Loftin, student groups spend spring break on Capitol Hill

By Ashley Jost

Sunday, March 30, 2014 at 2:00 am

University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin spent the better part of his spring break on Capitol Hill, as did a handful of students.

The primary goal of Loftin's trip, he said, was to get acquainted with Missouri's national representation, as those "relationships are very critical."

During his time there, he met with the entire Missouri delegation — eight representatives and two senators.

The former Texas A&M University president said it was an easier task than it was back in Texas, which has more than 30 congressmen and women.

Loftin said the delegation was interested in how they could help the university, for which Loftin had a request: A place for an intern from MU in every Missouri office each semester.

"We will have that accomplished this year as a continuous program," Loftin said. "That gives a personal face to the university that the congressmen or senators see."

Additionally, Loftin said he hopes to place more student interns at federal agencies for similar reasons.

While in town, the chancellor met with two out-of-state senators who are MU alumni: Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., and Tim Kaine, D-Va. He also visited with a few members of the Texas delegation who he said "could be very helpful to us going forward."

One of those members is Lamar Smith, R-Texas, who is chairman of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. Research funding was another "major topic" during discussions, Loftin
said. He said he spoke with Smith about how much research funding can grow and the congressman was "very open" with him about what possibilities exist in the future.

A few student groups also were in Washington over spring break. Loftin said members of the Graduate Professional Council were at the Capitol to talk about federal action on financial aid issues — an issue he said the university is interested in as well.

The Missouri Student Association, the governing body for undergraduate students at MU, held its annual "SEC in D.C." event.

MSA President Mason Schara said he and two other students attended and met with legislators and their staff to promote higher education issues that are important to students at MU and in the Southeastern Conference.

"We wanted to talk about Pell Grants because with decreased funding from the state, the Pell Grant helps make up some of the cost that falls on the students," Schara said.

During the trip, Schara said the students were able to meet with U.S. Reps. Emanuel Cleaver and Vicky Hartzler, Sen. Claire McCaskill and the staff from every other Missouri office. They also met with members of the vice president's domestic policy staff.

"Our biggest takeaway was that they really were very, very adamant that we have more of a presence at a federal level," Schara said. "We've already got a presence at the state level, but they said while it's great having administrators come and talk, students also make an impact on their decisions."

### Employee athletes

Something else to ponder

By Henry J. Waters III

**Saturday, March 29, 2014 at 2:00 am**

The Chicago district of the National Labor Relations Board, charged with implementing the National Labor Relations Act, found earlier this week that student athletes are employees of the institutions they represent and therefore entitled to bargain collectively with the help of a
representative of their choice. In other words, they can unionize and reach contracts with universities over wages and other conditions of employment.

If arguments whether players are primarily athletes or students aren’t enough, now the convoluted world of college sports is roiled anew.

Reactions to the NLRB decision are instant and diverse. “The SEC does not believe that full-time students participating in intercollegiate athletics are employees of the universities they attend,” said Commissioner Mike Slive.

Former Northwestern quarterback Kain Cooper, who brought the issue to the NLRB, contends athletes who bring big revenue to colleges deserve to bargain for additional compensation.

The path ahead for eventual approval of employee status for athletes would be long and tortuous, with required waypoints in state law and the courts. It won’t be the law of the land anytime soon. But the district NLRB finding is not a frivolous moment in the discussion of athlete-university relations.

A few months ago, NCAA President Mark Emmert advocated a stipend for athletes beyond usual scholarship benefits. University of Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden and football Coach Gary Pinkel agreed, but in this column and elsewhere potential troubles were cited. Stipends would have to be equal for all athletes in all sports, not just men’s football and basketball, the only two that make a profit. This contradicts the argument used for both stipends and bargaining that the university makes scads of money from the efforts of athletes and they should be paid. How about the members of the women’s cross-country team? Under federal law, they must enjoy something akin to equal opportunity. How about male divers and wrestlers, women’s basketball and all the others beyond the big two?

Any attempt to accommodate stipends, let alone collective bargaining, would run into too many legal and ethical quagmires to deserve serious consideration.

Even if these tactics are unworkable, how about the ethical premise athletes deserve more “payment” than they currently receive? Falls rather flat for me.

Scholarship athletes already receive benefits adequate to lure them to try out. Those who receive help get subsidies for college ranging to six figures, enabling many who would not matriculate otherwise. If a few provide money-making benefit to colleges, most receive more than they give.

And what football or basketball star can conscientiously say he got the short end of the stick in his deal with the college?

A more momentous discussion involves the student part of the equation. Without doubt it makes sense for colleges to promote academic accomplishment to their scholarship athletes. It might not make as much sense to act like athletes must achieve in the classroom by the same standards as other students.
Top-level athletes who possess skills interesting to professional scouts often are not concentrating on classroom skills to make a career. These are the same players who produce the big bucks for the college. It would be lovely if every one of these players legitimately got good grades to go with their first-round draft selections, but by all the criteria most compelling to both athletes and colleges, this connection is tenuous.

Does it make sense to maintain the myth athletes who come to college mainly to play sports are students first? Might it make sense to require all athletes to attend classes and otherwise be exposed to college life without straining the credibility of their academic achievement records? The temptation to fudge these numbers is monumental, particularly for men’s football and basketball, where the big bucks reside.

So if we want to provide an important benefit to college athletes, maybe the best way would be to eliminate academic barriers to top-tier schools offering the best opportunities, both on and off the field. And, by the way, this would be a big boon to the colleges as well.

HJW III

It is now proved beyond doubt that smoking

is one of the leading causes of statistics.

— author Fletcher Knebel

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: EVERYONE ON CAMPUS SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO REPORT SEXUAL VIOLENCE

March 30, 2014 12:00 am

In the editorial "Rape? Ho-hum" (March 25) you state that the University of Missouri "is finalizing a policy that mandates certain faculty and staff, known as 'required reporters' to inform the university of student complaints alleging sexual violence." I feel that if the university is serious about stopping these actions, then everyone who steps foot upon that campus should be a "required reporter." Not reporting a known action is not as despicable as committing one but certainly it is contemptible and irresponsible to harbor such knowledge without reporting it.

Julie S. Reiner • Edwardsville
Open Column

University Village site should not be rebuilt

Sunday, March 30, 2014 at 2:00 am

Editor, the Tribune: I agree completely with Hank Waters' opening statement in the March 15 Tribune regarding the need to demolish the University Village student housing complex. However, I disagree with his comment that the site is a good place for a new high-rise building.

First, allow me to put it in the flood plain — not of Hinkson Creek but of Flat Branch. But the name of the waterway is immaterial. The very fact Waters mentions in his view about the spot being low gives away the obvious: The site is in a flood plain. Although you can build around that problem to a certain degree, wouldn't it be better for the University of Missouri to take the lead and refuse to follow the penchant in Columbia to "build to the (stream) bank"? There have to be more favorable places to construct student housing.

Although it can always be argued that misusing one more location won't make that much difference, the University Village site is far better suited for being a parcel within a Flat Branch green belt corridor. Let us all call on MU to dedicate the site to help with the mitigation of storm water. Consider making the tract a park dedicated to fallen firefighter Lt. Bruce Britt. This would be far better than increasing the percentage of impervious surface in an area already suffering acute problems with urban runoff.

Ted Craig

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Posted in Letters To The Editor on Sunday, March 30, 2014 2:00 am.
Professor: Area’s soil needs moisture recharge

Ground is dry under surface.

By Ashley Jost

Friday, March 28, 2014 at 2:00 pm Comments (8)

The past few years have not been good for Missouri’s soil, and a lack of rainfall is to blame.

Randy Miles, associate professor of soil science at the University of Missouri, said a continuous pattern of dry weather during the past 2½ to three years caused conditions that might make for another hard season for summer crops.

"We don't have a fully recharged soil profile," Miles said. "The surface soil is moist, but the subsoil is, well, pretty dry."

The current conditions are in part fallout from a rough 2012.

Mark Fuchs, hydrologist with the National Weather Service, said besides some rain in April 2012, that year was almost completely dry, and the summer was extra hot.

"That quickly dried out the top soil and translated into moisture shortages over time below that as well," Fuchs said. "The only thing that saved us that year was a relatively cool August."

Fuchs said other climatologists refer to what happened that year as a "flash drought."

The next year was a little better for some parts of the state, such as south-central and southwest Missouri, which received significant rainfall and, in some parts, major flash flooding during the summer. Still, there were some parts of the state that Fuchs said "never fully recovered" from 2012, primarily the area north of the Missouri River.
There hasn't been a lot of moisture since last summer, either, Fuchs said. The fall was fairly dry, and the winter was below average in precipitation.

"Winter is the time of year we hope to get a significant recharge, with some more in the spring," he said, adding that although it was a cold winter, it was still considered a dry one. "So far, though, spring has not kicked in. March rainfall totals have been low through most of the state. If we don't get significant, or hopefully above-average, rainfall in April and May, we could be setting ourselves up for a drought-ridden summer."

April and May are indicator months of what kind of year to expect, Fuchs said.

Miles has seen the lack of precipitation at the Sanborn Field weather station, a research area Miles directs under the MU College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources.

"Good, timely rains" above what Missouri normally gets would help to make up the deficit, but Miles said that it takes more than an overnight shower to move the moisture down to the subsoil.

Without more rain, there is the possibility of decreased yields for farmers.

Also, he said many local ponds, springs and even the Missouri River will be — and already are — lower than usual.

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**God and Caesar [Commentary]**

**Its going to take a Republican president and Congress to repeal Obamacare and start over with real reforms that protect religious believers**

March 29, 2014|By Cal Thomas

"Well, then," Jesus said, "give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God." (Mark 12:17 Living Paraphrase)
When considering what belongs to Caesar and what belongs to God, what happens when the federal government seeks to replace God by defining "church" and when life begins to have value, the latter having been done in Roe vs. Wade and subsequent court rulings?

While there are other issues in the Hobby Lobby case argued before the Supreme Court on Tuesday, these are the major ones.

To review quickly for those who haven't been paying attention, the owners of Hobby Lobby, a crafts supply chain based in Oklahoma City, are conservative Christians. They believe their faith prohibits them from offering a health insurance policy for their female employees that covers certain birth control, including all forms of intrauterine devices and emergency contraception. The government says the religious exception they are seeking under the Affordable Care Act applies only to churches and religiously affiliated nonprofits, such as schools and hospitals, and that for-profit companies, like Hobby Lobby, are required under the ACA to cover all aspects of women's preventative care, or face a hefty fine.

Let's consider the arguments before the Court and the response of some of the justices.

"At oral arguments on Tuesday," writes the Huffington Post, "the women justices were the most aggressive in their questioning of Hobby Lobby's lawyer, former Solicitor General Paul D. Clement. Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan asked whether other companies should be allowed to refuse to cover other procedures, like blood transfusions and vaccines, if employers had a religious objection to such medical treatments."

I put that question to Professor Joshua D. Hawley of the University of Missouri School of Law. Mr. Hawley is also counsel to the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty. In an email, Mr. Hawley wrote: "...the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (which states that government shall not substantially burden a person's exercise of religion) does not give religious objectors a blank check. The statute requires objectors to show that they have a sincere religious belief that is substantially burdened. And it permits the government to impose the regulation anyway if the government can show that its interest is truly compelling and that it has no other viable means available for achieving it."

Specifically addressing the comment by Justices Kagan and Sotomayor, Mr. Hawley says the compelling interest standard "would likely work to defeat many other religious objections," including for blood transfusions and vaccines, because "the government could almost certainly show that it had a compelling interest in requiring businesses to pay for life-saving procedures and treatments, including antibiotics." Hawley notes the RFRA, signed by President Bill Clinton, has been on the books since 1993 and there has not been a flood of civil exemptions.
Justice Anthony Kennedy may have come up with the best compromise. He asked Mr. Clement why Hobby Lobby could not drop health insurance altogether, pay the fine and increase salaries of their employees so each could buy health insurance that fits their needs.

Come to think of it, that approach makes sense for everyone. Unfortunately, it is not the one-size-fits-all approach of the Obama administration, its Affordable Care Act and its apparent march toward a single-payer health plan, which is and always has been the liberal left's goal.

Caesar needs to get back on his side of the church-state line, which the left freely invokes when it claims the church is trespassing on the state's territory. Secular progressives seem less concerned when the state crosses the line in the other direction and seeks to impose its will on people of faith.

It's going to take a Republican Congress and a Republican president with courage and a new health insurance plan to repeal Obamacare and start over with real reforms that protect religious believers and enhance health care.

CRIME DROP LINKED TO USE OF WELFARE PLASTIC IN LIEU OF CASH

March 28, 2014 11:00 pm • By Christopher Ingraham Washington Post

A new study has found that paying welfare benefits via debit card, rather than cash, caused a 10 percent drop in crime.

Researchers have long noted that cash plays a critical role in street crime, because of its liquidity (it is easy to obtain, and everyone accepts it) and anonymity (it leaves no paper trail). In poorer neighborhoods, public assistance payments used to be a significant source of circulating cash: Recipients would cash their assistance checks at the bank, pocketing the money and becoming attractive targets for criminals.

But that changed, starting in the 1990s, as the federal government gradually phased out paper welfare checks in favor of electronic debit cards — the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program. Along with a team of researchers, Richard Wright of the University of Missouri studied the effects of this change in his home state and found that it was directly responsible for a 10 percent drop in the overall crime rate there.
The authors found that “burglary, assault, and larceny decreased by 7.9 percent, 12.5 percent, and 9.6 percent, respectively.” They also found corresponding drops in arrest rates that supported their findings.

They also looked at the incidence of rape, which showed little change between the pre- and post-EBT eras. Because rape is “typically unrelated to the immediate acquisition of cash,” this didn’t come as a surprise.

To put these results in perspective, the overall 10 percent decrease in crime corresponded to 47 fewer crimes per 100,000 people per county per month as a direct result of switching welfare benefits from cash to debit cards.

The finding raises a few questions.

First, did the drop in crime occur simply because criminals decided to pack up and move elsewhere? The authors tested for this and found no evidence that criminals switched counties, noting that this finding was “consistent with criminological literature indicating that offenders tend to operate within their own geographical awareness space.”

Second, what if we expand the definition of “elsewhere” to include virtual as well as physical space? It stands to reason that a shift from paper to electronic currency would cause a concomitant shift from physical to virtual crime — if criminals can’t pick your pocket, maybe they’ll figure out how to pick your bank account.

Wright’s study did not dig into these questions, but as society gradually shifts from physical to virtual currency in bitcoin and beyond, such issues will become increasingly important.

Finally, to what extent can we extrapolate nationally from these findings? Wright and his co-authors note that the widespread drop in crime in the United States over the past several decades corresponds to a decline in the proportion of transactions involving cash.

While there are many possible explanations for this, the paper notes that “a significant fraction of the decline has yet to be identified empirically.”

While a lot more research is needed on these questions, Wright’s paper strongly suggests that less cash equals less crime.

Medical students to hold fundraiser

Saturday, March 29, 2014 at 2:00 am
Medical students at the University of Missouri plan to host a kickoff event Monday for a St. Baldrick’s fundraiser to support the fight against childhood cancer.

The event will take place from noon to 1 p.m. Monday at the Acuff Gallery in the MU School of Medicine, 7 Hospital Drive.

There will be a raffle for the chance to shave the head of Michael McCullough, assistant professor of obstetrics, gynecology and women's health at MU. The cost is $1 each or $4 for five tickets.

This fundraiser precedes a larger event on April 12 when students, faculty, staff and community members will shave their heads in support of childhood cancer research. There also will be games and live music.

The April 12 fundraiser is planned for 5 to 8 p.m. at Mojo's, 1013 Park Ave.

MU vet school hosts annual open house

Friday, March 28, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine is hosting its annual open house in two weeks with the theme "On beHOOF of One Health, One Medicine, let's have a round of aPAWS for Mizzou Veterinary Medicine."

The open house will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 12 at the veterinary school, 1509 E. Rollins St.

According to a news release, the event will highlight links between human and veterinary medicine — which is the purpose of One Health, One Medicine — through tours of the teaching hospital, presentations and a look at the veterinary ambulatory truck.

Also, there will be face-painting, mule rides and live animal exhibits. The event is free and open to the public.
CRAFTSBURY, Vt. • Many students spend years after college working off tens of thousands of dollars in school debt. But at seven "Work Colleges" around the country, students are required to work on campus as part of their studies — doing everything from landscaping, growing and cooking food to public relations and feeding farm animals — to pay off at least some of their tuition before they graduate.

The arrangement not only makes college more affordable for students who otherwise might not be able to go, it also gives them real-life experience, teaches them responsibility and how to work together, officials said.

"I love it," said Melissa Eckstrom, of Philadelphia, who is an assistant garden manager at Sterling College in Craftsbury, Vt., where she's studying sustainable agriculture. "It's really satisfying to work in the garden and do all this hands-on, you know, dirty work — and I go to the kitchen and sit down for a meal and I'm like, I grew this. It can't get more full circle than that."

With rising college costs and a national student loan debt reaching more than $1 trillion, "earning while learning" is becoming more appealing for some students. The work college program is different than the federal work study program, which is an optional voluntary program that offers funds for part-time jobs for needy students.

But at the seven so-called Work Colleges — Sterling College, Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes, Ky., Berea College in Berea, Ky., Blackburn College in Carlinville, Ill., College of the Ozarks in Lookout, Mo., Ecclesia College in Springdale, Ariz., and Warren Wilson College in Asheville, N.C. — work is required and relied upon for the daily operation of the institution, no matter what the student's background. The students are then evaluated on their performance.

"It's a core component of the educational program," said Robin Taffler, executive director of the Work Colleges Consortium.
"It does not differentiate between those that can afford to pay for their education, from those that must work to cover their educational costs. And that's a big deal. No student can buy their way out of this work program. So this essentially levels the playing field because everybody is doing a job," she said.

Eckstrom works up to 100 hours a semester at $11.10 an hour, so the pay helps with her school costs, she said. She also gets tuition credit for coming a week early for training before the start of the school year.

"It's all very helpful," said Eckstrom, 23, who said she probably couldn't have afforded to attend a school like Sterling otherwise.

The average debt of Work Colleges graduates in 2010 was $12,121 compared to $27,710 for private nonprofit college graduates, $21,740 for public college graduates, and $33,050 for graduates of private, for-profit colleges, according to the Work Colleges Consortium. Sterling's average loan debt is $16,800.

Three of those colleges — Alice Lloyd, Berea College and College of the Ozarks — fully cover the cost of the tuition, through work, grants and donations.

The schools save on operational costs by having students working on campus and running the daily operation because they don't have as much staff, Taffler said. But that doesn't mean the work program is inexpensive for the schools to operate. Some funding is available through the federal work colleges program but the schools must match it dollar for dollar.

"So it is not necessarily an inexpensive program to operate," Taffler said. The schools that offer full tuition do a lot of fundraising, she said.

The "earning while learning" concept appears to have become more appealing to students as a way to pay for college.

At Sterling College, enrollment was up 26 percent in the fall of 2013, while the rate of applications rose 38 percent from last March to now. The number of applications to Berea College has steadily increased from 1,362 in 2009 to 1,620 in 2013.

The Work Colleges Consortium reports that 75 percent of graduates agree their college work helped prepare them for their first job and 84 percent said it helped them to get along with people with different attitudes and opinions. Seventy-five percent of graduates agreed that their work experience helped them to understand the importance of service to others and 86 percent said it helped them to appreciate the value and dignity of work, the consortium said.

Charles Elliott, of Huntsville, Texas, will be graduating this year, debt-free, from the College of the Ozarks, a private Christian school, called "Hard Work U." He's worked in the school's restaurant in the kitchen learning how to cook, as a waiter in the dining room and at landscaping and is now working in the public relations office. It's taught
him how to juggle his time between studies and work and given him experience that has helped in finding a job with a software development company.

"I've had opportunities to work in four different places here on campus," he said. Instead of looking like he can't stay at a job very long, it actually shows "I'm getting much more experience in different fields," he said. "It's a really great thing."

Work Colleges Consortium: www.workcolleges.org