Afterthoughts with Gary Ward

By Ashley Jost

Tuesday, September 2, 2014 at 12:00 pm

Last Tuesday’s Tribune included a story on the naming of Gary Ward as the University of Missouri’s permanent vice chancellor for operations and chief operating officer.

After publication, I had the chance to chat with Gary about the announcement and a few of his plans now that he’s no longer in his post on an interim basis. This is going to be the kick off to a new “afterthoughts” series where I sort of dump my notes or include information I couldn’t prior to publication. Enjoy.

Chief among Ward’s plans in his new, full-time roll is an effort to support the teaching and research missions of the university.

“Dollars are scarce, so we need to think how we can do what we need to do to support the academic and research missions,” Ward said. In particular, there’s a need to do something about laboratory space for classes.

Ward said he and his crew are trying to work with faculty to ask what their needs are for space. But along with listening to those faculty needs, he also plans to reach out to some groups in Columbia and do some talking.

“I need to get out into the community to explain what the university is doing and why,” Ward said. He’s already made a pit stop at a Rotary Club meeting, and is making plans to talk with more organizations.

Looking forward, Ward said he’s most excited about the renovation to Swallow Hall, one of the historic academic buildings on the Francis Quadrangle. That building is the fourth to be renovated under the stewardship model of top-to-bottom renovations. Tate, Switzer and Gwynn halls were all renovated under the model during the last several years.

Ward’s biggest challenge so far is not having enough hours in the day - an issue most can relate to.

“The University of Missouri is one of the premier public institutions in the country,” Ward said. “To be in the position where I’m named as vice chancellor is an incredible, humbling honor. My
promise to our faculty, staff and students is to work as hard as I can to look for those efficiencies to make sure we’re doing what we can to always improve.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Discussion to take down MU rec complex rock wall sparks social media outcry

Tuesday, September 2, 2014 | 10:03 p.m. CDT; updated 6:52 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, September 3, 2014

BY MICHAEL ALVEY

COLUMBIA — When Wesley White walked across the Hearnes Center stage to receive his bachelor's degree in biochemistry from MU in 2013, he was draped in standard graduation attire: a black gown, a black cap and a gold honors tassel. But what set him apart from most of his fellow graduates was his additional tassel — a green rock climbing rope.

White was very involved in rock climbing in his four years at MU. He worked for Team Mizzou as a climbing instructor at the MU Student Recreation Complex, was president of the Mizzou Climbing Club and took climbing trips with fellow club members to Texas, Arkansas, Nevada, Colorado and Kentucky.

"Climbing was the defining experience of college for me," White said. "I found out a lot about myself from the climbing club. College was about classes, but climbing and the experiences I had with my friends was the most important part for me."

**Future MU students may not be able to have the same rock climbing experiences as White, however. At the MU rec complex's annual "Rally" training event on Aug. 24, Diane Dahlmann, director of recreation services and facilities, announced that the rock climbing wall could be taken down as early as December to expand one of the complex's weight-training rooms.**

Scroggs Peak, a 35.5-foot climbing tower, and Brewer Butte, a 180-square-foot bouldering wall, have been staples of the MU rec complex since its renovation in 2005. But Dahlmann said that membership for the rock wall, which requires an additional $39
annual fee, has been declining over the years. In the 2012-2013 school year, 138 memberships were sold, and only seven have been sold since August, she said, though she expects sales to increase as the school year progresses.

MU rec complex employee Mark Mayerhoefer, who worked at the rock wall, was stunned when he heard of the plans.

"She said, 'We've had to make some tough decisions, but it seems like the Pump Room is going to be expanding into the aquatics hallway and the climbing wall area,'" Mayerhoefer said. "All of us who work at the rock wall were sitting next to each other, and all of us were completely blown away."

Word quickly spread of the MU rec complex's potential decision to take down the rock climbing wall, and both current and former MU climbers made their voices heard on social media. A Facebook page titled "SAVE THE MIZZOU REC ROCK WALL" had 755 members as of Tuesday afternoon. Members posted testimonies of what the wall meant to them, letters to Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and pictures of themselves holding signs that read "Save the Mizzou Rec Rock Wall."

"I was disappointed at Mizzou," MU senior and climber Denny Ganahl said. "It made me feel as a student that I wasn't being heard. We're told to be diverse, and they want to tear down the most diverse thing at the rec center."

Dahlmann said that there are no concrete plans to remove the wall. She said that estimates of what the project would cost and designs for the project will be ready in the next 30 to 60 days.

"(Expanding) the Pump Room has been on our radar for several years," Dahlmann said. "No decisions have been made yet. This is still very much a conversation. But we do know that that space (where the rock wall currently is) can be reshaped to expand the Pump Room, and that it would be a large and messy project that would take several months."

Although Dahlmann wasn't thrilled with some of the negative responses and misinformation that has been posted on social media, she did appreciate that many of the climbers voiced their opinions.
"I think that the statistics that we have about who uses the wall and what that frequency is tells one part of the story," Dahlmann said. "But some of the testimonials that have come out of social media, that fills out the rest of the story. Every assessment we've ever done, we've never been able to capture the first-person side. Now we have it."

Dialogue between climbers and the MU rec center staff is ongoing. On Tuesday afternoon, Dahlmann met with climbers Mayerhoefer and John Kelly to hear their concerns about removing the wall.

"I do agree that the Pump Room needs to be expanded," Mayerhoefer said in the meeting. "I just think it would be a real shame to take down the climbing wall for a problem that's going to be fixed only very temporarily."

In the meeting, Dahlmann assured Mayerhoefer and Kelly that no decision has been made yet. She also said it's possible to relocate the wall or keep the wall as is. All parties agreed that the conversation was a positive step, and that the recent attention given to the rock climbing wall could actually be helpful.

"In the past, we've done a great deal to promote the rock wall, and it hasn't been wildly successful," Dahlmann said. "Perhaps this is exactly the bump we need."

Wolfe, Loftin overhaul Title IX, sexual assault policies

By Clarissa Buch

Changes to the ways in which MU and the UM System handle Title IX and sexual assault cases are underway in wake of new allegations of Title IX violations at MU.

In his statement on Aug. 21, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin pointed to a number of “sweeping changes” he and UM System President Tim Wolfe have implemented since his taking office in February, such as Executive Order 40, which Wolfe issued in April.
The executive order designates all university employees with knowledge of sexual harassment against a student as “mandated reporters.”

Only health care workers and counselors are exempt from the mandatory reporting policy.

Information required of mandatory reporters depend on his or her employment status. Supervisors must report all known details, including names of parties if disclosed. Non-supervisory employees must report circumstances of the situation, but the initial report does not need to disclose names or other identifying information.

Mandated reporters must promptly report information to the appropriate Title IX coordinator. System-wide issues are reported to Betsy Rodriguez, UM System vice president of human resources, and issues in MU are reported to Interim Title IX Coordinator Linda Bennett.

"Our goal is to make this process as effective as possible," UM System spokesman John Fougere said. "If an employee learns of an alleged sexual assault in which the alleged victim is a student, that employee now has the responsibility to report that directly to the Title IX coordinator, who will handle it from there."

Fougere said a new training program is being developed to teach mandated reporters what their responsibilities are under the president’s Title IX executive order.

“Our first priority is to train the first responders, such as Title IX coordinators and others that handle investigations,” Fougere said.

Fougere said an online program will be released in the coming months to train faculty and staff to be mandated reporters.

Loftin said in his statement that a full-time Title IX investigator has been hired, but MU spokesman Christian Basi was unavailable to elaborate on who was hired for the position.

MU is also reviewing how the Office of Student Conduct addresses sexual assault cases and will potentially create an independent committee to handle such cases.

Basi said in an email that while some changes have been made already, others will be completed over time based on priority.

“Our number-one priority at MU is safety, so anything that enhances safety has priority,” Basi said in the email.

Fougere said that Title IX issues are a very important initiative to Wolfe.

“We are in a constant mode of assessing our resources and how we address these difficult issues, and looking at ways to get better," Fougere said. "Our goal is to have other universities across the country look at the (UM System) as the national exemplar of best practices when it comes to Title IX policy."
Presumed Guilty

*College men accused of rape say the scales are tipped against them*

By Robin Wilson

**NO MU MENTION**

Caleb Warner drives a delivery truck and may never finish college. Joshua Strange moved home and enrolled at a branch campus of the University of South Carolina after he was kicked out of Auburn University, his dream college. Zachary Hunt lost a $30,000 scholarship and his place on Denison University’s football team.

All three young men were expelled after their colleges found them responsible for sexual assault. A national campaign against what some have called a rape culture on college campuses has brought attention to sexual violence, and to victims—typically women—who have long described being ignored. But others think the movement has gone too far, labeling some innocent students as rapists.

Many young men who feel unfairly accused recognize that campus sexual assault is a serious issue, and that some students are truly responsible. But in the current climate, they say, the gender-equity law known as Title IX is allowing women to allege rape after alcohol-fueled sexual encounters in which the facts are often murky. An increasing number of undergraduate men are now fighting back—with the help of parents, lawyers, and a new national advocacy group.

"Fundamental fairness has become a pawn in the gender wars," says Judith E. Grossman, a mother who helped found the group, Families Advocating for Campus Equality. Her son, who graduated this spring from a small liberal-arts college, was accused last January by a former girlfriend of "nonconsensual sex." Ms. Grossman wrote to administrators and hired a lawyer; after a campus hearing, the college found her son not responsible.
"I am a feminist, and I believe one rape is one too many," says Ms. Grossman, who would not name her son or the institution. "But in their rush to judgment, colleges are now substituting one class of victims for another."

Antirape advocates hardly see it that way. Now that colleges are paying more attention to sexual assault, they say—investigating reports and punishing offenders—some students found responsible are bound to cry foul. "It’s a little hard to believe that we can go for generations where rape victims are ignored, disbelieved, and disregarded, and now the battle cry is out that we’re ruining the lives of untold numbers of innocent young men," says David Lisak, a clinical psychologist who consults with colleges on rape cases. People accused of assault, he says, frequently contend that they're innocent.

Many students accused describe feeling much like their classmates who say colleges have mishandled their reports of being assaulted. Alleged victims have charged colleges with minimizing their experiences and trauma, even blaming them for the incidents. Alleged perpetrators, meanwhile, also feel betrayed and mistreated: presumed guilty, they say, by campus administrators so concerned with protecting victims that due process falls away. Some men found responsible lose weight, suffer depression, and watch their college and career plans crumble.

Mr. Strange, expelled from Auburn in 2012, says he felt branded with a scarlet R even before the university decided his case. "I stood in line to eat once between classes and heard people talking about me, saying, ‘Can you believe this guy Josh raped a girl?’" he recalls. His girlfriend had accused him of forcing her to have sex, a charge he disputes. Through the new national group, he has become an informal adviser to other students accused of rape. "I lost who I was," he says. "I lost my way for awhile. I was devastated and crushed."

Statistics paint a scary picture for college women. One in five is sexually assaulted, according to a 2007 study by the National Institute of Justice, although some observers have questioned whether the incidence is really that high. The number of sex crimes reported by colleges rose by 52 percent between 2001 and 2011, to 3,300, another federal study found. Headlines have multiplied: In a May cover story, Time magazine called campus sexual assault a "crisis," pronouncing colleges "hazardous places" for women.
Colleges face increasing pressure from survivors and the federal government to improve the campus climate. Title IX compels them to resolve reports of rape whether or not an alleged victim reports the incident to the police. If a college fails to handle cases promptly and fairly, the U.S. Department of Education can find that it has created a hostile learning environment. The department is now investigating 76 colleges for possible violations of Title IX related to alleged sexual violence. In recent months it has announced a few harsh settlements requiring institutions to strengthen their policies.

Laura Dunn, a law student who started an advocacy group called SurvJustice, has advised some Washington officials pushing colleges to be more responsive to victims. "Women are very intelligent—they know when they’ve been harmed," says Ms. Dunn, who has shared her own story of being raped 10 years ago as a freshman at the University of Wisconsin at Madison by two men on the crew team. (The university determined that they were not responsible.) "There is an unfortunate, aggressive sexual norm related to masculinity in our culture," she says. "We are asserting our rights now in the face of aggressive, predatory sexuality."

A network of self-described survivors and allies has sprouted up to encourage students to report campus assaults and file federal complaints and lawsuits if colleges don’t take the reports seriously.

But the crackdown, say young men and their lawyers, has come at a cost. Since the Education Department issued a "Dear Colleague" letter in 2011, admonishing colleges to process students’ reports of assault uniformly—with the goals of investigating all cases and preventing new ones—many campus officials believe the underlying message is that they should side with victims, says Brett A. Sokolow, president of the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, a consulting and law firm. The department’s letter also emphasized that colleges should determine responsibility using the "more likely than not" standard of proof. That’s lower than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard required for a criminal conviction.

At a national summit on sexual assault held at Dartmouth College in July, a participant asked Catherine E. Lhamon, who leads the Education Department’s Office for Civil Rights, if colleges could safely assume that it was urging them to tip the scales in favor of accusers. Ms. Lhamon said no, apologized if her office had given that impression, and said she wanted "all students to have a fair and appropriate process."
When a student reports a sexual assault to a campus administrator, the college typically conducts an investigation to determine whether to pursue the case. If it does, a panel of faculty and staff members usually hears from both parties, then issues a finding and in some cases a penalty.

Gina M. Smith, a lawyer who advises colleges on sexual misconduct and Title IX, says the system tends to work well. "Colleges and universities have long been in the business of student discipline," she says. "They remain committed to providing fair, impartial, and informed processes that produce reliable results."

Others who observe that process believe something has gone wrong. The burden of proof, say several lawyers representing students who have been found responsible for sexual assault, is too low, letting colleges rule against alleged perpetrators on very slim, sometimes conflicting evidence. (Colleges use the term "responsible" rather than "guilty" to distinguish the findings of their proceedings from those of the criminal system.)

Some students are appealing campus findings. Others are filing lawsuits—against Columbia, Denison, and Duke Universities and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, among other institutions. And several young men have lodged Title IX complaints of their own, arguing that in a rush to judgment, their colleges discriminated against them on the basis of their gender.

In the past few months, Mr. Sokolow says he has gotten nearly 60 calls from accused students and their parents—a steep rise from just a year ago. He takes the cases he feels are the strongest (for now, a dozen). "The last thing I want to do," he says, "is represent a rapist."

Of the cases Mr. Sokolow has accepted, at various stages of resolution, three young men have had charges against them dismissed following campus investigations or hearings. Three others whose colleges had found them responsible had those findings reversed on appeal, and two who were found responsible reached settlements with their institutions. The rest of the cases are pending.

Andrew T. Miltenberg, a lawyer based in New York City, says he has been getting about 15 calls a month this year, including a recent one from a father in South Korea whose son had been expelled by an elite American institution. Mr. Miltenberg and a colleague have filed five lawsuits so far this year claiming
discrimination under Title IX. They are in the process of drafting several others and have consulted on almost a dozen campus appeals.

What many of the accused want most is for their college records not to reflect conduct violations, says Eric Rosenberg, a lawyer in Ohio who represented three young men who were expelled by Denison in reaching confidential settlements with the institution. "If this boy wants to become a lawyer or a doctor, this has the potential to rear its ugly head down the road, like Chappaquiddick," he says.

In most of the cases they accept, plaintiffs’ lawyers say, the two students involved knew each other before the sexual encounter. Some were in relationships, but most were just acquaintances who shared a group of friends—and maybe had had sex before. Typically, both were drinking, often to excess, and what actually happened, say lawyers for many of the young men, is an ambiguous he-said, she-said muddle of events.

In Mr. Strange's case, at Auburn, he and his girlfriend had been out at a bar celebrating a friend’s acceptance to law school. They got drunk, he says, went back to his apartment—where the girlfriend had been staying for a couple of weeks—and in the middle of the night began having sex. Mr. Strange insists that nothing out of the ordinary had happened when suddenly his girlfriend "freaked out."

In a hearing at Auburn, however, the young woman said Mr. Strange had begun sodomizing her, and when she asked him to stop, he wouldn't. Mr. Strange denies intentionally attempting to have anal sex and says he stopped physical contact as soon as she objected.

Occidental College expelled a freshman last February after finding that he had had sex with a female classmate too drunk to consent. The woman said she remembered performing oral sex on him but didn't recall having intercourse. He has sued the college, arguing that she sent text messages telling her friends she was about to have sex and asking him if he had a condom.

Officials at Auburn and at Occidental declined to comment on the cases.

Under current interpretations of colleges’ legal responsibilities, if a female student alleges sexual assault by a male student after heavy drinking, he may be suspended or expelled, even if she appeared to be a willing participant and never said no. That is because in heterosexual cases, colleges typically see the male student as the one physically able to initiate sex, and therefore responsible for gaining the woman’s
consent. If the woman was not just intoxicated but incapacitated, then colleges frequently find that she was incapable of consenting: The male student should have realized she was too drunk and refrained from sex.

The problem with that reasoning, say lawyers representing those accused, is that colleges often apply it in cases in which both parties were drunk but not incapacitated. "If the university poorly distinguishes between being merely intoxicated and being incapacitated—and many do—it’s discriminatory to charge only the man," says Mr. Sokolow. But that is what often happens, he says.

Colleges are essentially expecting men to judge women’s ability to consent to sex, says Mr. Miltenberg, another of the lawyers. "As much as everyone wants to appear forward-thinking in terms of sexuality, colleges are applying an antiquated, chauvinistic, and paternalistic standard," he says. "In every one of these situations, the male is in no better shape, physically, emotionally, or maturity-wise, to make any of these decisions than the girl is."

But people who advise colleges on sexual assault say they make decisions on the basis of individual cases, not stereotypes. "These cases turn on the application of well-written and informed policies," says Ms. Smith, "and robust evaluations of all the facts and circumstances."

Stories reveal different scenarios for campus sexual assault. Sometimes aggressive men, maybe acting in groups, feel entitled to take things as far as they want—even when their partners protest or are incoherent. What lawyers for accused perpetrators describe, though, are situations in which a young man believes that a woman is describing a mutually drunken hookup as rape.

"Colleges, too often for fear of their reputations or their liability under Title IX, set up these processes where they define sexual assault poorly," says Matt Kaiser, a lawyer in Washington whose firm has represented about a dozen men accused of assault on campuses. "The student himself becomes a scapegoat for that college looking bad or getting an investigation from the Department of Education."

That is exactly what "John Doe," a sophomore astronomy major at UMass, says happened to him this past academic year. In the fall, he met a female classmate at a party and ended up back in her dorm room. "She invited me there," says Mr. Doe, the name he used in a lawsuit he filed in August against the university. Both students had been drinking but weren’t drunk, he told The Chronicle, and nothing about their sexual encounter was surprising, he says. "She said yes to everything I asked, and immediately prior to having
sex, she said, ‘Put on a condom.’ At one point I had stopped, and she asked me why, and I said, ‘I’m sorry. I’m a little nervous.’ And she said, ‘OK, don’t worry about it.’ "

The next day, says Mr. Doe, he sent the woman a text message, asking her if what had happened was a one-night stand or the beginning of a relationship. Her answer: a one-night stand. Later that day, he says, he got a call from the dean’s office: The young woman was alleging that Mr. Doe had sexually assaulted her.

Under federal rules, colleges must take "interim measures" to protect students who report rape by keeping alleged perpetrators away from them while a case is being investigated. "They told me I had six hours to get out of my dorm and find somewhere else to live," says Mr. Doe. "They treated me with such hostility, like I was already a criminal."

UMass quickly found him responsible, ruling that his partner had been too drunk to consent to sex, he says. Within three months, he had been expelled.

"They undermined all of the hard work I had done. I had been making friends and networking," says Mr. Doe. "It was humiliating and degrading." Just before he was expelled, he transferred to a different college—"the back-up to my back-up schools," he says—and now commutes there from home. By throwing him out, his lawsuit argues, UMass violated his right to an education free of gender discrimination under Title IX.

UMass declined to comment on the suit but issued a written statement. "The university does take allegations of sexual assault seriously and conducts reviews through a detailed procedure specified in the Code of Student Conduct," it says. "Due process for all parties involved is a central aspect of the code."

Mr. Doe’s story is familiar to mothers like Ms. Grossman, Alison Strange—Joshua’s mother—and Sherry Warner Seefeld, who together started the group Families Advocating for Campus Equality. Ms. Warner Seefeld’s son Caleb was expelled from the University of North Dakota in 2010 after a female student alleged that he had raped her. (He has maintained that the sex was consensual.) Following his expulsion, Ms. Warner Seefeld says she "went into mom mode" to defend her son, writing to politicians and to the university’s president, threatening "a national PR campaign."
The case led the local police to charge the young woman with filing a false report. And although Mr. Warner was readmitted to North Dakota in 2011 with the penalties against him revoked—including the requirement that he attend sensitivity training regarding sexual assault—he decided not to return, says Ms. Warner Seefeld. "He got a driver’s job, he is making excellent money, and he is really too traumatized to attempt college again," she says. He declined to be interviewed for this article. A spokesman for North Dakota also would not comment.

Tiffany Hunt’s son Zachary was expelled by Denison in 2013, after what he has described as walking a female classmate who had been drinking heavily at a party back to her dorm room. She charged him with sexual assault. But Mr. Hunt has said they never had any sexual contact, and he passed a polygraph test, says his lawyer, Mr. Rosenberg.

"Can you imagine what it feels like to a young boy to be accused of such a heinous crime?" asks Ms. Hunt. "You trust the college administration to take care of them, just like the parent whose daughter is assaulted, and you feel like that trust was broken."

Mr. Hunt declined interview requests. He lost 25 pounds in the months following the allegation against him, his mother says. He is now volunteering at a ministry and trying to figure out his next step.

Under scrutiny, colleges are struggling to balance the need to protect victims and punish perpetrators with the need to guarantee a fair process to students accused of assault. And the cases keep coming.

The mothers hope their new nonprofit group can represent the voices of the accused in the national conversation. Some spoke this spring to a committee appointed by the Education Department to draft regulations under the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act. As Congress considers legislation intended to make colleges more responsive to reports of assault, the mothers want to get involved. They also want to support parents who find themselves in the same position they did. "It’s a lonely road," says Ms. Warner Seefeld.

On a trip to Washington this summer as part of her work as a history teacher in North Dakota, she visited the National Archives. Her first stop: to examine the original copy of Title IX. She wanted to see for herself: Was the law just for women, or for men, too?
"It says equal opportunity for all in education," Ms. Warner Seefeld says. "It wasn’t created just for women."

**HEALTH**

**U.S. Health Agency Advises More Vigilance on Campuses**

U.S. Colleges Advised to Tighten Ebola Precautions

By RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA SEPT. 2, 2014

**NO MU MENTION**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has advised American colleges and universities, and any students or staff arriving from nations hit by the Ebola virus, to take precautions against spreading the disease that go beyond what most schools have done.

In interviews last week, some large universities said they had not adopted any anti-Ebola measures, noting that the C.D.C. had not yet offered them any guidance on the matter. Other colleges said they were asking anyone known to have recently been in the affected countries about possible exposure and potential symptoms, like fever, diarrhea, severe head or body aches, or unexplained bruising or bleeding.

In a new advisory issued over the weekend, the agency recommended that colleges conduct that kind of screening for anyone who had been in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria or Sierra Leone in the past 21 days, the maximum incubation period for the virus before symptoms appear.

In addition, it advised measures that few colleges and universities have adopted, like having people returning from those countries take their temperature twice daily until the 21-day period has passed, even if they have no symptoms and no risk of exposure under guidelines the C.D.C. has developed. It instructs colleges, “If a student, faculty or staff member has had a high- or low-risk exposure, state or local public health authorities should be notified, and school officials should
consult with public health authorities for guidance about how that person should be monitored."

The C.D.C. says that anyone who was recently in the outbreak region and develops a fever of 101.5 degrees or higher, or has other possible signs of the disease, should seek immediate medical care and warn a hospital or doctor’s office in advance of their arrival. It advises steps to minimize proximity to others, like not taking public transportation.

At this time of year, thousands of foreign students and workers, and Americans who have been traveling abroad, arrive on campuses to start a new school year, stirring fears of Ebola reaching the United States.

Campus health officials have played down the risk, noting that the numbers from the affected countries are small. Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where the outbreak is most severe, send fewer than 400 students each year to American colleges and universities. Nigeria sends more than 7,000, but it has had far fewer Ebola cases.

Administrators can easily identify students from those nations. Identifying others who have traveled to those countries is harder, and colleges say they have little choice but to rely on people stepping forward voluntarily.

### College of Business launches new risk management program

MU joins about 60 other institutions across the U.S. with a risk management program.

**The College of Business has launched the new Risk Management and Insurance Program after two years of fundraising and preparation.**

Frederick Travis, a recent hire to the college, will head the program as director. Previously, Travis worked as a senior risk management consultant at Smith McGehee Insurance Solutions.

Travis will lead the only course that is currently available in the program: Introduction to Risk Management and Insurance. The course is only open to graduate students this semester with hopes of inviting upperclassmen in the spring.
Students interested in the program must be admitted to the College of Business and have declared an emphasis in finance. Travis said he hopes the program will become its own emphasis area one day with three core courses and a selection of electives.

Travis said the need for risk management has increased since the 2008 recession, especially in the financial industry.

But the supply hasn’t caught up with the demand.

According to the American Risk and Insurance Association, MU’s new program joins the ranks of about 60 programs at four-year institutions in the U.S. Only about 1,000 students in the nation have graduated from these programs with a degree in risk management last year.

“We have the potential to be very big in what is a small pond,” Travis said.

The program was first announced by Joan Gabel, the College of Business dean, during the Davenport Society dinner last year to celebrate the college’s 100th year.

Gabel said risk management and insurance is an area of study with which she is familiar.

Prior to her time at MU, Gabel was the chairwoman of the Department of Risk Management/Insurance at the Florida State University College of Business. Since coming to MU, extending her knowledge of the field to students has been her priority.

“The management of risk has both evolved and yet retained its traditions, much like us at (MU),” Gabel said. “So there can be no better time than during our centennial celebration for the Trulaske College of Business to begin this exciting program.”

The program is funded by more than $1 million in donations from Duncan and Shirley Matteson, Tom and Betty Scott, the Missouri Employers Mutual, Columbia Insurance Group, Shelter Insurance and Lockton Insurance in Kansas City.

Dan French, chairman of the Department of Finance, said the program would not have been possible without the donations.

“Our new risk management initiative is a good example of our partnerships with donors and employers that result in new opportunities for MU students that would not otherwise be available without such private support,” French said.
New sustainability coordinator focuses on connections, big picture

Burden hopes to bring groups on campus together and focus on university-wide sustainability issues.

The Sustainability Office recently hired Michael Burden as the new coordinator in an effort to keep a better handle on sustainability issues around MU.

Burden, who previously served as the project coordinator for the Office of Service Learning, said he hopes to connect groups working on similar sustainability issues while in his new position.

“We have a pulse of what’s going on all around campus, so when somebody comes to us and says ‘we’re working on this,’ we can then connect them to somebody across campus who is doing something relatable and see if there are any synergies possible,” Burden said. “We love when we can find those collaborative projects that tie those things together.”

Burden said the office recently connected two groups researching waste at football games.

The first group is studying the placement of bins and how it impacts behavior, while the other looks at the food waste stream coming out of the stadium to optimize efficiency.

“(The athletics department) really wants to achieve a low waste profile for the games that they have,” Burden said. “When a partner like athletics is on board with sustainability issues, the amplification of the issue is tremendous because so many people care about it.”

Burden said the office will also help MU administrators in achieving carbon neutrality on campus by 2050.

Alicia LaVaute, the senior recycling and waste minimization specialist for the Sustainability Office, said Burden’s positivity and high-energy personality will improve the office.

“He has great leadership skills and will be able to motivate people to try new things and make changes to live a life that can be more sustainable,” she said.

Campus Facilities spokeswoman Karlan Seville said Burden will take the office in a new direction.

“(Burden) is going to focus more on the big picture of sustainability as a whole on campus — that’s something we’ve been lacking,” she said. “And someone to get a handle on what is
happening across campus and better package that because people don’t know how many different research projects and classes there are.”

Burden said the Sustainability Office will work with Sustain Mizzou and the Environmental Leadership Office to host Sustainapalooza in October and spread awareness of environmental efforts on campus.

“College is a time when you start to develop habits that are potentially going to be lifelong habits and it’s also a time when you’re exposed to a lot of new ideas, and we hope that students will consider how their day to day actions have an impact on others and their environment,” Burden said.

Burden said his goal for the next few months is to get a clear understanding of everything occurring on campus, and eventually propel MU to be recognized as an environmentally-friendly campus.

“One of the goals that I have is that if you visit the campus as a prospective student, I want you to very easily get a sense that this campus is at the forefront of sustainability,” Burden said. “We are in so many ways now, but you might not know that. Sometimes it’s below the surface or isn’t in the promotional materials. I want to continue to amplify and integrate those efforts into the overall messaging that folks receive.”

**SHP considering new public health program**

_Hume and Kuhnert hope to start the new public health program by fall 2015_

_The School of Health Professions is considering a new undergraduate program in public health._

Deborah Hume and Mark Kuhnert, associate professors in the school, have sent out a needs assessment to students, possible employers and alumni to determine students’ interest in the program and demand for a public health degree in the job market.

“So far we have gotten a few hundred surveys back,” Kuhnert said, “and so far they have been very positive.”

The survey results will be used to create a proposal for the program, which will be presented to Dean Kristofer Hagglund in October with hopes of starting the program by fall 2015.

The information gained in the surveys is added to the proposal and a committee was made in order to help formulate the technicalities of the degree.
“(For) the proposal, we have to develop the curriculum and our budget, how (many) faculty and staff we will need and the operating expenses,” Kuhnert said. “We assembled a committee with our faculty and student services in order to develop curriculum.”

Hume said there are few options for studying public health in Missouri, but if MU were to launch a public health degree program and gain accreditation from the Council on Education for Public Health, it would expand choices for students.

“The only other undergraduate public health major in the state is in St. Louis,” Hume said. “(If MU launched the program), we would be the second in the state with this degree and the only public university.”

Students who graduate with a degree in public health would have a background in sociology, statistics, epidemiology and environmental science. Hume said an undergraduate degree in public health would allow graduates of the program to work in fields such as assessing water quality and working in school education programs to assess school nutrition.

MU currently offers a graduate degree in public health, so undergraduate students could continue their education through MU if they choose to study public health.

“We are looking at the graduate school to see what kind of (undergraduate) requirements they need,” Kuhnert said.

Public health degrees have been around for a long time to help prevent disease epidemics while helping the health of a community as a whole, Hume said.

“Public health looks at the health of the community as a whole (and) it is more about the prevention (of diseases),” Hume said. “I think that there are already a number of people (in the School of Health Science) who have a background in public health and students should make an appointment to talk to one of these people (if they are interested).”

MU offers unconventional classes

Classes about wizards and rappers give students a new look on their favorite topics.

Students constructing their schedules can include unconventional elective courses, which may both satisfy credit requirements and interest them.

Religious Studies 2240: Harry Potter, Magic and Religion

This course goes deeper inside the world of everyone’s favorite boy wizard, taking an analytical look at the books we all remember consuming in mass quantities a decade ago.
Professor Signe Cohen, a self-proclaimed Ravenclaw, has taught the class for five years.

“I think students are interested in the class because they are always thinking about and analyzing things going on in popular culture, and this class offers them an opportunity to go deeper than your average superficial chat,” Cohen said.

The students are instructed to read each of the seven books over the course of the semester, to fuel in-class discussion about the way the magic in the books ties to topics such as religion and mythology. Cohen said references to Greek, Nordic and Celtic mythology as well as Biblical parallels are discussed.

**English 2169: Jay-Z and Kanye West**

Another unusual class is focused on the analysis of a different facet of pop culture: the music of icons Kanye West and Jay-Z.

Technically an English course, this class swaps out the novels, poems and essays for the lyrics of the two artists’ songs.

Professor Andrew Hoberek has taught the class for two semesters and lists his favorite Kanye West song as “All Falls Down” and his favorite Jay-Z track as “Dirt off Your Shoulder.”

“Students that take the class tend to come in already being interested in the subject, which makes it easier for them to really connect with the material,” Hoberek said. “Even if they are normally reluctant to participate in class discussions, here they would be more inclined because they already have the knowledge.”

Class normally consists of students listening to the artists’ songs or watching their music videos and then discussing meanings and themes as interpreted.

**Peace Studies 1150/Rural Sociology 1150: The Amish Community**

Students in this class study the culture of one of the longest-standing populations in the U.S.

This course is a verified credit-buster, covering behavioral studies, humanities and writing intensive requirements.

Professor Caroline Brock said she finds herself teaching students from two different spectrums.

“The class is composed of students who both come from Missouri that are exposed to the Amish firsthand in their small towns, and also urban students who have seen the reality shows and media coverage on the culture that has exploded in recent years,” Brock said.
Small vs. large: Which size farm is better for the planet?

By Tamar Haspel September 2 at 10:00 AM

There’s a kind of farm that has caught the imagination of the food-conscious among us. It’s relatively small, and you know the farmer who runs it. It’s diverse, growing different kinds of crops and often incorporating livestock. It may or may not be organic, but it incorporates practices — crop rotation, minimal pesticide use, composting — that are planet-friendly. Customers are local restaurants, local markets and us: shoppers who buy into a farm share or visit the farmers market.

There’s a lot to like about that kind of farm, and advocates believe it’s the pattern for what our agriculture ought to look like. The vision of small, diversified farms feeding the world, one community at a time, is a popular one. But is it a viable one?

I talked with a passel of people who either study (agricultural economist) or live (farmer) this issue, and there were a few ideas that generated enough consensus that I’m willing to call them facts:

1. **Small, diversified farms are less efficient than large ones.** Which means that food grown on them is more expensive. Marc Bellemare, an assistant professor in the University of Minnesota’s department of applied economics, calls farmers market produce “luxury goods,” and Tim Griffin, director of the Agriculture, Food and Environment program at Tufts University’s Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, explains the dynamic simply: economy of scale. “As the farms get larger, it’s easier to invest in labor-saving machinery, technology and specialized management, and production cost per unit goes down,” he says. It’s Econ 101.

Even John Ikerd, professor emeritus of agriculture and applied economics at the University of Missouri and an outspoken advocate of the idea that small organic farms ought to feed the world — an idea Bellemare calls “wishful thinking” — acknowledges that we’d need many more farmers to make that happen, and that food would be more expensive. How much more expensive is tough to estimate. Advocates of small-and-local tend to say not much (Ikerd guesses 6 to 8 percent), and skeptics tend to say quite a bit. It would undoubtedly vary significantly by region; areas that are densely populated, where land is expensive, or that have lousy weather, where food is hard to grow, would have higher prices.

2. **Small, diversified farms bring benefits to their communities.** I’ve never talked with anyone who thinks incorporating agriculture into communities is a bad idea. Pretty much everyone seems to believe, as I do, that there’s value in having a place where people can take kids to pull a
carrot out of the ground or come face to face with a pig. Local agriculture can contribute to a sense of community and keep spaces open. It’s a reminder to everyone that food doesn’t just appear, and that it’s only because somebody else is growing it that we’re freed up to be accountants or mechanics or scientists. Or journalists.

3. **Local’s market share is small.** Very small. Under 2 percent small. And the farmers market share is just a fraction of that. Although farmers’ direct sales (through markets, farm stands and community-supported agriculture programs, or CSAs) tripled from 1992 to 2007, from $404 million to $1.2 billion, they leveled off afterward, growing to only $1.3 billion from 2007 to 2012 — despite a large increase in the number of farmers markets during that time, from 4,685 in 2008 (there’s no 2007 data) to 7,864 in 2012. That’s 0.3 percent of total agricultural sales. Expand “local” to include sales that go through channels to local restaurants and markets, and the figure is larger: $4.8 billion in 2007, the last year for which data is available, but still just over 1 percent of total farm sales. (The USDA is planning to release new data at the end of September, and I’ve seen indications that the number will increase.)

4. **Farmers selling directly to their customers aren’t making a living.** The USDA defines “small” as a farm with gross sales under $50,000, and 97 percent of the farms selling directly meet that definition. But the overwhelming majority — 86 percent — don’t have even $10,000 in sales. These are clearly not operations that support farmers, and perhaps not the best pattern on which to plan the future of our agriculture.

5. **Farms pollute, and large, chemical-intensive commodity farms have damaged the environment.** According to the EPA, agriculture is the biggest source of pollution of lakes and rivers, and the recent shutdown of Toledo, Ohio’s, water supply because of toxins produced by bacteria is Exhibit A for agriculture’s environmental impact. That doesn’t mean that all large farms pollute, or that no small farm does, but when you have tens of thousands of acres of a two- or three-crop rotation, with chemical fertilizers and pesticides as standard operating procedure, there are bound to be problems. (There are also animal welfare issues, but I’m leaving that important topic for another day and focusing on crops.)

6. **Large industrial farms grow primarily corn and soy, which consumers buy as meat and processed foods.** And there’s a strong argument that those foods are making us fat and sick. But that’s not the farmers’ fault. They grow what the market demands. If we want to fix that, and I think we should, we’d be better off talking to the government, which determines subsidies; food manufacturers, who turn crops into what we actually eat; and consumers, who vote with their wallets.

Those are the major points, and although obviously each is complicated, in aggregate, they boil down to this: Small farms are inefficient but are more likely to grow healthful foods and might be more environmentally friendly, while large farms are sometimes environmentally unfriendly but raise large amounts of food efficiently and affordably.

The idea that we should replace the large, polluting farms with the small, diversified farms ignores what might be the best solution: Get the large farms to stop polluting.
There are some hopeful signs that it’s already happening. Cover cropping and no-till farming, which help improve soil health and reduce runoff, are on the rise. Recent droughts have underscored the importance of building up organic matter, which retains water, in soil.

The kind of farm that doesn’t get talked about, and that may combine the best of small and large, is what economists call “the ag of the middle.” One of those farms, on 2,500 acres in southern Minnesota, has been run by Matt Eischen’s family for generations. Eischen rotates sweet corn and peas, which are contracted to become Birds Eye frozen vegetables, with field corn and soy. Growing peas, which go in early and mature in 60 days, sometimes allows him to double-crop his land. He samples 1.5-acre parcels and adds only the fertilizer that each parcel needs to support the crop he’s intending to grow there. He practices no-till, and he plants grass strips in low-lying areas, which act as a filter for any rainwater running off the fields. In the fall, he puts cattle out in the fields to eat the cornstalks, and he uses animal manure and crop residue to build organic matter in his soil. No, it’s not like the farmer growing 10 acres of vegetables just outside town, but neither is it the stuff of Chipotle commercials.

As a small farmer, I see both sides of small. It’s immensely gratifying for my husband, Kevin, and me to bring people out to see our oysters, to show them the different growth stages, to describe how we bring them from pinheads to market size. Our visitors tell us that tasting an oyster right on the farm is a compelling, memorable experience. But our size means that we do many jobs in a way that is time-consuming and labor-intensive. Take tumbling, which we do to remove barnacles. Bigger operations have stainless-steel tumblers that can cost thousands of dollars. We use a ’70s-era cement mixer Kevin found on Craigslist. And, like many small farmers, we drive a truck that’s well past the first blush of youth, and an 80-mile round trip in a truck that gets 14 miles to the gallon, all to drop off 2,000 oysters at our wholesaler . . . well, you do the math.

Small and large both have benefits. Saying we need both isn’t some kind of namby-pamby, can’t-we-all-get-along compromise. It’s the optimal system, with each kind filling a different demand.

What if advocates on each side focused on getting their own house in order? If you’re in the small camp, work on efficiency. Perhaps you can reconsider organic’s natural/synthetic line in the sand, which increases costs without benefiting either customer or environment. Down the line, think about incorporating genetically modified crop varieties that are disease- or drought-resistant. Find ways to cut back on waste. And those in the large, why not make some of the basic organic-style practices, like cover cropping and no-till, standard? Consider a target level of organic matter in the soil, to cut back on water use. How about strengthening the conservation practices required for farms to receive federal dollars, even linking them to results like runoff reductions or increased organic matter?

Ultimately, we all vote with our wallets, every day. The best way to get an environmentally sound system that grows healthful food is to buy healthful food from environmentally sound farms. And it doesn’t have to be farm stand kale. It could be frozen peas.
MU researchers find cause of tassel-less corn to be boron deficiency

MU researchers recently used a piece of tassel-less corn to study boron’s effect on plant cells.

By Grace Rogers

Living in Columbia, where one is never far from a farm, it is easy to take advantage of the complexity of agriculture.

Paula McSteen, an associate professor of biological sciences, and a team of researchers have been working to understand boron’s role in agriculture.

Their research began with a mutant corn plant, which had no tassels, the pollen-producing flowers. McSteen became interested in which gene caused the mutation because it is important for producing tassels and improving the size of corn ears.

Kim Phillips, a graduate student at Penn State University, mapped the genome of the corn plant and found the gene responsible for the mutation.

“(In genetics,) you actually don’t know what you’re going to end up with,” McSteen said. “We had no idea we were working on boron. We didn’t start off to look for boron. We just were interested in how tassels are made.”

Collaborating with professors from other departments and universities, including Simon Malcomber from California State University-Long Beach, the team discovered the tassel-less gene appeared to be a boron transporter.

According to MU post doctoral student Amanda Durbak, who was the first author of the project’s research paper, they tested their hypothesis that the gene produced a boron transporter by injecting RNA into unfertilized frog eggs. The team also collaborated with MU plant sciences professor Walter Gassman and MU research specialist Sharon Pike to test their hypothesis.

After being injected with the RNA, the egg produced the boron transporters. When placed in a boron solution, the eggs swelled due to the intake of boron, and some even burst.

“When it swells for a while, (the membrane) can just stretch out, but if it’s too quick it can’t do that, it bursts,” Gassman said.

For more information on boron, the team turned to emeritus professor of plant sciences Dale Blevins and biochemist Malcolm O’Neill from the University of Georgia.
Boron plays an important role in plants, especially in the cell wall. Through a process called cross-linking, boron affects pectin to help make cell walls more stable. It is a delicate balance, McSteen said, because too little boron can cause the cell to collapse in on itself due to instability, while too much makes the cell wall overly rigid.

Meristems, or stem cells of a plant, are particularly vulnerable to boron imbalance. Plants’ meristems continue functioning throughout their life, unlike the stem cells of humans. However, the researchers found that it was most important to keep a healthy balance of boron while the corn was producing tassels and ears.

“That’s kind of one of the tricky parts: How much is the sweet spot?” Durbak said.

The team took their research to the corn fields and found that a little boron goes a long way. Durbak found that the fields watered with a boron fertilizer grew normally, while those given only water had difficulties growing in Missouri’s naturally boron-deficient soil.

Farmers can put the study to use right away by getting the boron levels of their soil tested.

“Straightaway, all farmers should be testing if they have boron-deficiency and adding boron if they need to,” McSteen said. “If they added more boron (at the correct times), they would get more yield.”

However, McSteen said, boron research has plenty of future potential as well. Currently, she is collaborating with the chemistry department to develop methods of visualizing boron in cells.

“That involves sticking our plants into the nuclear reactor here,” McSteen said. “So, that’s kind of cool.”

As time passes, more and more applications of the team’s basic research may be found.

“That’s why basic research is so important because you never know how it’s going to be important in the future,” McSteen said.