COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Provost candidate Stokes speaks about experience at Florida State, University of Georgia
Monday, November 10, 2014 | 9:14 p.m. CST; updated 10:17 p.m. CST, Monday, November 10, 2014

BY CAITLIN HOLLAND

COLUMBIA — In the fourth campus forum for MU's open provost position, candidate Garnett Stokes explained on Monday how she thinks her experiences would contribute to success as provost at MU.

Stokes is the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Florida State University. She was interim president of the university until midnight Monday. Florida Sen. John Thrasher was confirmed as Florida State's next president on Nov. 6.

In her forum, Stokes addressed her experiences as provost at Florida State, dean of the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Georgia and head of the Department of Psychology at Georgia.

She said her goals as provost at Florida State were to improve faculty morale, raise the university’s research profile, work to enter the American Association of Universities and hire more tenure and tenure-track faculty.

She said that as provost at Missouri, she would want to focus on increasing faculty morale with an emphasis on rewarding excellence. She said she also would focus on what value being an AAU university brings to students.

Motivating faculty
In the forum, Stokes was asked how she incentivized faculty members to do excellent work. She described her efforts at Florida State to find ways to reward faculty who were doing exceptionally well but had not received substantial raises.

Stokes said she created the provost's Extraordinary Accomplishments Program to address this. Under the program, if a faculty member at Florida State won an award that the AAU recognizes and considers in its criteria, the member would receive an automatic bump to his or her base
salary, Stokes said in the forum. If a faculty member won an award recognized by the National Research Council, that member would receive a different bump in base salary.

She said that these salary bumps were given to more than 100 faculty members in the past year and that the university did not limit how many a member could receive.

She said faculty have been working harder individually and with colleagues to get those awards with the incentives in place.

The salary bumps range from $5,000 to up to $15,000 for big awards, Stokes said.

Stokes said the system isn't perfect because there are awards faculty can receive that do not fall under either of the two criteria. But another committee was formed to analyze if and when other awards are deserving of pay bumps as well.

"I'm not sure there's been much I've done that I've felt better about," she said.

**Communication and leadership style**

Stokes described a budget-cut experience she had as a dean at Georgia. She said she went into a meeting of all the deans and provost and was told each dean would receive an envelope with their funding cut inside.

"Is this really the way that we want to communicate budget cuts?" Stokes said she thought after that meeting.

She said she prefers talking face to face and in small groups over email communication.

When asked what her top priorities would be at MU, she said she would want to get to know faculty, staff and students to understand where the campus is and where it is trying to go.

**Title IX**

During Stokes' time at Florida State, the university underwent a Title IX investigation for its handling of a sexual assault complaint relating to a student athlete, she said.

Stokes was asked what she learned from being in the national news as a leader and how she would use what she learned at MU.

As part of her response, she said that when facts are sketchy, unclear or contradictory, people tend to fill in gaps with their own perceptions of what they believe is true.
"I believe in being as fair to our students as possible, and I believe that one's decisions cannot be driven by what the media might or might not say," she said.

She described Florida State's approach to sexual violence as victim-centric. She said she feels confident that the focus at Florida State is on protecting the victims of sexual violence and sexual assault.

**Provost search process**

Three other candidates — **Michele Wheatly, John Wiencek** and **Nancy Brickhouse** — have spoken in forums already.

Since Brian Foster's retirement after eight years at MU in December 2013, the university has hired search firm Isaacson, Miller to create a position profile for the next provost.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin will make the final decision on the next provost. On Friday, MU spokesman Christian Basi said Loftin indicated he would like to hire a new provost by early next **semester**, according to previous Missourian reporting.

**the maneater**

MU still looking into Loftin Twitter incident

**DoIT is investigating why his account had favorited a pornographic tweet.**

**Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin’s Twitter account favorited a pornographic tweet Oct. 20, raising questions about access to @bowtieger.**

The next morning, Loftin tweeted the following:

@bowtieger Just woke up and discovered my twitter account was hacked last night. I am shutting it down until I get my security fixed.

Loftin resumed tweeting Oct. 24. The graphic tweet in question has since been unfavorited.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said Loftin is the only one with access to his Twitter account and that Loftin writes all his own tweets.

Basi said a university technology team is still looking into the cause of the incident and working to improve account security.
“As demonstrated by this incident, anyone can be vulnerable,” Basi said. “Since technology is always changing, our team works to stay updated on the latest security tools and make sure our account security is the strongest possible.”

MU Information Security Officer Brandon Hough said in an email that the Division of IT has communicated with the chancellor’s office following the Twitter incident and taken steps to protect MU resources.

Hough said strategies for protecting campus information include systems and applications security measures, network security mechanisms and account-level protections.

“Our most important security defense is having faculty, staff and students aware of the risks, and them using best practices to defend themselves and the university against the risks,” he said. “When individuals unintentionally share passwords or inadvertently provide personal data via a fake survey, the technology protections are diminished.”

Hough said the first step in account security is creating strong passwords, keeping those passwords private and changing them occasionally.

“The university has strong requirements for any passwords used on university systems,” he said. “We have an extensive IT security awareness and training program that employees are required to take and is also offered to students. Included in this are recommendations for keeping passwords private and best practices for account security.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Waste, pollution cited in proposal to limit plastic bags in Columbia

Monday, November 10, 2014 | 5:08 p.m. CST; updated 9:24 p.m. CST, Monday, November 10, 2014
BY NICOLA DALLASEN

COLUMBIA — The Sierra Club Osage Group cites waste and environmental pollution in its drive for limiting the use of plastic bags at Columbia stores that sell perishable food. The environmental organization has proposed an ordinance that would require shoppers to bring their own bags or pay at least 10 cents each per paper bag. Paper bags would need to be 100 percent recyclable and contain at least 40 percent recycled material.
The ordinance, which would take effect one year after approval, would not include plastic bags used for produce before checking out. Stores that don't comply would be fined $100 to $300 for each day they are in violation.

"What we want is to drive people to use reusable bags," said Carolyn Amparan, Osage Group publicity committee chair. "They can re-use paper, or they can re-use the plastic bags they already have."

Sierra Club members discussed banning plastic bags at a goal-setting workshop in March. They had heard of bans in other cities and wanted one for Columbia. The club reviewed ordinances in Chicago, San Francisco, Long Beach, California, and Eugene, Oregon, before drafting its own proposal and presenting it to the Columbia City Council on Oct. 20.

The council sent the ordinance to its Citizen Advisory Commission on Energy and the Environment, which assigned it to a subcommittee for a review, Esther Stroh of the Environment and Energy Commission said. The commission will examine the environmental and economic impacts of plastic bags Thursday, according to its meeting agenda.

While the proposal makes its way through city government, the Osage Group is educating the public about single-use plastic bags and their effects. The Sierra Club partnered with Missouri River Relief to host a free showing of the documentary "Bag It" at 6 p.m. Tuesday at Ragtag Cinemacafe.

Frederick vom Saal, an MU biology professor and one of the world's leading researchers of the health effects of plastic additive bisphenol A, Osage Group Chair Jan Dye and members of the Missouri River Relief will host a question and answer session after the screening.

Those advocating limits on plastic bags also cite the environmental threat to wildlife and people.

"Once they're out and sunlight hits them they photo-degrade, which causes them to break up into tiny pieces that look like food to animals, and they try
to eat them," Dye said. The animals can also get entangled in the bags causing the animals to suffocate and die, he said.

Vom Saal discussed the chemical dangers of plastic bags when the proposal was made to the City Council.

"There are really serious consequences for having things like ethylene plastic bags get into the environment where UV light degrades them and then they bind onto dioxins, PCBs, DDTs and other extremely harmful chemicals and vector them through the food chain," he said.

These chemicals travel from landfills to groundwater, where wastewater treatment plants fail to remove them, vom Saal said.

Bisphenol A, or BPA, is an endocrine disruptor, according to vom Saal's research. This means it interferes with humans' hormone systems.

The chemical has been linked to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, damage to the reproductive system, cancer and learning disabilities.

MU hosts Missouri Geographic Alliance conference

The conference featured several lectures, student presentations and raffles.

The Missouri Geographic Alliance, a network of Missouri educators, geography professionals and concerned citizens, hosted its fall conference in the Animal Science center Saturday.

This year’s conference hosted more than 20 lecturers, including Alyson Greiner, a professor at Oklahoma State University and an editor of the Journal of Cultural Geography.

The event also included a variety of lectures on various subjects that ranged from hands-on geospatial technology activities, geography and economic data to exploration of scientific concepts from a geographical perspective.
MU adjunct professor Larry Brown gave a talk entitled “We Know Who We Are: White Nationalism in the Ozarks.”

Brown’s lecture chronicled the numerous white extremist, racist groups that have developed in the Ozarks region of Missouri over the last century. He also detailed how several of the older and enduring geographic features of the Ozark region are related to the development of these extremist groups.

“In general, geography is the one of the most integrated and holistic educational disciplines,” Brown said. “The level of technical and sociological integration within the field makes it almost imperative that students have at least some knowledge of it. It (is) so much more than the data — it’s the vast implications of such data.”

Many students studying education and geography also attended the event to present various lesson plans and attend lectures.

These students, like senior Caleb Pitts, were also given an opportunity to present their ideas in an informal poster presentation format.

“We are here to present our lesson plans, as well as to attend the presentations from all of the guest speakers,” Pitts said. “Our lesson plan is entitled ‘Themes of Geography’, which talks about the practical applications of geography. I, along with several other students attending, are on the path to teaching high school social studies.”

The MGA is an organization that connects educators with geographers, and vice versa, and is funded through a National Geographic Education Foundation grant as well as fundraising.

A part of the conference focused on raising funds for the organization via silent auctions and raffles.

Shannon White, the coordinator of the Missouri MGA and this year’s conference, said the alliance offers various opportunities for its members.

“The first purpose of the MGA is to connect educators with geographers,” White said. “The alliance gives opportunities to educators and geographers alike, while also creating chances for these educators to become educated themselves by attending events like our fall conference.”

The alliance has a track record of creating opportunities for their members to attend education-oriented events, as well as traveling to exotic places in the process. Andy Tilmon, a high school social studies teacher, said he is an example of this.

“Through my membership and participation in MGA, I was selected by the Northeast Asian History Foundation to be a part of the U.S. Delegation to attend the fifth International Conference on Geographic Naming Geographic Education in Seoul, South Korea,” Tilmon said.

White said Alliance also has been shown to act as an advocacy group in the past.
“I was able to take students to Washington, D.C., to lobby for geography education through the alliance,” she said. “It is so important to be able to advocate, and the alliance has been an instrumental tool in allowing us to do that.”

The event concluded with a raffle and a lifetime achievement award given to Bill Gerling, director of social studies education for the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Gerling urged the audience to stay involved in the alliance.

“It’s a great opportunity to network,” White said. “We love to come together, we love to see each other and we absolutely love to see what sort of opportunities we can make available to each other. We’re a tight-knit group.”

Settlement sought in Washington University student's death

Monday, November 10, 2014 | 4:42 p.m. CST

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. LOUIS — Family members of a Washington University student who fell to his death from a balcony say they believe the school is partly responsible.

Yongsang Soh died when he fell from a 23rd floor balcony in October 2013. The death was first ruled a suicide, but the death certificate was changed a year later to say the cause of death was undetermined. The presence of LSD in his system was listed as a factor.

Soh’s family this summer sought a $50 million settlement from Washington University, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported. In exchange, the family promised not to sue or publicize concerns about what they called the school's lax enforcement of discipline. The school rejected that proposal. University spokeswoman Jill Friedman said over the weekend that the school would not comment on pending legal matters.
The St. Louis Police Department said that while it’s not seeking a suspect in Soh’s death, an investigation is active and ongoing.

A jogger discovered 22-year-old Soh’s body outside of the Dorchester apartments on Oct. 26, 2013. Authorities said there weren’t any signs of foul play and that it looked as if Soh fell to his death.

Soh’s family said in a settlement proposal obtained by the Post-Dispatch that Soh had "zero history of drug use or illegal behavior prior to commencing his studies at the university." They say Soh fell in with a drug culture at the university and that ultimately led to his death.

Some of Soh’s friends told the family’s private investigators that he had taken LSD the night he died.

The settlement proposal mentioned Soh's involvement with the Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity’s Phi chapter, which was kicked off Upper Fraternity Row in 2008 after a criminal drug investigation that resulted in some arrests.

In 2012, the fraternity was disbanded by its national office and suspended by the university following an investigation that revealed "significant violations."

Soh’s family said the university was too easy on students carrying or selling drugs and opted to refer them to the school’s disciplinary system rather than turning them over to law enforcement. They say that leniency allowed members of the fraternity to set up a system for students to buy and sell drugs.

Friedman rejected the idea that the school was too lenient and said it was clear to students how they were expected to behave.

"The university took serious disciplinary action against involved students — up to and including permanent termination — and referred individual cases to the local prosecutor for consideration of criminal charges,” Friedman said.