MU student body president resigns, citing family issues

Tuesday, July 22, 2014 at 9:16 am

Mason Schara, president of the Missouri Students Association, announced his resignation Monday afternoon, citing a medical emergency.

Schara’s resignation is effective at the end of the month, after which he will also leave the university and go back to his home state, Texas.

“Schara expresses his sincerest apologies to the whole student body, administrators, all of MSA, specifically, his appointed MSA Executive Cabinet,” a MSA news release said.

According to the release, Vice President Kelsey Habeberger will serve as president for the rest of the term, which ends later this year. Former Chief of Staff Matt McKeown will become the vice president.

Education Dept. Will Test Use of Student Aid in Programs Not Based on Credit Hour

By Kelly Field

In an effort to graduate more nontraditional students faster, the U.S. Education Department will test the idea of awarding student aid based on something other than credit hours, the department said on Tuesday.
The latest round of "experimental sites," which will be announced in the Federal Register this week, will allow participating colleges to award aid for competency-based programs, prior-learning assessments, or programs that blend direct assessment and credit-hour coursework. Such programs allow students to progress at their own pace and earn credit for work experience, which make them appealing to nontraditional students.

Institutions that are accepted into the experiment will be freed from certain regulatory and legal requirements that generally limit student aid to credit-hour programs.

The "sites" are part of President Obama’s sweeping college-affordability agenda, announced during a bus tour last summer. In December the Education Department called on colleges to submit ideas for the experiments.

Since 2013 the department has allowed colleges to apply to provide federal financial aid to students enrolled in direct-assessment programs on a case-by-case basis. But only a handful of programs so far have been approved to do so. If the experiments prove successful, they could make it easier for competency-based programs to qualify for student aid, opening the federal coffers to a much wider swath of nontraditional programs.

Tuesday’s announcement came a day before the U.S. House of Representatives is scheduled to vote on a bill, HR 3136, that would create a competency-based demonstration project. Late Tuesday the White House issued a statement of support for the bill.

Amy Laitinen, deputy director for higher education at the New America Foundation, said the joint actions show that "policy makers want to dig deeper and see what—if anything—works, for whom it works, and under what conditions it works."

"In a town not always known for bipartisanship or particularly thoughtful policy making," she said, "the movement for responsible, competency-based education innovation is a refreshing and exciting change."
Gary Pinkel’s right: It’s time for MU and KU to play again

BY YAEL T. ABOUHALKAH

Hurray for Gary Pinkel: The University of Missouri head football coach wants to play the University of Kansas on the gridiron.

“It would be great,” he said Monday on ESPN’s SportsCenter.

And last week, Pinkel said much the same thing: “I wish we were still playing Kansas. I’d like to think that we’d get together and get that game going again.”

So the storied football rivalry is getting closer to resuming, right?

Well, not so fast.

Many Jayhawk fans — and to be clear, as a KU grad, I am not one of them — still harbor grudges against MU for leaving the Big 12 and going to the football-superior Southeastern Conference.

That’s resulted in a silly feud that needs to wither away, the sooner the better.

College sports too often is driven by the all-mighty dollar. Everyone gets that these days. That’s why MU left, in large part. And it’s why KU stayed in the Big 12, to be in a safe harbor with rivals that attract big-time money to the conference, such as the universities of Texas and Oklahoma.

But fans of the Jayhawks and Tigers over the decades were part of what’s reported to be the second-most played rivalry in Division 1 history. The games played at Arrowhead
were well attended and spirited. They brought attention to both schools, especially in the Midwest.

MU has a far better record than KU in football in recent years. Pinkel’s “invitation” to resume the rivalry is notable because it would allow the Jayhawks to get a chance to knock off a superior squad.

**In other words, there’s not a lot of reason from a purely competitive reason for MU to want to play KU.**

But Pinkel — more so than some KU “fans” — gets it: The two schools had a rivalry that was meaningful in the past to many, many people on both sides of the state line.

It can be meaningful again, if officials at both schools will grow up and play each other.

Read more here: [http://www.kansascity.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/yael-t-abouhalkah/article778555.html#storylink=cpy](http://www.kansascity.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/yael-t-abouhalkah/article778555.html#storylink=cpy)

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What will happen to St. Louis Storytelling Festival?

By Jane Henderson jhenderson@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8107

Just three months ago, the St. Louis Storytelling Festival advertised its 35th annual event as the "largest FREE storytelling festival in the world!"

But now organizers face a major revision of the festival, which is no longer affiliated with UMSL's School of Professional and Continuing Studies.

"There will be a festival next year, but we don't know where it will be," Patty Carleton said on Tuesday. Carleton, who is director of youth services at the St. Louis Public Library, is on the planning board for the festival. "I don't know who the director will be."

**Ron Turner, one of the festival's founders, has confirmed to organizers that the multi-day event will now be part of the University of Missouri Extension Community Arts Program. The festival's website has yet**
to announce the change.

This year, the festival ran May 1-3 and included six national storytellers and dozens of regional ones. About 18,000 young people participated. The festival has traditionally been held at multiple venues, including the Arch, Old Court House, Cahokia Mounds, libraries and schools. But this year the event had less help from UMSL staff members and a part-time executive director, Becky Walstrom, who had actually retired from the job a few years ago, Carleton said. She said that the continuing studies department wanted the festival to be more self-sufficient.

An UMSL spokesman, John Matthews, directed questions on Tuesday to Walstrom, who did not respond immediately to emails.

The festival still has grants, including one from the Missouri Arts Council, Carleton said, and with the extension center's help will continue to have a regional presence next year.

But how it will change for its 36th edition remains to be seen. Look for more information as organizers work out the festival’s transition.

Jane Henderson is book editor of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Follow her online at stltoday.com/books and on Twitter @stlbooks.