MU chancellor vows changes after assault report

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The University of Missouri's new chancellor says he is prepared to make the school "accountable and responsible" after an independent review faulted its response to a former swimmer's rape claims.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin's latest remarks amplify his comments when the Dowd Bennett law firm report was first released last week.

The review determined that the university fell short of federal standards for the reporting and investigation of sexual assault on campus. The report also found that administrators in Columbia should have investigated 20-year-old Sasha Menu Courey's 2011 suicide sooner. The swimmer alleged she was sexually assaulted during her freshman year by several football players.

Menu Courey's parents say they support the university's efforts to strengthen its policies.

Colleges are getting tough on violence against women

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

The attack on violence against women at college campuses is turning into a beatdown.
A lot of muscle has lined up to combat rape and sexual assault on campuses, including President Barack Obama, who in January called on college administrators to act.

**About the time national leaders began blasting colleges for putting their image ahead of battling campus rape, University of Missouri System president Tim Wolfe ordered his four chancellors to review their processes for when a sex crime is reported.**

And system curators ordered an investigation into how the Columbia campus handled the alleged rape of a former swimmer by at least one University of Missouri football player. The swimmer, Sasha Menu Courey, committed suicide in 2011.

Last week we learned that after her death, MU failed to investigate or tell law enforcement officials about the alleged 2010 rape.

Wolfe plans to clean things up. He issued an executive order for university employees to report claims of sexual assault to the university’s Title IX coordinator.

**On Tuesday, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said the MU campus “may create an independent committee with special training to specifically handle cases involving sexual assault.”**

Attitudes may have reached the zero tolerance level at MU. A Tiger football player was kicked off the team last week for alleged violence against women.

MU isn’t the only school getting tough. Last month, a University of Kansas football player was suspended from the team indefinitely after a woman accused him of sexual assault.

With a national dialogue focused on getting more students to report such incidents and having schools act on the complaints, a college’s record of response might eventually affect how it’s viewed by potential students and their parents.

In an open letter to U.S. News & World Report, a dozen members of Congress suggest the magazine consider how a college handles reports of sexual violence when forming its annual ranking of best colleges.

That could change the playing field for some elite schools because several of the consistently top 25 universities, including Harvard, Dartmouth, Columbia, Cornell and the University of California, Berkeley, have been at the center of student complaints or federal investigations over their handling of sexual assaults.

How a college fares could be a blow to its revenues if students start bypassing schools that don’t step up their fight.
MU chancellor meets with concerned student parents, shares his own experience

COLUMBIA — **MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and student parents concerned about the future of an on-campus day care facility found common ground in a private meeting Tuesday, but no decision has been made regarding where the center will reopen.**

The parents — who created a [petition](http://www.kansascity.com/2014/04/15/4962076/campuses-getting-tough-on-violence.html#storylink=cpy) asking that the day care, the Student Parent Center, be relocated elsewhere on campus — had collected 1,174 signatures, which they showed to Loftin at the meeting. But after Loftin shared his own experience as a student raising two children, some parents believed he understood their position.

The Student Parent Center is located in University Village Apartments. The chancellor announced on March 12 that [University Village would shut down on June 30 and would be demolished shortly thereafter](http://www.kansascity.com/2014/04/15/4962076/campuses-getting-tough-on-violence.html#storylink=cpy) and that the day care would be shut down and demolished, as well.

Kimberly Bodner; her husband, Christopher Engelhardt; Naomi Clark; and Danielle Walker met with Loftin in Jesse Hall on Tuesday afternoon. Bodner and Clark are graduate students, Engelhardt is a post-doctoral fellow, and Walker is an undergraduate who will enter graduate school in the fall. The group had been asking for a meeting with the chancellor since mid-March.
Clark said she wanted to offer the chancellor a perspective on the costs of not having child care available on campus. She said it seemed like the chancellor wanted to make a decision in the next few weeks.

Walker said her hope for the meeting was for the university to take a stand in its support of student parents. She said she knows students who have left because of a lack of resources for students with children and students who are pregnant and weighing their options for school.

**Loftin shared his own experience being a married graduate student and having two children.**

Walker and Clark said hearing that the chancellor was once in a similar situation made them feel as though he understood their situation.

No decision has been made on whether the day care will be reopened in a new location or if a new facility will be built. **Loftin said he tasked Gary Ward, interim vice chancellor for administrative services, with gathering cost estimates on both options. Loftin said he is still waiting on a report.**

"**I am committed to making a quick decision after receiving this analysis from my staff,"** he said.

Loftin said he might have a decision by early May. 

**Missouri universities raise funding concerns**

**NO MU MENTION**

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Officials from Missouri's public universities are raising concerns about reduced revenues for education as state lawmakers consider an income tax cut.
A statement signed by the governing board presidents of nine state universities cites concerns that legislation could limit the money available for education.

Although the letter does not specifically mention the proposed income tax cut, the executive director of the Council on Public Higher Education said that is the subject of the concerns.

The Republican-led House could vote as soon as Wednesday on whether to give final approval to a bill that would eventually cut more than $600 million of income taxes for individuals and businesses.

Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon has said the bill could harm education funding. He vetoed a tax cut last year.

WHAT OTHERS SAY: Green-Beckham cut good for Missouri football

Tuesday, April 15, 2014 | 5:18 p.m. CDT

BY

The drama surrounding Dorial Green-Beckham — the Hillcrest High School football standout who was dropped by the Missouri team Friday — seems to have a life of its own.

Green-Beckham has been in the news most recently because of a Columbia incident involving violence against a young woman.

In January, he was in the news because he and two other young men were stopped in a car carrying a pound of marijuana.

In October 2012, he and two teammates were arrested by the MU Police Department after they were found possessing 35 grams of marijuana.

In the first arrest, he was able to plead down to trespassing and paid a $200 fine. In the second, one of the other men in the car took responsibility for the marijuana and no charges were filed against Green-Beckham.

In the most recent case, Columbia police announced they will not file charges because there is no "probable cause." But the police report reveals some disturbing information.
Picture an upset boyfriend looking for his girlfriend. There’s pushing and shoving. Someone gets hurt. Afterward, the victim decides it is better for everyone involved to drop the whole thing, and police decide that, without victim and witness cooperation, no charges can be filed.

The victim, according to the report, said she was "afraid of the media and community backlash" and worried about that the arrest would jeopardize Green-Beckham’s NFL career.

Letting a victim who feels overwhelmed and frightened decide whether charges should be filed is too much pressure. Police ought to be able to determine if a crime has been committed using evidence and statements from both the victim and witnesses, regardless of their cooperation.

Head coach Gary Pinkel made the right choice to drop the troubled player, regardless of what the police do.

**Pinkel, in a news release from the Missouri athletics department, said the decision was "made with the best interests of all involved in mind." He said Green-Beckham should focus on "getting the help he needs."**

We, too, hope this young man with so much potential will learn to control his behavior so he can go on to have a bright future.

Director of Athletics Mike Alden said the decision was also made with the university and the team in mind: "We have a high standard of conduct for our student-athletes. Though we provide the resources and mentoring to all of our student-athletes, we are also responsible to the community at large and to the ideals and values of the University of Missouri. We have determined that this was a necessary step for our football team, athletic department, the university and our community."

The Columbia police need to have the same level of interest in the community. The police report reveals plenty of cause for an arrest. The young woman had bruises, and both she and Green-Beckham’s girlfriend, who was there at the time, acknowledged the assault. The victim also provided evidence of coercion by the girlfriend to drop any complaint against the player.
Green-Beckham is a talented football player, and he is likely to find a way into the NFL if those who love and care about him can help him onto the right path.

So far, he has not had to face any real legal consequences for his actions, so it is important that the Missouri athletics department take action.

It appears his coaches understood that if he had been allowed to avoid any consequences this time, it could have sent him the message that he is above the law.

Missouri made sure that didn't happen.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Family Dog Can Help Kids With Autism
TUESDAY, April 15, 2014 (HealthDay News) -- Children with autism may find the "unconditional" love of the family dog a real help, a small new study finds.

Researchers at the University of Missouri interviewed 70 parents of children with autism. The investigators found that nearly two-thirds owned dogs, and that 94 percent of those parents said their children formed a bond with their four-legged friend.

"Children with autism spectrum disorders often struggle with interacting with others, which can make it difficult for them to form friendships," study lead author Gretchen Carlisle, a research fellow at the university's Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction, said in a school news release.

"Children with autism may especially benefit from interacting with dogs, which can provide unconditional, nonjudgmental love and companionship to the children," she added.

The advantages of having a dog include companionship, stress relief and giving children with autism opportunities to learn responsibility, according to the study published in a recent issue of the Journal of Pediatric Nursing.

Many of the parents in the study said they opted to get a dog because they believed it would help their child.

"Dogs can help children with autism by acting as a social lubricant," Carlisle explained. "For example, children with autism may find it difficult to interact with other neighborhood children."
If the children with autism invite their peers to play with their dogs, then the dogs can serve as bridges that help the children with autism communicate with their peers."

However, Carlisle said it's important to consider a child's characteristics when selecting a dog in order to make sure the pet and child are a good match.

"Bringing a dog into any family is a big step, but for families of children with autism, getting a dog should be a decision that's taken very seriously," Carlisle said. "If a child with autism is sensitive to loud noises, choosing a dog that is likely to bark will not provide the best match for the child and the family. If the child has touch sensitivities, perhaps a dog with a softer coat, such as a poodle, would be better than a dog with a wiry or rough coat, such as a terrier."

And, the researchers suggested, the child should be involved in the process of choosing a dog.

"Many children with autism know the qualities they want in a dog. If parents could involve their kids in choosing dogs for their families, it may be more likely the children will have positive experiences with the animals when they are brought home," Carlisle said.

Children with autism bond with the family dog

COLUMBIA, Mo., April 14 (UPI) -- Man's best friend may indeed be the best friend of a child with autism providing a child who has trouble interacting with people companionship and unconditional love.

Gretchen Carlisle, a research fellow at the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, interviewed 70 parents of children with autism.

She found two-thirds of the families owned dogs, and of the families with dogs, 94 percent of the parents reported their children with autism bonded with the dogs. However, even in families without dogs, 70 percent of parents said their children with autism liked dogs.
“Children with autism spectrum disorders often struggle with interacting with others, which can make it difficult for them to form friendships. Children with autism may especially benefit from interacting with dogs, which can provide unconditional, non-judgmental love and companionship to the children,” Carlisle said in a statement.

“Dogs can help children with autism by acting as a social lubricant. For example, children with autism may find it difficult to interact with other neighborhood children. If the children with autism invite their peers to play with their dogs, then the dogs can serve as bridges that help the children with autism communicate with their peers.”

Carlisle said her study only addressed dog ownership, but dogs might not be the best pet for a child with autism.

“Dogs may be best for some families, although other pets such as cats, horses or rabbits might be better suited to other children with autism and their particular sensitivities and interests,” Carlisle said.

The findings were published in the Journal of Pediatric Nursing.

500-million-year-old embryo fossils a rare and mysterious find

Tiny, spherical fossils found in southern China appear to be the embryos of a previously unknown animal.

The fossils come from the Cambrian, a period dating from 540 million to 485 million years ago and known for an explosion of diversity. Some of the organisms that appeared during the Cambrian, such as the bug-like trilobite, had exoskeletons and other hard parts that fossilized nicely. Others, including sponges and worms, were made of soft tissue that rarely preserves.

Researchers Jesse Broce of Virginia Tech, James Schiffbauer of the University of Missouri and their colleagues were searching for these rare soft-tissue fossils in limestone from the Hubei province of southern China when they found something even more rare: tiny spheres, including some with polygonal patterns on their surfaces. These itsy-bitsy fossils are
most likely fossilized embryos, the researchers report in the March issue of the Journal of Paleontology. The fossils come from the third stage of the Cambrian, dating back to around 521 million to 541 million years ago.

"We found over 140 spherically shaped fossils, some of which include features that are reminiscent of division-stage embryos, essentially frozen in time," Schiffbauer said in a statement.

The researchers began their investigation by attempting to dissolve fossils out of the limestone from China's Shuijingtuo formation with acid, but that method seriously damaged or destroyed the spherical fossils. Researchers then hand-chiseled the rock into millimeter- or centimeter-sized chunks, exposing the fossil surfaces manually.

From there, the researchers investigated the spheres with a variety of techniques, including slicing them into thin sections, which can be viewed under a microscope. The scientists also imaged the fossils with X-ray and scanning electron microscopy and X-ray techniques.

The results showed specimens with a phosphate-rich envelope surrounding a ball of calcite. (The organic compounds that once made up the embryos have long since mineralized.) Some of the spheres had polygonal patterns that look very similar to those seen on fossilized embryos from Markuelia, a Cambrian worm-like creature. The researchers believe that these specimens are blastulas, which are an early, multicellular stage of embryonic development.

It remains a mystery what these embryos would have grown up to become. Fossilized embryos from a variety of species pop up occasionally in the fossil record, from a 380-million-year old fish with an embryo still in her belly to dinosaur embryos still curled up inside their eggs.

P. Allen Smith, agriculture experts talk about popularity of local food sources

Tuesday, April 15, 2014 | 10:50 a.m. CDT; updated 7:07 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, April 15, 2014

BY CECILIA MEIS

COLUMBIA — Gardening advocate P. Allen Smith discussed the increasing popularity of local food sources at a panel discussion Monday at MU.

An award-winning garden and design expert, Smith hosts two television shows that aim to teach farm-to-table gardening to viewers and is an advocate of the move toward local food production.
This national trend has been evident in Missouri, where the number of farmers markets has nearly doubled in three years, Missouri Department of Agriculture spokesman Charlie Hopper said.

Smith was joined by Missouri farmers and agriculture experts who weighed in on it.

Hopper said the move toward more local food sources comes from a rise in food awareness.

"We are a small piece of this worldwide revolution," he said. Two of the panelists were Missouri farmers, and many of the others practice organic or farm-to-table lifestyles.

"Food is medicine," said Melinda Hemmelgarn, a dietician who hosts "Food Sleuth" on KOPN. "The garden is at the heart of everything."

Although Missouri is one of the top 10 states with local growers, Smith said, the challenge is connecting farmers to consumers. Finding online information about farmers markets and local farmers remains a challenge, he said.

The Missouri Department of Agriculture created Agrimissouri.com, a website that catalogs Missouri growers and markets. The site helps shoppers search for specific products, growers or markets in their area.

The website is frequently updated, Hopper said, but many markets remain unregistered.

Location is another challenge many farmers markets face. Most are held outdoors in large parking lots, which can force them to close during colder months, said Smith. Columbia's Farmers Market operates a winter market in the Parkade Center and opens for the spring in a lot behind the Activity and Recreation Center.

Dan Kuebler, a local grower and vice president of the Missouri Farmers Market Association, said many farmers markets struggle to find an enclosed shelter that allows them to stay open year-round. Columbia's Farmers Market had hoped for a permanent pavilion, but the plans stalled.
The availability of farmers markets is just one of the issues that the panel discussed. The speakers also touched on how to cultivate your own food in a garden and the importance of education programs in schools to teach children about local food.

Some of the organizations represented at the panel also offer free programs that provide tools, mentoring and classes to teach people how to create and tend to their own backyard gardens. The programs aim to provide access to fresh produce and information about how to prepare it, said Debby Campbell, executive director of Get Healthy DeSoto.

"It goes back to that education process, and it doesn't happen overnight," Campbell said.

Campbell said the challenge is receiving the necessary funding to launch the programs. Get Healthy DeSoto hosts two community gardens that rely on sponsors and the work of its garden master, Joe Bean, to remain operational. Campbell said the garden master is paid an annual stipend of $500.

Smith was in Columbia to celebrate 175th anniversary. In addition to the panel, he gave a presentation on Thomas Jefferson's gardens Sunday evening.

MU alumni celebrate Pulitzer Prize wins

Tuesday, April 15, 2014 | 8:00 p.m. CDT; updated 8:42 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, April 15, 2014
BY MARY RYAN

Chris Hamby was sitting at his computer at the Center for Public Integrity on Monday afternoon, refreshing his Web browser over and over again. He was not bored, though — he was waiting.

Hamby jumped up and celebrated with the rest of his office. The results for the Pulitzer Prizes had just been posted.

Hamby is one of several MU graduates who were named 2014 Pulitzer Prize winners on Monday. Hamby, who earned his master's degree in
investigative journalism from MU in 2010, won the investigative reporting award for his series on medical and legal fraud against coal miners with black lung, published by the Center for Public Integrity. Although Hamby was excited to win, he also felt guilty.

"It's a bizarre feeling, because you won something by writing about people suffering and slowly suffocating to death," Hamby said. "It's just always trying to maintain your distance and your sanity. You spend a lot of time on the road and with people who are dying."

His 25,000-word investigative series looked into how lawyers and medical professionals in Appalachia were actively attempting to take away benefits from miners with black lung. It took about a year to report and more than a month to write.

The Pulitzer Prize is a prestigious award given to those who exhibit "excellence in journalism and the arts," according to the prize's website. To many who work in those fields, winning a Pulitzer Prize is one of the highest honors possible.

Steven Rich, who earned a master's degree in investigative and data journalism from MU in 2013 and is now a database editor for investigations at The Washington Post, won the public service award as a member of The Washington Post team for its contextualization of the National Security Agency's surveillance attempts made in tandem with The Guardian. The award was shared between The Washington Post and The Guardian.

Rich was sitting at the computer with his parents when he got the news of his Pulitzer win.

"They were very excited," Rich said. "Probably more excited than I was."

Rich is still in shock about the win, a feeling many of the winners share.

"I'm still kind of in awe," he said. "You don't do journalism for the awards, but when it happens, it hits hard."

The entire Boston Globe staff won the breaking news reporting award for its coverage of the Boston Marathon bombings. Among the staff are several MU graduates, including graphic artist Patrick Garvin, deputy director of photography and Page One photo editor Kim Chapin, assistant political editor Mike Bailey, and music critic James Reed.
With the usual champagne toast replaced with cupcakes, Garvin thought that the announcement of the staff's Pulitzer win Monday couldn't have been more appropriate — the one-year anniversary of the Boston Marathon bombings was Tuesday.

"We were glad to be a part of it, but it was a good end to a tough year," Garvin said. "Even if we didn't win the award, we knew we did good work."

Jonathan Sperber, an MU history professor, was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in the biography category for his book, "Karl Marx: a Nineteenth-Century Life." Sperber has taught at MU since 1987.

Sperber had known that he was nominated for a Pulitzer since last year but had no idea that he was a finalist until Monday afternoon.

"When I came back from teaching my classes, I got a call from my editor (and they) told me that they'd seen the website and seen that I'd been one of the finalists, right in the biography category," Sperber said. "I was astonished."

Protests had lasting effect on MU

Panel discussion to examine impact of May 1970 shootings.

By CHRIS ROBINSON

Tuesday, April 15, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The tragic events on two university campuses in May 1970 had powerful short- and long-term effects on U.S. culture and, in particular, higher education. An upcoming panel and audience discussion on Monday titled Viet Nam War Protests at Mizzou: Legacy of the Kent State-Jackson State Shootings is designed to provide perspective on these events and evaluate their impact on MU culture and policy.

On May 4, 1970, during a protest against the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, members of the Ohio National Guard open fired on a crowd of students at Kent State University, killing four and injuring nine. Ten days later, city and state police in Jackson, Miss., shot 12 student protesters at
Jackson State University, two of them fatally. Immediately, these events sparked demonstrations at more than 300 colleges and universities across the country. On the night of the Kent State shootings, MU protesters spray-painted "Kent State" on the base of two of the columns in Francis Quadrangle.

On what is now Stankowski Field, 2,000 student demonstrators burned President Richard Nixon in effigy to the shouts of, "Burn, baby, burn!" and, "Peace now!" Afterward, students marched south on Maryland Avenue carrying a black-and-gold painted casket and placed it on the steps of Crowder Hall, the Army and Air Force ROTC building. Meanwhile, someone set fire to the Navy ROTC building on Stewart Road.

Two days later, the MU Sociology Department voted 16-6 to allow professors to cancel classes in support of a student-proposed strike, which made several demands. Among these was that Chancellor John Schwada join other college officials — including Stephens College President Seymour Smith — in denouncing the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia. On the morning of May 11, more than 500 students gathered for the student strike, and, in response, the chancellor's office imposed "emergency regulations," which banned visitors from campus and prohibited any gathering of three or more people. By afternoon, the crowd had grown to more than 3,000.

Although the demonstration remained nonviolent, arrests were made, some by police in full riot gear. When protesters refused to disband, Chancellor Schwada eventually agreed to meet with student protest leaders and members of the Faculty Council. On May 12, after nine hours of negotiations, the parties agreed to a "Joint Statement on Campus Problems." (Source: "Reflections of a University Peace Activist" by Bill Wickersham.)

As is often the case with social activism, long-term accomplishment came at the expense of individual sacrifices and short-term disappointments. On June 2, the Board of Curators reprimanded the Sociology Department by withholding some of its professors' pay, denying them salary increases and temporarily suspending the chair of the department. Bill Wickersham, assistant professor of recreation and administration and an organizer of the May 11 student strike, was dismissed from MU shortly after the protests, with his final paycheck considerably docked. However, as a result of these punishments, the American Association of University Professors put MU on its list of institutions censured for violating principles of academic freedom. The university remained on this list until university curators, in consultation with the AAUP, developed stronger, clearer policies for the protection of student and faculty rights on free speech pertaining to social issues. This protection continues today.

Also, although the Board of Curators repudiated the "Joint Statement on Campus Problems" negotiated by student protesters, the May 1970 events coalesced like-minded groups and individuals, both on campus and in the Columbia community. These groups included the Missouri Peace Study Institute, the NAACP, various women's groups, CORE, the Ecumenical Institute, the Newman Center, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Committee for Informed Opinion on Nuclear Arms, among others. Additionally, the 1970 MU events rallied concerned faculty and students, directing academic attention toward new ways of addressing significant human problems and yielding new academic curricula, such as the MU peace studies program.
Once this critical mass was formed among MU students, faculty, campus and community groups, serious political and social action became the order of the day.

Panelists for Monday's discussion include: Wickersham, a faculty adviser during the 1970 student protests who helped represent student interests to produce the "Joint Statement on Campus Problems" and is now an MU adjunct professor of peace studies; Paul Wallace, an assistant professor of political science in 1970 involved with Committee of Concerned Students "teach-ins" who is now professor emeritus of political science at MU; Musa Ilu, current professor of sociology at University of Central Missouri, who was a graduate student involved in MU's anti-apartheid movement during the 1980s and will be speaking about academic intellectuals and political engagement in May 1970; and Curtis Edwards, a sociology graduate instructor who is researching the effects of social movements on public policy, including the Occupy movement, and also is involved with Grass Roots Organizing Mizzou.

Were you there? After the panelists' presentations, there will be an audience discussion and "open mic" where individuals who participated in the student protests of May 1970 are invited to share their recollections and insights. John Betz, former MU 1970 student protester and member of Veterans for Peace, will share his perspective of this time. Current students are encouraged to participate in the dialogue, as well.

Monday's panel and audience discussion is part of a new campaign by Friends of Peace Studies called the Activist Legacy Project (ALP). It focuses on documenting the insights and personal stories of longtime social activists, particularly those associated with MU and the Columbia area. The ALP also facilitates dialogue and collaboration between multiple generations of activists, acknowledging that each age group has a uniquely valuable set of experiences, strengths and viewpoints.

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Almost four years after several teachers sued over a Missouri virtual teaching program, parties in the case are seeking a settlement.
The lawsuit was filed by teachers who started jobs with the Missouri Virtual Instruction Program, or MoVIP, in August 2009. The teachers were out of work by November of that year after the state eliminated funding for the program.

The lawsuit names the University of Missouri, the Missouri Board of Education, the state and eMints, a program based on the Missouri campus that hired the teachers.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports (http://bit.ly/1gyj9M ) the teachers' attorney, David Brown, says the dispute is mostly about whether the teachers were "at-will" employees of the university or if their contracts were for a full school year.

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Truman's Closet offers clothing rentals for MU students, staff, faculty

Wednesday, April 16, 2014 | 6:00 a.m. CDT; updated 6:28 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, April 16, 2014
BY ALYSON BEAN

COLUMBIA — Last semester, Lanre Shitta-Bey helped a student pick out a suit to rent from Truman's Closet. For weeks afterward, the student came back for more clothes.

The student was always happy with what he checked out and was incredibly thankful for the service, said Shitta-Bey, education chairman of Truman's Closet.

"It was really cool that someone could be so excited and so touched by what we do here," he said.

Run by the Missouri Students Association, Truman's Closet provides MU students, staff and faculty with access to business attire and formal wear, which they can rent for free with their university email username. Clothing
can be rented for a variety of events, including job interviews and fraternity and sorority formals.

The clothing rentals are for two days but can be changed to work with a customer's needs. Clothes do not need to be cleaned before they are returned, but they are cleaned at Tiger Cleaners before they are put out again.

The idea for Truman's Closet started when Nick Droegue, former MSA president, heard about the idea from another university. The idea was later passed on to Sean Joy, the founder of the organization at MU.

Joy, a graduate student in occupational therapy, held interviews to find an executive coordinator and chose Kathleen Kowalsky. Kowalsky picked the members of the first executive board, and Truman's Closet began.

The space on Rock Quarry Road has shelving units, two free-standing clothing racks and two tables where the staff members sit. Black sheets obscure a large portion of the room, hiding the shelving units that Tiger Pantry, which is at the same location, uses to store its food.

When Truman's Closet opened Oct. 1, it was even smaller. It had only two shelving units for clothes. Tiger Pantry donated the other shelving units.

The staff have hopes for further expansion. Charlie Hall, staff chairman for Truman's Closet, said they hope to someday move to a space on campus.

Since it opened, Truman's Closet has had more than 50 checkouts. This semester has been much busier than the previous one, and the staff has seen many returning customers, Hall said.

Truman's Closet carries a variety of clothing, including dress shirts, slacks, jackets, skirts, shoes and ties.

All of the clothing comes from donations, which are accepted any time while the store is open or at the Center for Student Involvement at the MU Student Center. All donations are kept unless they are damaged.

"A lot of people around campus have been helpful," Hall said.
Though right now it primarily rents business attire and formal wear, Truman’s Closet is working on educational opportunities for students. Truman’s Closet posts links to helpful videos and articles about topics such as "how to tie a tie" on its Facebook and Twitter pages.

The board is developing a panel discussion series to further educate students about topics such as creating and updating a LinkedIn profile, Shitta-Bey said.

They are also working on a new checkout system that will allow students to check out clothes by swiping their IDs.

Staffers at Truman’s Closet said they appreciate the opportunity to help other students.

"Getting to serve other people in a capacity like this, it really excites me," Shitta-Bey said.

M.J. Rogers, fundraising chairwoman for Truman’s Closet, said many other staff members have returning customers. She has had returning customers and one day was even recognized on campus by a woman she helped at Truman’s Closet.

Kevin Ackermann, a staff member at the store, said he sees his work there as a bit of a social equalizer. It allows people who would otherwise not be able to afford business attire access to it and gives them a chance to dress for internship or job interviews, he said.

Students interested in getting involved should look for ads around campus and on Facebook or Twitter. Truman’s Closet takes on new staff members every semester and will soon be looking for staff for the fall semester.

"We want to do our best to set students up for success," Hall said.

GRAPHIC: MU doubles weekly recycling in RecycleMania competition
COLUMBIA — **MU spent the past eight weeks competing in RecycleMania, a competition consisting of more than 500 universities attempting to recycle as much waste as possible.**

The university placed **26th out of 256 schools** in the main competition category. MU more than doubled its weekly recycling rate to more than 50 percent and recycled about 40,000 more pounds of waste than in last year’s competition.

MU’s sister school and last year's winner, University of Missouri-Kansas City, placed second. Overall, MU recycled the equivalent of 14.34 pounds per person during the eight weeks.

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**Mizzou Hillel to hold social justice Seder**

Tuesday, April 15, 2014 | 5:25 p.m. CDT; updated 7:29 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, April 15, 2014

BY CAROLIN LEHMANN

COLUMBIA — **Mizzou Hillel will host a social justice Seder on Friday.**

The Seder, which is part of Passover, includes a meal and a service. Passover is an eight-day holiday commemorating the exodus of Jewish people from slavery in Egypt.

Seders are traditionally held on the first two nights of Passover, which this year fell on Monday and Tuesday. This special event will be themed because the Seder lends itself to a conversation about justice, said Amanda Rainey, programming and student engagement associate for Hillel.

"It's about asking questions," she said.

**The event will be from 6 to 8 p.m. A vegetarian, kosher meal will be provided. Guest speakers include Rebecca Martinez, an assistant professor**
in Women's and Gender Studies at MU, who will speak about transgender issues.

People interested in attending should register online. Rainey said the amount of food they cook will depend on how many people register.

The event will go through the order of a traditional Seder but replace the 10 biblical plagues traditional used in the ceremony with modern-day ones, Rainey said.

Some of the plagues to be discussed this year are the conflict in Israel, LGBT rights in Russia and in-school bullying. **These themes were chosen by a committee of people involved with Mizzou Hillel, the MU Women's Center and the MU RSVP Center, the groups sponsoring the event.**

The public is invited to submit modern-day plagues they're interested in discussing as well.

For the first time, people and organizations may sponsor a table for a $50 donation, Rainey said.

The Mizzou Hillel has had social justice Seders in the past, and Rainey said they were popular. Hillel director Jeanne Snodgrass wanted to bring them back, Rainey said.