"We do have a plan that we're going to move forward with. … We want to take due diligence and make sure we find the right person for the position," Vianello said. "The board is going to step up and fill any gaps that might be evident."

**Campbell took over at the symphony in February 2013, about 18 months after the University of Missouri entered into a contract to lease the Missouri Theatre, which is owned by the Missouri Symphony Society. The theater reopened in 2008 after a huge renovation campaign, but it left the society roughly $10 million in debt. After it opened, contractors began filing liens against the society, and the theater at one point closed temporarily.**

The university stepped in during the summer of 2011, agreeing to lease the Missouri Theatre for $12,000 a month.

MU now operates the theater, though the deal has given the symphony the opportunity to resume regular events. The contract also gives MU the option to purchase the building this year for $3.7 million.

At the historical society, the former executive director, Jenifer Flink, resigned in November, said Dick Otto, president of the board. He declined to elaborate.

Campbell applied for the job when the board listed it, Otto said. "We ended up with a number of very good applicants and brought in four of them, the best four on paper," Otto said. "Chris was the outstanding one in that group."

Reporter Jodie Jackson contributed to this story.

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**MU AG ECONOMIST PREDICTS VOLATILE YEARS AHEAD FOR CORN, SOYBEANS**

By Tim Barker tbarker@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8350
University of Missouri agriculture economist Pat Westhoff is predicting volatile corn and soybean prices over the next five years, accompanied by a 24 percent drop in net farm income next year.

Last year was one of the strongest years for farms since the 1970s, with income topping $130 billion.

Westhoff is the director of the University of Missouri Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute.

The organization's projections call for corn prices to drop to $4 per bushel and soybeans to fall to $10 per bushel. He characterized the projections as being “more pessimistic than a year ago” but more optimistic than those from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Westhoff’s projections are part the research institute's recent briefing booklet for the agriculture and biofuel markets.

Institute to host sports injury talk

Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The Missouri Orthopaedic Institute is hosting a free seminar next month to raise awareness and educate families on treatment of youth baseball and softball injuries.

The seminar is scheduled for 7 to 8 p.m. April 17 in the fourth-floor conference room of the Institute, 1100 Virginia Ave.

Aaron Gray, a sports medicine physician and assistant professor of family and community medicine at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, and Sumit Gupta, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon and assistant professor of orthopedic surgery, are co-presenting the seminar called "Knowledge Now Youth Sports: Preventing and Treating Injuries in Youth Baseball and Softball."

The presentation is part of the institute's Knowledge Now series.

Registration is required. Anyone interested in attending can register by calling 573-882-3104.