The chief of cardiology at Tulane University will become the dean of the University of Missouri School of Medicine, effective Dec. 1.

The university announced Tuesday that it had chosen Patrice Delafontaine, a member of the Tulane faculty from 2003 to 2014. He served in various roles, including director of the Heart and Vascular Institute and medical director of cardiovascular services at Tulane University Hospital and Clinic.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports (http://bit.ly/1sjLMJY ) Delafontaine's appointment comes more than two years after the medical school's former dean, Robert Churchill, resigned shortly before a federal fraud investigation. Investigators found two radiologists committed billing fraud. The investigation and an accompanying lawsuit are continuing.

Delafontaine previously worked at the University of Kansas Medical Center, the University of Geneva and Emory University in Atlanta.
MU names new dean for medical school

By Ashley Jost

Tuesday, July 15, 2014 at 10:00 am Comments (1)

Patrice “Patrick” Delafontaine, chief of cardiology at Tulane University in New Orleans, has been named dean of the University of Missouri School of Medicine effective Dec. 1.

The announcement comes more than two years after the college’s former dean, Robert Churchill, resigned as the school faced a federal fraud investigation. An internal investigation found two of the school’s radiologists committed billing fraud. A federal investigation and accompanying lawsuit are still in progress.

Delafontaine has served as director of the Tulane University Heart and Vascular Institute at the university’s medical school. He is board certified in cardiovascular diseases.

Tulane, like MU, is a member of the American Association of Universities. MU has placed an increased focus on research-based projects and hiring to improve its AAU rank.

“The opportunity to seamlessly integrate the education, research and clinical missions of the School of Medicine and to grow a strong, nationally recognized academic medical center is very exciting,” Delafontaine said in a statement.

Delafontaine’s research on cardiovascular health has been funded by the National Institutes of Health for more than 18 years, according to a news release. He has worked at Tulane for 11 years and previously worked at the University of Kansas Medical center, the University of Geneva and Emory University in Atlanta. Delafontaine was born in Egypt and received his medical degree from the University of Geneva in Switzerland. He completed his research and a clinical fellowship in cardiology at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston.
Patrice Delafontaine, new Medical School dean, 'delighted' to join MU

By James Nosek
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COLUMBIA — Patrice Delafontaine said he is excited to try Shakespeare’s Pizza once he arrives in Columbia.

Delafontaine will begin his job as dean of the MU School of Medicine on Dec. 1, according to an MU news release.

He is chief of cardiology at Tulane University in New Orleans, where he has worked since 2003. Delafontaine also served as the Sidney and Marilyn Lassen Chair of Cardiovascular Medicine and director of the Tulane University Heart and Vascular Institute.

"I'm delighted to be coming to Mizzou," Delafontaine said. "I'm honored to be chosen for this position."

Delafontaine was the first scientist to establish the critical link between the human hormone system that regulates blood pressure and a protein that is essential for childhood growth, which provided insight into muscle-wasting diseases, according to the news release. He has authored more than 115 articles about his research.

Delafontaine said that during his career, he has focused on three areas — education, clinical and research — and will continue to do so at MU.

"I've worked with students all of my life," he said. "I look forward to working in a campus with a whole range of students and, hopefully, we keep making it a great academic opportunity for them."
After three visits to the MU School of Medicine and other medical facilities on campus, Delafontaine, 63, said he and his wife, Mary, are excited for the chance to live in a community like Columbia.

"Columbia is a very appealing place to live," he said.

They have two sons: Jean-Luc, 25, and Laurent, 21.

Before Tulane, Delafontaine worked at the University of Kansas Medical Center, Emory University in Atlanta and University of Geneva in Switzerland, where he received his doctor of medicine degree, according to the news release. He completed a research and clinical fellowship in cardiology at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston.

"My research and academic opportunities in the United States have been second to none," said Delafontaine, who was born in Alexandria, Egypt, and raised in South Africa before going to medical school at Geneva.

The former dean of the MU School of Medicine, Robert Churchill, retired in October 2012, according to previous Missourian reporting. The move followed a federal investigation that revealed fraudulent billing practices of two doctors in the Department of Radiology at MU Health Care. Churchill was not implicated in the investigation. Les Hall has served as the interim dean.

A search firm, Witt/Kieffer, contracted by the School of Medicine approached Delafontaine about the position.

"I was intrigued by the opportunity to come here," Delafontaine said. "I’m really impressed by Mizzou and the Health Sciences Center."

Delafontaine's annual salary will be $600,000, said Mary Jenkins, MU Health System public relations manager.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
The University of Missouri-Columbia has named Dr. Patrice Delafontaine, chief of cardiology at Tulane University in New Orleans, as the new dean of the MU School of Medicine, effective Dec. 1.

The announcement comes more than two years after the school’s former dean, Robert Churchill, resigned as the school faced a federal fraud investigation, according to the Columbia Daily Tribune.

An internal investigation, according to the Tribune, found two of the school’s radiologists committed billing fraud, and a federal investigation, and accompanying lawsuit, is still in progress.

Delafontaine has served as director of the Tulane University Heart and Vascular Institute at the university’s medical school. He also has served in clinical leadership positions at the University of Kansas Medical Center, the University of Geneva and Emory University in Atlanta.

“I’m delighted and honored to have been chosen to lead the School of Medicine at MU as dean,” Delafontaine said in a statement. “The University of Missouri has a sterling reputation as evidenced by its membership in the Association of American Universities. The opportunity to seamlessly integrate the education, research and clinical missions of the School of Medicine and to grow a strong, nationally recognized academic medical center is very exciting. The concentration of multiple schools and colleges on one campus facilitates interdisciplinary research and educational programs and is a major strength of the University of Missouri.”
It's time to stop trashing this nation's crop of college graduates for not knowing common facts -- the name of the U.S. Supreme Court's chief justice for example -- and start applauding them for what they did learn after four years of academia.

Specifically, how to master a rock climbing wall.

I say this after spending the early part of summer visiting colleges and universities vying for my daughter's attendance -- and her father's tuition checks -- come next year. We've toured campuses large and small, public and private, in urban settings and surrounded by bean fields, and have always come away with the same perception:

"Gee, wasn't that rock climbing wall awesome?"

College tours, after a few of them, take on a sameness that feels like the "Groundhog Day" plot. A fresh faced student greets a gathering of skeptical parents and their wide-eyed teens at the admissions office and proclaims, in precisely 30 PowerPoint-aided minutes, their undying infatuation with the school.

"There's no place like (INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL)" they'll say, so often that eventually I glance at their feet to see if they are clicking their heels together three times.

During this love fest, it's also imperative to recite the names of celebrities who attended, even those who flunked out, dropped out or were expelled for launching paint filled balloons onto the school president's front porch. During the University of Missouri tour, Brad Pitt's name was invoked so often, I assumed he was the school's mascot. It's actually the tiger, which sounds far better than "The Fighting Pitts."

Then the real tour begins. Several equally well scrubbed students appear, split the audience into small groups, and head out. There are promises to visit lecture halls, buildings where famous research was conducted ("Here at Indiana University, we'll see where Alfred Kinsey asked frumpy housewives personal questions about sex!") and the library.

But first, the guides happily exclaim, we'll tour our brand new, state-of-the-art student athletic
It's a little known fact, but all U.S. institutions of higher learning were recently mandated, under federal law, to construct massive recreational centers. This was necessary after studies concluded students might know that John Roberts, not Jon Hamm, is chief justice if they had access to 50-meter lap pools, Stairmasters, smoothie bars and the obligatory rock climbing wall. Until I began touring colleges, I'd only seen rock walls at health clubs and retail sporting good outlets. All feature a "climber" who has scaled about three-quarters of the structure and now, dangling 100 feet in the air, looks hopelessly confused, as if his next move will be his last. I never understood how climbing a wall in the middle of The Sports Authority prepares one for climbing an actual mountain; most natural rock formations don't include brightly-colored plastic footholds and a spotter below constantly yelling encouragement.

But, judging by their mandatory presence at the University of Wherever, conquering one must be a job prerequisite. I've already instructed my daughter to surmount the wall as soon as possible, for it should help her obtain employment, or at least an internship.

"Miss Schwem, I see you made the Dean's Lists, served as sorority president and taught English to underprivileged kids in Guatemala. But how are your rock climbing skills?"

"Excellent. Check out this selfie of me at the top of Mt. Pitt!"

"Welcome aboard!"

Parents usually stare at the rock wall as if it were the world's hardest Sudoku puzzle, so confused are they by its presence and the realization that their tuition checks will help maintain it. Also, rugged fitness was most likely not a part of their college experience. Indeed, I remember being short of breath just running down my dorm steps to greet the mobile pizza truck.

Ironically, the campus tour usually concludes at a dorm cafeteria, where attendees are invited to eat whatever they can consume in 45 minutes. The guides hover nearby, picking at salads or other light fare since all will probably be climbing the rock wall later that day and don't want to feel bloated.

My daughter has yet to make her college decision but has narrowed her choices. I won't reveal her top pick for I do not wish to be flooded with calls and emails from the runners up, begging for a second chance.

But here's a hint: She looks awfully good in a black and gold climbing helmet.