Nixon to appoint St. Louis Community College lawyer to UM Curators

By ASHLEY JOST

Gov. Jay Nixon named his choice Friday to fill one of three University of Missouri Board of Curators seats that will be vacant starting Jan. 1.

Mary Nelson, a Democrat from St. Louis, will be appointed by Nixon to serve on the UM System’s top board, pending approval from the state Senate.

Nelson is general counsel and the chief legal officer for the St. Louis Community College District. She started with the community college in September.

Nelson formerly worked with the governor’s administration as the director of boards and commissions in 2009-2010, identifying people to serve in the more than 1,900 positions the governor has authority to fill by appointment.

“Mary is a distinguished alumna of the University of Missouri School of Law, who has served her state and her community for decades,” Nixon said in a news release. “She will make an outstanding curator for the University system.”

Before working in her current position, Nelson was the commissioner for the Administrative Hearing Commission, a state entity that considers cases brought forward by people or agencies and hears appeals connected to decisions by other state agencies. The commission has jurisdiction over state tax, professional licensing, Medicaid provider issues, some Highways and Transportation Commission actions and disciplinary actions against state employees, among other things. Nelson was the first black woman appointed to the commission.

Nelson also has served on the Board of Police Commissioners for the City of St. Louis and served as president from 2002 to 2004. She has held several legal positions as well and is an active member of the Missouri Bar.

A graduate of Princeton University, Nelson went on to get her law degree at MU.

She will replace former state Sen. Wayne Goode, also a Democrat, whose term on the Board of Curators expires Thursday. Goode is one of three curators to leave the board next week, the others being Don Downing, also from St. Louis, and David Bradley of St. Joseph.

Goode described Nelson as knowledgeable and said she is familiar with the St. Louis area and the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus. Even though she has only been with St. Louis Community College for four months, Goode said, that knowledge will benefit her when it comes to tackling the issues the curators have to address such as funding and budget allocations.

“We are appointed by congressional districts to give diversity, but we’re not appointed” to represent individual campuses, Goode said. “We all come on looking at the university as a whole, and that’s
what I would recommend for any new curator: you’re there to represent the entity and to make judgments for it as one body.”

If Nelson wins approval, her term will expire Jan. 1, 2021.

Nixon appoints Nelson to UM Board of Curators
Dec 26, 2014, 2:10pm CST

Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon on Friday appointed Mary Nelson, a Democrat from St. Louis, to the University of Missouri System’s Board of Curators, which oversees operation of its four campuses.

Nelson is general counsel and chief legal officer for the St. Louis Community College District and a University of Missouri law graduate.

She’s also served as a commissioner for the Administrative Hearing Commission; president of the Mound City Bar Association; and board member for the city of St. Louis’ Board of Police Commissioners.

Nelson’s term will begin on Jan. 1 and expire in 2021. She’ll represent the First Congressional District and replaces Wayne Goode.

Nelson’s appointment is pending confirmation from the Missouri Senate.

The University of Missouri system is led by President Timothy Wolfe. Its four campuses — in Columbia, Kansas City, Rolla and St. Louis — had a total fall 2013 enrollment of 75,272.

MU law graduate appointed to Board of Curators
Saturday, December 27, 2014 | 3:37 p.m. CST

BY SARAH ROTHBERG

COLUMBIA — Gov. Jay Nixon has appointed Mary Nelson to fill one of three vacancies on the University of Missouri System Board of Curators.

His choice of a fellow Democrat, who is general counsel and chief legal officer for the St. Louis Community College District, will need confirmation by the state Senate.

If confirmed, Nelson will join the nine-member board that oversees operations of the four-campus system for a six-year term.
Nelson was selected to fill fellow Democrat Wayne Goode’s position — whose term ends Jan. 1 — as the representative for the 1st Congressional District.

“Mary is a distinguished alumna of the University of Missouri School of Law, who has served her state and her community for decades,” Gov. Nixon said in a press release. “She will make an outstanding curator for the university system.”

Nelson previously served on the state’s Administrative Hearing Commission, which handles matters including Medicaid provider issues, Highways and Transportation Commission actions and disciplinary actions against state employees.

She has served as president of the Mound City Bar Association and on the Board of Police Commissioners for the City of St. Louis.

Nelson earned her undergraduate degree from Princeton University and her law degree from MU.

Supervising editor is Austin Huguelet.

MU student who fell from balcony dies

By ASHLEY JOST
Friday, December 26, 2014 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri student who fell at least two stories at a house party earlier this month has died, University Hospital spokesman Jeff Hoelscher said.

Jack Lipp, 19, fell at least two stories from a building in the 500 block of South Fourth Street on Dec. 13 during a party of about 100 people, according to previous Tribune reports.

Columbia police were dispatched to the location at 2:24 a.m. Dec. 13, and partygoers took off when police arrived. With no witnesses, police have little information about the fall. CPD spokeswoman Latisha Stroer said Friday morning that detectives are still looking for witnesses. Anyone with information is asked to call Detective Julie Ray at 573-874-7610 or email jamarty@gocolumbiamo.com.

In an earlier news release from CPD, police indicated they were not sure how far Lipp fell. He was listed in critical condition the next morning. Hoelscher could not provide any additional information, including when Lipp died.

Lipp is the 14th MU student who has died since Jan. 1, university spokesman Christian Basi said. The university honors deceased students at an annual vigil during the spring.

The annual vigil is scheduled for April 3. The time and place have not been set, but the ceremony is typically held in Stotler Lounge of the Memorial Student Union.
MU student dies after fall from balcony in mid-December

Friday, December 26, 2014 | 3:49 p.m. CST; updated 5:21 p.m. CST, Friday, December 26, 2014
BY AMBER GARRETT

COLUMBIA — The MU student who fell Dec. 13 from a balcony on Fourth Street near campus died Thursday.

Jack Lipp, 19, died at University Hospital from injuries caused by the fall from a two-story balcony onto a driveway. He remained in critical condition until his death.

Lipp fell from the balcony of a house at 507 S. Fourth St. during a party, the Missourian reported at the time. According to a resident of the house, Mike Novak, the balcony railing was broken and considered unsafe.

Novak said no one in the house saw Lipp fall. "We came outside and he was lying on the ground," he said.

Emergency responders arrived at around 2:30 a.m., according to Columbia Police Department records.

Private funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Monday at McMurrough Funeral Chapel in Libertyville, Illinois. Memorial donations to the American Cancer Society are preferred, in honor of his grandfather, Ellis Lipp, and his uncle, Marty Schade.

Lipp was born in Lake Forest, Illinois, to John and Stephanie Lipp. He graduated from Libertyville High School in a northern suburb of Chicago. He was a freshman at MU studying business.

2014: The year's biggest news stories

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF
Sunday, December 28, 2014 at 12:00 am

The year 2014 is almost over, but the biggest stories that happened during Earth's latest revolution are sure to be remembered. Among them were a renewed focus on combating sexual assault on the University of Missouri campus, a battle over the shape and infrastructure of Columbia's downtown and voters' repeated rejection of attempts to increase taxes.

In some cases, the stories are still unresolved. In others, their repercussions will be felt in 2015 and beyond. Here are the biggest stories of 2014, as selected by the Tribune newsroom.
Lt. Bruce Britt’s death

A Columbia firefighter was killed in the line of duty in February while responding to University Village, an MU student apartment complex, after a report of a partial building collapse.

Lt. Bruce Britt died Feb. 22 when a concrete walkway on Building 707 collapsed while he was trying to get residents out of the building. The walkway flipped as it fell, crushing Britt under the concrete deck.

The university hired Trabue, Hansen & Hinshaw Inc., a local engineering company the university often uses for contract work, to investigate the structural integrity of all MU-owned buildings in Columbia and beyond, including where Britt was killed. The firm determined that water and chlorides and expansion from “freeze-thaw action” likely “combined to deteriorate the concrete to the point where its shear strength could no longer support even only the self-weight of the walkway” that Britt was standing on, according to documents obtained via a records request earlier this year.

One engineer wrote in the report that the walkway’s support beams, metal deck and concrete slab were “significantly deteriorated.” Because of the state of the components, he wrote that it was “very difficult to pinpoint precisely what happened based solely on the observed debris.”

The firm’s report indicated issues with several other buildings at the University Village complex that resulted in the decision to tear down the apartments. Demolition of the buildings will come to a close in time for the land to be used for parking for students next semester.

Leigh Britt, the widow of Lt. Bruce Britt, filed a wrongful death lawsuit in March alleging the university is responsible for her husband’s death because it failed to properly maintain the apartment complex.

The suit is ongoing.

Menu Courey fallout

It took one former University of Missouri student’s alleged rape and subsequent suicide to spark serious discussion that has since become the staple issue of the year for MU and the UM System.

The moves came after a story by an ESPN program, “Outside the Lines,” that questioned MU’s response to the reported sexual assault of Sasha Menu Courey, a former MU swimmer who committed suicide in 2011, about 16 months after she allegedly was raped by a Missouri football player.

After the story was published, the UM Board of Curators hired the Dowd Bennett Law Firm out of St. Louis to act as an independent investigator and give details about how the university handled Courey’s case and identify whether it was dealt with correctly. Dowd Bennett investigators later announced the university failed to have proper policies in place under Title IX, a federal law prohibiting sexual discrimination and violence, despite federal guidance, and it should have acted on information about Menu Courey’s case.

One week before the independent investigation was made public, UM System President Tim Wolfe announced that every university employee, except lawyers, health officials or other positions that require confidentiality is required to bring any reports of sexual assault or violence to the Title IX coordinators.

These policies were crafted with guidance from the National Center for Higher Education Risk Management, a consulting company the UM System is paying almost $500,000.
At MU, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin announced the creation of a campus office focused solely on Title IX that would be staffed with an administrator and at least one investigator. This office is charged with addressing cases related to sexual discrimination and prevention and education efforts when the office is fully staffed.

**Voters reject taxes**

Columbia and Boone County voters delivered epic verdicts on tax and fee hike proposals in the second half of 2014.

In August, as voters statewide were giving a thumbs-down to Amendment 7, a three-quarter-cent sales tax to fund state road and bridge projects with only 40 percent approval, Boone County’s Proposition EPIC got even less support. EPIC, an eighth-cent sales tax aimed at providing revenue for the Central Missouri Events Center, or county fairground, and county parks projects garnered only 33 percent of the vote.

Boone County commissioners, who had been subsidizing operation of the events center with county general revenue since 2011, said a new revenue stream was needed for the events center, which the county has owned since 1999. As the year comes to an end, commissioners are preparing to close the venue, as they had warned voters before the August ballot issue.

The voting trend against higher fees and taxes continued in November when voters in Columbia delivered resounding defeats to Propositions 1 and 2: a property tax increase to pay for more public safety officers and a development fee increase that would have helped fund road construction.

Propositions 1 and 2 were defeated with 60 percent and 55 percent of votes, respectively.

As a result of apparent voter angst over taxes, city officials might be nervous going into 2015, when voters will see an electric bond issue, and possibly a fee increase for stormwater infrastructure improvements, in April and extensions of the city’s quarter-cent capital improvement sales tax and its eighth-cent sales tax for parks in August.

**Downtown development**

The story of downtown Columbia’s development boom reached a dark chapter late last year when, faced with a wave of proposals for new, high-density housing, city officials raised alarms about the capacity of electric and sanitary sewer infrastructure to serve thousands of new residents in the area.

After City Manager Mike Matthes announced that new proposals would need to be put on hold until the problems are addressed, he and other top city officials began to push for the formation of a tax increment financing district to encompass the central city as a way to raise new funds for infrastructure improvements.

Facing opposition from taxing local entities that would be affected by the proposal — including the Boone County Commission — the Columbia City Council voted down a measure in February that would have allowed the TIF district plan to move forward.

Before the council’s vote, Boone County Counselor C.J. Dykhouse filed a lawsuit against the city to block it from approving TIF in any form for at least the next several years, alleging the city did not file reports on existing TIF projects with the Missouri Department of Economic Development in a timely manner. The case is ongoing and is expected to go to trial.

Downtown development did not grind to a halt without a TIF district. In March, the council approved legislation to authorize development agreements between the city and two student housing developers seeking to put more beds near the MU campus: Collegiate Housing Partners of St. Louis and The Opus Group of Minneapolis.
In return for assurances their projects would be able to move forward, the developers agreed to chip in on infrastructure improvements. Collegiate Housing Partners is constructing TODD Student Living on Conley Avenue at Fourth and Fifth streets, and Opus is building District Flats on Locust Street at Seventh and Eighth streets. Both complexes are expected to be finished in time for the start of the fall 2015 semester.

But local activists were upset by the council’s vote on the agreement for Opus — Collegiate Housing Partners had been in talks with the city for more than a year at that time and had won political points by backing off an earlier proposal to demolish the Niedermeyer building to make way for a high-rise apartment building — and launched a referendum petition effort to rescind the development agreement.

The council voted to rescind the first agreement and put a second one in its place, which local attorneys Jeremy Root and Josh Oxenhandler argue in a lawsuit filed on behalf of two residents who took part in the Repeal 6214 effort amounted to a violation of the petitioners’ civil rights.

Major federal indictment

Federal authorities joined local and state officials last month to announce the indictment of 27 local people in an alleged drug-trafficking conspiracy, a move a federal attorney said targeted the “worst of the worst” offenders in the area. Many of them have long criminal records.

One worked for the Boone County Circuit Clerk’s Office, and authorities allege she tipped off another member of the conspiracy about a search warrant, putting officers’ lives in jeopardy. Another was an employee of Columbia Public Schools who resigned weeks after the indictment was unsealed.

Authorities allege the 27 people were part of a ring that distributed cocaine and had started a prostitution operation. As of last week, all but two of the defendants were in custody.

Ryan Ferguson on the offensive

A few months after a judge ruled that police and prosecutors acted improperly in the case that led to Ryan Ferguson’s conviction for the 2001 killing of Tribune Sports Editor Kent Heitholt, Ferguson filed a federal lawsuit seeking $100 million for the roughly 10 years he spent behind bars.

The suit, filed in March, named Boone County, the city of Columbia, former police Chief Randy Boehm, former Prosecuting Attorney Kevin Crane and police investigators, saying they conspired to deprive Ferguson of his rights, defamed him and arrested him on false pretense. The city and county have spent thousands defending themselves and their employees.

Several of the defendants, including Crane, have been dismissed from the suit. However, Ferguson’s father, Bill Ferguson, said the litigation will continue, and Crane will be brought back into a courtroom for his role in Ryan Ferguson’s conviction.

Ryan Ferguson has maintained his innocence. Charles Erickson, the other man accused in Heitholt’s murder, is serving 25 years in prison after pleading guilty to second-degree murder.

City ‘bans the box’

After a recommendation from the Mayor’s Task Force on Community Violence, the city council voted this month to make Columbia the first Missouri city to prohibit both private and public employers from asking job applicants about their criminal histories or conducting background checks before making a conditional job offer.

The “ban the box” law is intended to level the playing field for offenders who are trying to get back into the job market after getting released from incarceration. In a report to the council, the task force — formed in 2013 after a rash of gun violence in the city — said when offenders find employment after their release, the likelihood of their re-offending decreases.
Kansas City and St. Louis have “ban the box” laws, but they apply only to public employees. The city of Columbia nixed the box from its job applications in 2012.

Before “ban the box” was implemented, the policy ran into some pushback from some in the business community who said it would be onerous for employers to hold off on conducting background checks on applicants until late in the hiring process.

The Columbia Chamber of Commerce asked for the council to amend the ordinance to remove the provision prohibiting employers from conducting background checks, but the council unanimously passed the legislation as recommended by the task force.

The city’s Human Rights Commission will be responsible for enforcing the ordinance. Violations of the law are punishable by as much as $1,000 in fines or as long as 30 days in jail.

**Justice for Bruce Cole**

In July 2010, Bruce Cole had a moment of triumph when his proposal to turn a vacant field in Moberly into a bustling artificial sweetener factory employing hundreds was endorsed by Gov. Jay Nixon, who announced local financial backing and state tax incentives to subsidize it.

On Nov. 10, Cole’s fortunes sank to a new low when he was sentenced to seven years in prison for fraud and theft, convicted of lying on documents used to lure investors and taking the money to prevent foreclosure on his $6 million Beverly Hills home. As the year ends, Cole, 67, is an inmate at the Fulton Reception and Diagnostic Center.

The criminal case was just one facet of the ongoing legal battles over his company, Mamtek U.S., that have cost Cole his freedom and the money that remained when he was forced to sell the home he shared with his wife, Nanette Cole. Civil judgments against the Coles in U.S. Bankruptcy Court, affirmed when U.S. District Judge Nanette Laughrey in August found “overwhelming direct evidence” of fraud, cost them $906,895 held in escrow by court order.

Nanette Cole was held liable for the loss because the money Bruce Cole was convicted of stealing was transferred from Mamtek coffers to her personal bank account. The Coles are making a last-chance appeal to the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in hopes of retaining the money.

The legal defeats for the Coles are just a portion of the fallout from the September 2011 collapse of the Mamtek project. Morgan Keegan, the now-defunct investment bank that purchased the bonds and sold them to investors in $5,000 lots, faces civil trials next year in federal and state court.

The first, scheduled for three weeks in January, is a class action before Laughrey on behalf of the original bond investors. It charges Morgan Keegan and its Missouri legal representative, Armstrong Teasdale, with securities fraud based on the same issues that put Cole in prison. In November, Morgan Keegan will defend itself on the same fraud allegations in Cole County Circuit Court, where Shelter Insurance Cos. and Waddell-Reed, a Kansas investment manager, filed suit in 2012.

**Uber makes enemies**

Uber’s debut on the Columbia market has meant tense negotiations between the popular and controversial company and city staff.

After months of quietly recruiting drivers to work in Columbia while publicly remaining coy about its plans for the city, the company gave city staff just a few days notice that it would start operating its UberX service in Columbia.

The company contracts drivers who use their own vehicles and set their own schedules. Uber has a smartphone app that pairs drivers with customers and takes a cut of the fare at the end of the ride. It has butted heads with officials in other cities, including St. Louis and Kansas City, because though
the company offers a paid ride service, it bristles at regulations for taxicab companies. Instead, it argues it is a technology ridesharing company that does not fit into the taxicab mold.

Deputy City Manager Tony St. Romaine said he does not think Uber should fall under the city’s taxicab regulations. Instead, city staff has been working to draft a set of rules designed for companies such as Uber and Lyft, which the city calls “transportation network services.”

The rules would require drivers to pay a $70 annual permit fee and provide evidence they have clean driving records, have passed a criminal background check and are insured, or risk running afoul of city codes. St. Romaine asked that Uber operate for free while the city worked out these rules so it was not an illegally operating business. Although the company initially complied, it started charging for rides. In turn, the city issued tickets to individual Uber drivers.

Uber opposes some of the regulations and has asked the city to waive the requirement that drivers go to City Hall to provide proof of background checks and have their photos taken for IDs. Additionally, the company wants a grace period for drivers to obtain a permit from the city, meaning they would be legally allowed to pick up customers as soon as Uber hired them but before they got their permit from the city.

The city council is set to vote on the proposed regulations at its Feb. 2 meeting.

**Tobacco age goes up**

This month, the city council approved legislation that made Columbia the only city in the state to increase its minimum sale age for tobacco products and e-cigarettes to 21 and one of several Missouri cities that have approved prohibitions on using e-cigarettes in workplaces, restaurants and bars.

The council voted 6-1 on each of the three bills to establish the new laws, with Fifth Ward Councilwoman Laura Nauser casting the sole dissenting vote on each bill.

Supporters argued that the jury’s still out on the safety of e-cigarettes and that increasing the minimum sale age of tobacco products would reduce teenagers’ access to them, thereby decreasing their chances for becoming hooked on nicotine.

Days after the vote, opponents of the new laws launched a referendum petition drive for the three new ordinances; the petitioners have until Jan. 5 to submit petitions to City Clerk Sheela Amin. If the petitioners fall short of the 3,209 valid signatures needed to call referendums on the ordinances, they will have 14 days from the Jan. 5 deadline to amend their petitions.

If the petition is certified, the new laws would be suspended and the council would be presented with bills to repeal them. If the council defeats those bills, then the issue would come before voters.

In a year of notable happenings on the Mid-Missouri sports scene, one big announcement trumped them all

By **JOE WALLJASPER**
Sam's story and quest for NFL glory made him a celebrity

1.) In 2013, Michael Sam went out of his way to avoid the spotlight. The Missouri defensive end ducked reporters as he piled up sacks and became the Southeastern Conference co-defensive player of the year and a unanimous All-American.

Before the season began, Sam told his teammates what many of them had already guessed — that he was gay — and he didn’t want his sexual orientation to become a distracting public topic.

After wrapping up Missouri’s 12-2 season with a game-clinching sack and forced fumble against Oklahoma State in the Cotton Bowl, Sam’s days as a low-profile football player were numbered. As he showed his skills for NFL teams at the Senior Bowl, Sam and his agent realized his “secret” wasn’t that much of a secret. Since the news was going to break soon, he decided to be the one to break it.

“I am an openly proud gay man,” Sam told ESPN and instantaneously became an international celebrity.

His bid to become the first openly gay NFL player was, by far, the Tribune’s top sports story of 2014. It was more than just a sports story, obviously. Sam got a shout-out for his courage from President Barack Obama and an invitation to the White House, which he declined. He became a pal and documentary subject of Oprah Winfrey. Sam was as pertinent a topic for Stephen Colbert as Mel Kiper Jr.

Sam was widely praised for his courage. He won the Arthur Ashe Award for Courage at the ESPY Awards. But there were also reactions that reminded him why others in his shoes had stayed in the closet. An article in Sports Illustrated anonymously quoted a league executive saying: “How are the other guys going to deal with it? It’s going to be a big distraction.”

Those words seemed prophetic in May as the NFL draft wound down. Once considered a mid-round prospect, it appeared he wouldn’t be picked at all until Coach Jeff Fisher and the Rams scooped him up in the seventh round, with the 249th pick out of 256. After he got the phone call from the Rams, an emotional Sam gave his boyfriend, former MU diver Vito Cammisano, a big kiss, and they joyfully smashed cake in each other’s faces.

If that image portrayed him as someone eager to grab the nation’s attention and stick a thumb in the eye of homophobes, at other times he was a reluctant trailblazer, often saying he just wanted to focus on playing in the NFL.

“I don’t know why I have to get on ESPN or The New York Times and tell people I happen to be gay,” he told the Tribune shortly after his initial announcement. “Straight people don’t have to do it. I don’t know why gay people have to do it.”

Sam had a productive preseason, making three sacks in four exhibition games, but some of the on-field concerns about his suitability to the NFL proved problematic. At about 260 pounds and with 4.9 speed in the 40-yard dash, he is small for a defensive end and slow for a linebacker. Fisher didn’t think Sam would be effective on special teams, so his role was strictly as a situational pass rusher, and the Rams didn’t really need another of those. The team released Sam in the last wave of cuts on Aug. 30.

The Cowboys added him to their practice squad a few days later but released him on Oct. 21, and no other team claimed him for the rest of the season. The unanswerable question is what role, if any, his sexuality played in him not sticking in the league as a rookie.

Haith beats a hasty retreat, opens the door for Anderson

2.) Frank Haith’s arrival at Missouri was most unexpected. So was his departure.
Plucked from Miami’s hot seat by Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden in 2011, Haith was a surprise choice to lead a program that had gone to three straight NCAA Tournaments. The hire seemed even more sketchy when Haith was accused of NCAA violations committed at Miami a few months after taking over at Missouri.

Haith changed many minds in his first season when he guided the Tigers to a 30-5 record and Big 12 Tournament title and earned national coach-of-the-year honors from The Associated Press. His second year was less impressive, but he again guided Missouri to the NCAA Tournament. And he avoided serious punishment after the NCAA’s deeply flawed investigation of Miami failed to prove the most serious allegations against him — that he paid hush money to rogue booster Nevin Shapiro.

But the cracks in Haith’s program began to show in 2014. Unable to find good high school recruits or retain those recruits after they arrived at MU, Haith relied increasingly on transfers. Fans soured on the Tigers, who played barely any defense. The high-scoring trio of Jabari Brown, Jordan Clarkson and Earnest Ross couldn’t drag the team any further than the second round of the NIT. With all three of those players departing — early, in the case of Brown and Clarkson — it appeared Haith was entering a make-or-break season without a roster conducive to winning.

When Tulsa’s job came open in April, he made the rare but probably wise decision to leave a Power 5 conference program to take over a lower-profile school.

Meanwhile, at the University of Central Missouri, Kim Anderson had just guided the Mules to an extremely well-timed run to the NCAA Division II national championship. Anderson, a former star player and assistant coach under Norm Stewart, had long considered Missouri his dream job, but for three coaching searches, his tight bond with his mentor probably hurt more than helped because of the frosty relationship between Alden and Stewart.

The fourth search was the charm. The Sedalia native and 1977 Big Eight player of the year was named Missouri’s coach on April 28.

His opening press conference was more like a homecoming, as former teammates and players packed the Reynolds Alumni Center.

“There is no place on Earth I would rather be,” Anderson said, “than Columbia, Missouri.”

Another year, another SEC East championship

3.) Pick almost any date during the 2014 football season, and at that time the Missouri Tigers did not resemble a team that could win the SEC East title.

In September, the defense gave up too many big plays, a trend that resulted in a stunning home loss to Indiana, a team that went on to finish its usual 4-8. In October, the offense went kaput, including a five-turnover performance in a 34-0 loss to Georgia. In November, the Tigers never lost but apparently didn’t win impressively enough, as they were the underdogs in three straight must-win games against Texas A&M, Tennessee and Arkansas.

Missouri (10-3) finished the regular season with six straight wins, claiming its second straight division title before losing 42-13 to Alabama in the SEC Championship Game.

In a season in which much of the focus was on what they weren’t, consider what the Tigers were. Missouri had a knack for performing best in the most difficult circumstances. For the second straight year, Gary Pinkel’s team won all of its true road games, running its road winning streak to 10. It trailed South Carolina, Texas A&M and Arkansas in the second half before rallying for victories.

“Every game we’ve gone in — this game, the last game — everybody picks us to lose,” All-American defensive end Shane Ray said after the Arkansas game. “As a team, we don’t understand how you
can just count us out like that. We understand respect is intangible. But you can’t deny the SEC East champions. You can’t deny that.”

**Taken to task over Title IX**

4.) The response — or lack thereof — by the University of Missouri and its athletic department when its players were accused of sexual assaults was exposed nationally in two episodes of ESPN’s “Outside the Lines.” The fallout included an internal investigation and overhaul of the university’s Title IX compliance program.

The first episode dealt with former swimmer Sasha Menu Courey, who committed suicide in 2011. Menu Courey said she was raped by a Missouri football player in 2010, an allegation she shared with a campus rape crisis counselor and therapist. She wrote in her journal that she also told the athletic department’s assistant director of academic services, Meghan Anderson, about the rape, but Anderson, who no longer works at MU, told ESPN that wasn’t the case.

Under Title IX, a federal law that bans sex discrimination in education, once a school knows or reasonably should know of possible sexual violence it must take immediate action to investigate, even if the alleged victim is dead. Missouri officials said a letter was sent to Menu Courey’s parents asking if they wanted an investigation, but when the parents didn’t respond, the matter was dropped.

The second episode dealt with former running back Derrick Washington, who was kicked off the football team right before the start of the 2010 season after allegedly sexually assaulting an athletic department tutor that summer. ESPN reported that Washington had been accused of rape by another MU student in 2008 and was interviewed by police but that no charges were filed. Gary Pinkel, Mike Alden and Chancellor Brady Deaton were aware of the allegation, but the Title IX coordinator was not notified.

Alden said that they didn’t know at the time it was necessary to launch a Title IX investigation. The university has revamped its Title IX reporting procedures, with President Tim Wolfe decreeing that every university employee is a mandated reporter, with the exception of legal and medical professionals.

“We know that mistakes were made in the past,” Alden said. “We understand that. ... It’s incumbent upon all of us to learn from those mistakes.”

**MU athletes gone wild**

5.) It was a very busy spring for Missouri athletes and their attorneys.

In a bizarre story that received national attention, MU basketball player Zach Price was arrested twice on the same day in April for assaulting former teammate Earnest Ross.

On the afternoon of April 2, Ross alleged that he was driving with his girlfriend when Price rammed his car. Ross filed a police report and took out a restraining order against Price. But before Columbia Police could make an arrest, Price allegedly struck again. At 1 a.m. on April 3, he was accused of punching Ross in the face and shovin...
receiving a barrage of pleading text messages from Green-Beckham’s girlfriend, but the police report was too damning for DGB to stay. He ultimately transferred to Oklahoma.

“I’ve never seen this concentration of the number of incidents off the field,” Athletic Director Mike Alden said. “I’m thinking it’s a coincidence, but we’re not going to sit back and just think it is. That’s why we’re going to take a hard look at it. And we’re going to make sure we’re addressing it head on.”

First time’s the charm for Battle football team

Many good high school coaches finish long and distinguished careers without ever winning a state championship. Justin Conyers got that little detail out of the way early.

In his second year as the football coach at Battle and the first year the program was eligible for the postseason, Conyers guided the Spartans to the Class 5 state title.

“This is something not only that they’ll remember forever — I mean, the whole entire school is going to remember forever,” Conyers said. “They’re going to come back 10, 15 years from now and they’re gonna be legends. Their names are going to be spoke in the hallways, because they are the team that really put us on the map.”

Battle wasn’t even ranked after it completed a 5-4 regular season. The Spartans trailed Waynesville by three points with 2:43 left in the district semifinals before putting together the winning drive, capped by Nash Sutherlin’s 4-yard touchdown run with 18 seconds left. Battle followed that with wins over Camdenton, Fort Zumwalt North and Ladue to advance to the Edward Jones Dome for a date with Nixa.

The Spartans erased a seven-point halftime deficit and won 25-22.

Sutherlin finished his senior season with 2,115 rushing yards. He was joined by junior defensive end Jerrion Nelson and senior linebacker Marshall Willingham on the media’s first-team all-state squad, and senior defensive lineman Chandler Anderson made the second team. Conyers was the Class 5 coach of the year.

They are the champs ... in lots of things

At this rate, Rock Bridge will need to devote a new wing just for its trophy case. The Bruins added four state championship trophies to the pile in 2014, with titles in girls basketball, baseball, boys golf and girls tennis.

Jill Nagel’s basketball championships are becoming a March tradition. Rock Bridge beat Lee’s Summit North 62-45 to win its third straight Class 5 championship at Mizzou Arena. The Bruins (27-3) towered over their competition with a starting lineup that had four starters listed at 6-foot or taller. Sophie Cunningham was named the state’s Gatorade Player of the Year after averaging 18.5 points. She and fellow Missouri recruit Cierra Porter are back for their senior seasons, making the Bruins the favorites for a four-peat.

The Rock Bridge baseball program had never won a state title and didn’t appear a threat to do so in 2014 when it fell behind Helias by eight runs in the top of the first inning of the district semifinals. The Bruins rallied for nine runs in the bottom half of the inning and wound up winning a wild one 12-11. There was no stopping them afterward, as they rode the bats of Logan Twehous, Kyle Teter and Connor Brumfield through the postseason, capping the run with a 9-6 victory over defending champion Francis Howell in the finals.

Led by a second-place finish from Matt Echelmeier and an eighth-place showing by Jack Knoesel, Rock Bridge’s boys golf team won the Class 4 title by eight strokes over De Smet. The Bruins kept it together on a wind-blown second day at The Dalhousie Golf Club in Cape Girardeau to duplicate the 2011 team’s state championship.

In the fall, Ben Loeb’s girls tennis team went undefeated, edging Notre Dame de Sion 5-4 in the Class 2 semifinals before sweeping St. Joseph’s Academy 5-0 to win the program’s third state title in
the last five years. No. 1 player Phoebe Boeschen placed third individually in singles, and Faith Wright and Katharine Dudley placed third in doubles.

**Cox wastes no time getting settled**

8.) In four years as a wrestler at Hickman, J’den Cox never failed to win a state championship. But even the most elite high school wrestlers don’t immediately dominate at the college level.

Right?

Cox was the exception to the rule. He completed an exceptional freshman season at Missouri by winning the national title with a 2-1 victory over Ohio State’s Nick Hefflin in the 197-pound championship match in Oklahoma City. It was the fifth national title in MU wrestling history, and Cox became the youngest to do it.

Cox won his last 20 matches to finish with a 38-2 record.

“My goal is to be a four-time national champion, and this is the beginning,” Cox said. “I think this was probably going to be one of the hardest ones.”

**From the hot seat to hallowed ground, Pinkel becomes career leader in wins**

9.) Gary Pinkel entered the 2013 season on every list of coaches on the hot seat. Missouri’s first season in the SEC had been an injury-plagued bust, and fans had soured on Pinkel’s seemingly stale approach, which was encapsulated by his favorite phrase: “We do what we do.”

Whether Pinkel actually was on the hot seat, we’ll never know, because he didn’t just save his job in 2013, he led the Tigers to the SEC Championship Game and a berth in the Cotton Bowl. It was on the third day of 2014 that Pinkel surpassed Don Faurot for the most victories in program history, winning his 102nd game at the end of his 13th season.

Missouri’s 41-31 victory over Oklahoma State was an example of one notable Pinkel trait — sticking with his quarterbacks through thick and thin. James Franklin had a rough night, completing just 15 of 40 passes for 174 yards and an interception, but with the exception of the two predetermined drives for backup Maty Mauk, Pinkel stuck with Franklin and was ultimately rewarded with a late scoring drive. The game wasn’t in the bag, though, until Michael Sam sacked OSU’s Clint Chelf and Shane Ray scooped up the fumble and returned it 73 yards for a touchdown.

That capped a 12-2 season and pushed the Tigers to a No. 5 national ranking. Not bad for a coach on the hot seat.

**Edwards gets a new ride**

10.) Carl Edwards had a solid year, winning two races and advancing to the final eight in the Chase for the Sprint Cup. But by far the biggest news about Edwards came out in August, when it was announced that Edwards was leaving Roush Fenway Racing for Joe Gibbs Racing.

The 35-year-old Edwards had spent his whole career at Roush, winning 23 Cup races and finishing second in the Chase for the Sprint Cup in 2008 and ’11, in addition to winning the Nationwide Series title in 2007.

Edwards will change from No. 99 to 19 and will switch from Ford to Toyota. His new crew chief will be Darian Grubb, who most recently worked for Denny Hamlin.

“It seemed like the right thing to do. ... When you speak to the other drivers and you look at the statistics and look at the landscape, it’s something I was really excited about,” Edwards told reporters.
Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame closes in Washington

WASHINGTON, Mo. (AP) — The Missouri Photojournalism Hall of Fame is closing its doors in Washington, Missouri, with tentative plans to reopen at some point at the University of Missouri School of Journalism in Columbia.

The Washington Missourian reports that a specific location in Columbia is being sought. Bill Miller Sr., editor and publisher of the Missourian and a founder of the Hall of Fame, says the move to Columbia will allow journalism students better access to the work of the inductees, and the number of visitors will increase.

The Hall of Fame has inducted 44 photojournalists in its 10 years in Washington. Miller says many photos and artifacts were donated, and there simply wasn't enough room at the Washington site to display them all.

Advisers aim to help more poor, first-generation teens go to college

Anzley Arline wanted to go to college but, until a couple months ago, didn't think it was possible.
The Parkview High School senior had all but given up when he got up the courage to walk into Katie Dempsey's office.

Dempsey, a college adviser new to Parkview this year, is available to help any student navigate the college selection, admissions and financial aid processes. But she is specially trained to identify and support low-income students and teens who would be the first in their families to go to college.

"I was really frustrated and needed help. I didn't think I was financially able to go," said Arline, who now plans to study musical theater at the University of Central Missouri next year. "She helped me a lot, taking the stress off me. She has helped me find financial aid."

**Springfield Public Schools partnered with the Missouri College Advisory Corps, housed at the University of Missouri-Columbia, to provide full-time college advisers at two high schools this school year. There's Dempsey at Parkview and Jenni Frier at Hillcrest.**

In just four months, the two college advisers have met one-on-one with hundreds of juniors and seniors, organized college planning and financial aid workshops, set up college tours and brought in college representatives. They assisted with nearly 200 college applications and helped students secure more than $40,000 in financial aid, nearly $70,000 in private scholarships and the waiving of nearly $3,000 in college application fees.

"Money — to me, that's the scariest thing, just paying for it," Arline said.

Associate Superintendent Justin Herrell said the addition of on-site college advisers is opening doors for Springfield students. "It's already showing huge impacts for us," he said.

Missouri established a college advising corps seven years ago, based on a national model, and Springfield is the first partner district in southwest Missouri. The MCAC has placed advisers in nearly 30 districts — mostly in the Kansas City and St. Louis areas — and averages a 10 percent bump in the college-going at the high schools it serves.

Herrell said the district was looking for a way to strengthen college and career planning in high schools when it heard about the program through board member Kris Callen, whose husband is a college professor. The advisers started locally in August and, based on the initial review, the district would like to expand the program to its other high schools.

"It's tremendous what's happened right out of the gate," Herrell said.

The partnership currently costs $100,000 a year with the district paying half — or $25,000 annually for each of the two advisers — and the MCAC covering the other half, largely through grants and donations.

Expanding the program to Springfield's three other high schools would cost another $75,000 annually.

Clarice Fels, a senior at Parkview, wants to be a nurse but wasn't sure where to apply or what college would be a good fit. After working with Dempsey, she settled on Central Methodist University.

"I wanted to go college but I didn't really know where to start," she said. "She has made it a lot easier."
Kenneth Brown, a senior at Parkview, planned to go into the military to help pay for college and wanted to study in Colorado. He worked with Dempsey to find the University of Colorado-Boulder, which charges in-state tuition to students serving in the military.

He eventually wants to work for the U.S. Marshals so finding a college with a great criminal justice program was also important.

"She is the only person who has been pushing me to get my application in. It's crazy how much she cares," said Brown, 18, of Dempsey. "Just having her makes it easier."

Beth Tankersley-Bankhead, executive director for the MCAC, said the program works to find the best higher education "fit" for students. Despite being housed at the University of Missouri-Columbia, less than six percent enroll there.

She said gaining access to college isn't enough, the program is beefing up its support to help students stay in college and graduate.

Hillcrest Principal Garry Moore said the district has put an emphasis on college and career planning and adding the college advisers was "the niche" that was missing.

"We have a lot of first-generation college-eligible students that need this type of resource, this type of support and this has been a great program for that," he said.

The program

The Missouri College Advisory Corp, based at the University of Missouri-Columbia, is a new program developed to provide college advisers to high school students. The cost is shared by the program, through donations, and Springfield Public Schools.

The goal of the program is to "empower Missouri students to go to college and succeed" through the following:

• Help students and their families see college completion is an attainable goal.

• Provide information and assist with college planning, application and financial aid.

• Increase college enrollment, especially among first-generation college, low-income and underrepresented students.

• Provide students with knowledge and tools to persist and graduate from college.

Springfield currently has MCAC advisers at Parkview and Hillcrest high schools and would like to expand to other high schools. For more information, go to http://mcac.missouri.edu.

By the numbers

The Missouri College Advisory Corp has been operating in two Springfield high schools — Parkview and Hillcrest — since August. Here is what the college advisers in those schools have generated so far:

$42,500

Financial aid secured
Mid-Missouri woman establishes fund for MU assault victim

Sunday, December 28, 2014 | 4:23 p.m. CST

BY JEREMY ROHRER

COLUMBIA – A mid-Missouri woman has started a crowdfunding campaign to help cover medical expenses for an MU student assaulted earlier this month.

Joel Grisamore was beaten unconscious by two unknown assailants outside Campus Bar & Grill on Dec. 8 and underwent facial reconstruction surgery last week. His father, outgoing state representative Jeff Grisamore, R-Lee’s Summit, tweeted last week that Columbia Police have leads in the case.

Eva D. Goss, of New Bloomfield, Mo., set up a GoFundMe page for Joel Grisamore Thursday to help cover the cost of his medical bills.

"I'm hoping to get the word out for this young man," Goss said.

Goss said she doesn't know the Grisamore family personally, but when she heard about Joel Grisamore's situation and surgery, she knew she had to do something to help.

"I contacted Rep. Grisamore to introduce myself and ask for permission; he said it would be such a blessing," Goss said.

Goss estimates that medical bills from the surgery will cost thousands of dollars but hopes the campaign will ease the burden on Joel Grisamore and his family.

Joel Grisamore is listed in the MU directory as a senior general studies student, and his father said he is a member of the Missouri National Guard and an MU ROTC candidate.
who works two jobs and is a leader in the Mizzouka Cannon Crew, according to previous Missourian reporting.

"He's kind of everything you'd want your kid to grow up to be," Goss said.

Supervising editor is Austin Huguelet.

Missouri lawmakers uncertain about budget powers

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY • Missouri voters recently gave lawmakers more power over state spending decisions. Yet there’s uncertainty at the Missouri Capitol over whether it’s OK for lawmakers to actually start using those new powers.

When the Missouri Legislature convenes Jan. 7, one of the things lawmakers will have to decide is whether they want to try to invoke a new constitutional provision to overturn some of the roughly $700 million of spending restrictions imposed by Gov. Jay Nixon.

Some lawmakers are willing to do so. Others don’t think they legally can.

“I think it’s an open question,” acknowledged Rep. Todd Richardson, R-Poplar Bluff, who sponsored the constitutional amendment.

The uncertainty stems from the sequence of events that unfolded in 2014.

Lawmakers who were frustrated about Nixon’s previous budget cuts proposed a constitutional amendment asking voters to give them the ability to override gubernatorial spending restrictions by a two-thirds vote of both chambers. The House passed the measure in February and the Senate followed suit in May, referring the measure to the general election ballot.

In June, Nixon announced $276 million of line-item vetoes and an additional $846 million of spending restrictions for the 2015 budget that began July 1. He cited concern about declining revenue and the potential for lawmakers to further drain the state’s finances by enacting tax breaks for businesses.
Lawmakers overrode in September $53 million of those line-item vetoes, but Nixon quickly placed a spending freeze on the items that continued to block them from going forward. Although he released some funding that he had previously withheld, Nixon continued to freeze about $700 million of budgeted expenditures.

Constitutional Amendment 10 won voter approval in November and took effect in early December. It requires the governor to send a proclamation to the legislature whenever he withholds any budgeted expenditures. Legislators can then vote to override the spending restrictions.

If Nixon were to announce spending restrictions today, lawmakers clearly could use their new constitutional powers. What’s less clear is whether lawmakers can cite the new constitutional provision to overturn the spending restrictions Nixon announced last summer, before voters approved the amendment.

State Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, who is expected to become House budget chairman in January, doesn’t believe so.

“As I see it, it’s just going forward — it’s not a retroactive piece of legislation,” Flanigan said.

Richardson, who is to become House majority leader in 2015, also has some doubts. He said his intention was for the amendment to be “forward-looking.” Richardson notes that Nixon didn’t deliver a proclamation to lawmakers when he originally announced the spending cuts, because that wasn’t a requirement at the time.

“The operative question is whether that proclamation is necessary for the legislature to act” to override the spending restrictions, Richardson said. “Frankly, there’s some fairly compelling views that we can, but I also think there’s some legitimate concerns that we can’t.”

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, is among those who believe lawmakers can reverse Nixon’s spending restrictions. He views the budget cuts as not a past action but an ongoing one.

“If the governor is continuing to withhold, then he is subject to an override by the legislature under Amendment 10 to release that money,” Schaefer said.

Similar reasoning was cited by Joshua Hawley, an associate law professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia who focuses on constitutional law. Because Nixon has continued to impose the spending restrictions after passage of the constitutional amendment, “it is a live action” and Nixon now could be required to submit a proclamation to legislators about the spending restrictions, he said.

Nixon said in a written statement that he was continuing “to review the legal and budgetary implications” of the amendment. He has taken no public position on whether he believes lawmakers legally can override his current spending restrictions.
OPEN COLUMN

Meningitis shots must be covered

Friday, December 26, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Editor, the Tribune: Dear University of Missouri students, how much is your life worth?

Medical economists who work for the federal government are asking themselves that question as they decide whether to recommend a new meningitis B vaccine for college students. Their recommendation will determine what sort of insurance coverage the shot gets.

College students are at greater risk of contracting bacterial meningitis than the general public, but it’s still a rare disease, and the economists might decide it’s not "cost-effective" to recommend vaccinating all of you against meningitis B if only a few of you are going to die of it.

They have tables that put a dollar figure on each of your lives.

I will encourage a college recommendation when I talk to federal officials in February because when I was at the University of Kansas in 2004, meningitis B almost killed me and cost me parts of all four limbs.

I have already encouraged Missouri legislators to require meningitis vaccinations next year because I’m a Jayhawk who wouldn’t wish what happened to me on my worst enemies. Google names such as Stephanie Ross, Andrea Jaime, Sara Stelzer and Aaron Loy, and you will see what meningitis B does to college students. Loy is the lucky one: He only lost his legs.

Contact your congressional reps and tell them you want a broad meningitis B vaccine recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control. Your life is more than a number on a table.

Andy Marso
700 Monterey Way, Apt. N1
Lawrence, Kan.

PULSE SHOTS: A visit from Santa

Sunday, December 28, 2014 at 12:00 am

The University of Missouri Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders invited children with autism and their families to visit Santa on Dec. 6. Because children with autism might
have sensory issues and often struggle with social interactions, the visits with Santa, played by Vince Eversgerd, were catered to the children’s specialized needs and took place in a private, comfortable room. Photos by Lizz Cardwell
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — A woman is planning to defy the Roman Catholic Church and become a priest — the first to do so in Kansas City, Missouri.

The Kansas City Star (http://bit.ly/1xTXcYj ) reports that 67-year-old Georgia Walker knows she will be excommunicated from the church, but that doesn't faze her because she doesn't accept the legitimacy of the excommunication.

The church in turn will not accept her ordination, scheduled for Jan. 3. Under canon law, only men can be priests.


Walker is part of a movement called the Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests. Instead of leaving the church, they hope to change it from within. There are nearly 200 women priests, all but about 50 of them in the U.S.

Walker has worked as a sociology professor at the University of Missouri, a financial officer and a hospital manager. She converted to Catholicism at midlife and became a Sister of St. Joseph, though she did not take final vows. She is working on a graduate degree in theology.
Walker also is a peace activist. She works to former prisoners reintegrate with society. As a priest, she plans to establish a regular schedule to visit prisons in the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph to bring the sacrament to inmates.

She also wants to build a small community of worshippers while remaining a member of St. James Parish in Kansas City.

Canon Law 1024 of the Roman Catholic Church says that only baptized men may be ordained as priests, based on Jesus calling only men to be his disciples.

A decade ago, Pope John Paul II issued an apostolic letter affirming that the priesthood was for men only. Pope Francis had raised hopes that he would bring more flexibility to the church, but he made it clear last year that women cannot be priests.

Walker said those rules "have been made by men who seemingly forget that the first person that Jesus appeared to after his resurrection was a woman. Did he make a mistake? Mary Magdalene was the first one to see him. She was the first one to start spreading the good news of his resurrection."

The Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph said in a statement that since Walker's ordination "does not involve the participation of any validly ordained Catholic clergy, the diocese does not see a reason to comment any further."

Walker said the diocese explicitly warned her she would be excommunicated if she continued with her plan. She plans to do so anyway, with the ordination performed by Bishop Bridget Mary Meehan, who travels the country ordaining women priests and deacons — 25 of them in 2014.

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Missouri Begins Drafting College Blueprint

BY DALE SINGER

NO MU MENTION

Like a beginning freshman plotting out college courses so she can have a marketable degree four years down the road, the Missouri Department of Higher Education is embarking on a new planning process to make sure students leave campus with skills to help the state — and themselves -- move ahead.

But when the plan is finished, the final exam question will be this: Will its recommendations actually be used on the state’s campuses?
Lowell Kruse of St. Joseph, a longtime member of the state’s Coordinating Board for Higher Education, says implementation is the key.

“I’ve been on the coordinating board for 12 years,” he said in a recent interview, “and I’ve seen a lot of strategic plans come and go. And we tend to fall short on the solution piece because it is so complicated....

“Someone said to me, this is not rocket science. We know how to put a man on the moon and return them safely to earth. We just don't know how to do this. This is very complicated stuff.”

The new plan has been dubbed “Preparing Missourians to Succeed: A Blueprint for Higher Education.” The department and the coordinating board began putting it together earlier this month at two hearings, in O’Fallon and downtown St. Louis, with seven more scheduled across the state in the coming months.

Once they are finished, a steering committee will oversee a report due to the board next December.

David Russell, Missouri’s commissioner for higher education, told the board at a meeting at St. Charles Community College earlier this month that his department’s goal is to raise the number of Missourians with a college degree to 60 percent by the year 2025. Among young adults, ages 24-35, only 41.3 percent of Missourians had a two-year or four-year degree last year.

That was up from 40 percent two years before – progress that brought Missouri just below the national average. But Russell is hardly satisfied.

“Is it enough?” he asked the coordinating board at its meeting? “I would of course say it is not. Our challenge is to maintain this momentum to meet the higher education needs of Missouri.”

Those needs, he added in an interview, include matching the skills and education that today’s jobs require with the credentials of those who will be needed to fill them.

“We know that 60 percent of all of the jobs in the inventory of jobs in Missouri by the year 2018 are going to require some kind of postsecondary education,” Russell said. “A high school degree is just not going to be enough in the future.

“If you look back over the period of time that we had this recent recession, the jobs that require only a high school diploma or less went away at the beginning of the recession, and they aren't coming back in the recovery.”

To make sure people get the education and training they need, Russell and Kruse said, the system has to change.

“There’s no way we can continue doing things the way we have been doing,” Kruse said, “and expect a different result.”
Blueprint for change
The last statewide plan submitted by the department of higher education came in 2008; it was titled “Imperatives for Change: Building a Higher Education System for the 21st Century.”

It was adopted by the coordinating board right before the economy tanked, so the emphasis on jobs was not as strong as it is likely to be this time around. But it did recognize the importance of a college degree to students’ future well-being.

“More than ever,” it said, “in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century, higher education is the gateway to an improved standard of living for Missouri’s residents.”

The report went on to outline steps and goals that are similar to the ones being considered this time around. In its planning for the upcoming blueprint, the board said it should focus on four major areas:

- **Accessibility.** Schools have to make sure students are prepared for college, and higher education has to make sure opportunities are available to students all across the state.
- **Affordability.** Even though Missouri has been among the nation’s leaders in limiting tuition increases at public institutions, more has to be done to make sure college costs are within the reach of the state’s families.
- **Quality.** Students need to be sure that the knowledge and skills they need are as excellent as possible, not just for the first jobs they will hold after graduation but for the ones that come after that.
- **Completion.** Enrolling in college is just the first step; schools have to help make sure students stay the course and complete the program designed to provide them with a certificate or a degree.

Those factors are similar to ones released this month by the federal Department of Education in a preliminary plan for rating colleges and universities. The final plan is expected next year.

Above all, Russell said, higher education in Missouri has to be able to adapt to shifts and respond quickly.

“We want to continue to provide quality education to students,” he said, “and we have to be more nimble. We’ve go to be able to change -- change the curriculum, change our approaches to education, so students learn more than they did in less time.”

Just as important, he added, is making sure that once students begin their path to a degree, they persist. Part of that process, Russell said, is making sure everyone sees that reaching the finish line will have meaningful consequences.

“We want to make sure that a degree still has value to individuals long after they have earned those degrees and have entered the workforce. That means that we’ve got to continue to maintain the quality of what we’re teaching in the classrooms, that we’re teaching them the right things.”

Kruse said that recognizing and strengthening the continuum between the campus and the workplace will go a long way toward making higher education more productive and more satisfying for everyone involved.

“Higher ed is in a position to describe what has to happen upstream and what has to happen downstream,” he said. “It’s a different role than just educating the students that are with
them for that short period of time. It's a bigger role for society. Maybe we have to take that on.”

**The power of partnerships**
That broader vision was clearly on the minds of those who attended the department’s first public hearing on the upcoming plan. It convened at Component Bar Products in O’Fallon, where CEO Troy Pohlman told members of the coordinating board and the steering committee charged with writing the report that his company’s training program has helped give young people opportunity they have not had before.

Letting students “test drive” a job before they commit to it, he added, helps both companies and their prospective employees.

“I would rather learn that this is the job that I want to do – or more importantly, the job I don’t want to do – in my first semester of school than in my fourth or fifth semester of school,” Pohlman said.

Most participants in the session agreed that partnerships between businesses and education can help establish more such situations that can help match students with jobs they can do and can find satisfying.

“How can we all work best together,” asked Ronald Chesbrough, president of St. Charles Community College, “to transform lives and build a vibrant future for those lives and the state?”

And, he added, those relationships have to work within the higher education community as well.

“If we’re going to solve the various riddles of effective higher education in Missouri,” Chesbrough said, “we need to stress partnerships between two-year and four-year institutions…. The coordinating board needs a coordinated plan.”
College sees small, big benefits with loan promise

ADRIAN, Mich. (AP) — When it came time to pick a college, Abby Slusher leaned toward a private school near her southeastern Michigan home for the small campus and class sizes. Her mother pushed Adrian College for another reason: A new program guaranteeing every graduate would make more than $37,000 or get some or all student loans reimbursed.

Adrian is among the first colleges to take out insurance policies on all incoming freshmen and transfer students who have student loans and at least two years of school remaining.

"She said, 'Look at me, I'm still trying to pay my student loans off — this would be great. I don't want you in this situation,'" said Slusher, 18, who is studying to become a social worker. "And seeing her in this situation, I don't want that."

The idea has been around for a few decades at Yale Law School and for specific programs elsewhere, such as seminary and social work degrees. Some small, religious schools started offering guarantees to all new students in recent years, but Adrian President Jeffrey Docking is taking it further by framing the program as a solution to skyrocketing tuition costs and student loan defaults. His crusade has gotten the attention of U.S. lawmakers and education officials.

"Obviously, we feel like this is a big solution to a big problem — maybe the biggest problem right now in higher education," Docking said. "We felt like we needed to make a grand statement."

Adrian paid roughly $575,000 this year, or $1,165 per student, to take out policies on 495 students. For those who graduate and get a job that pays less than $20,000 a year, the college will make full monthly student loan payments until they make $37,000 a year. With a job that pays $20,000 to $37,000, the college will make payments on a sliding scale.
There's no time limit for the payment plan, but the college caps total loan payments at $70,000 per student. Adrian's annual cost of tuition, room and board is about $40,000 before any forms of financial aid.

The school has 1,700 students.

Docking already sees benefits: The entering freshmen class is up about 50 students to 570; to break even, the school determined it needed about two dozen new students who took out loans. He credits the program in part for the enrollment increase but says other efforts, like launching a varsity bass fishing team, have served as a lure.

About 35 miles northwest of Adrian, Spring Arbor University, a small Christian institution, offered a similar guarantee to every incoming freshman in fall 2013. A conversation with Spring Arbor's former president inspired Docking.

Although Spring Arbor officials see value in the program, they're likely to scale it back next year.

"For the vast majority of students, it's not a deciding factor in choosing Spring Arbor," said school spokesman Malachi Crane. "Is there a way to better tailor it to students who really need it and have the desire to have that option? For us, it makes more fiscal sense not to automatically assign it to each and every student."

Both programs were made possible by the Loan Repayment Assistance Program Association, a Bloomington, Indiana-based organization that works with U.S. colleges and universities. Peter Samuelson, the organization's president, said some schools "have ramped up, ramped back down and ramped back up again" with loan programs, but overall results are positive.

"There's much more likelihood they're going to complete college successfully," Samuelson said.

To get word out about the program, Docking met with other university presidents and testified last year before a U.S. House higher education subcommittee. Retiring U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., made a floor statement last June praising Adrian's program as a model for other colleges.

Docking said federal education officials told him at a meeting in August that they are exploring ways to promote the program. Education Department spokeswoman Denise Horn said officials commend the college for its "creative approach" to helping students manage their loans.

"We're talking about this far and wide because we hope other colleges do it as well," Docking said.

Mark Kantrowicz, publisher of edvisors.com, a college planning and financing website, said such programs have grown as school administrators become more concerned about rising discount rates, or the percentage of gross tuition given back to students in the form of grants. He calls it an "arms race in recruiting students," and schools are trying to find ways to stop the discount rate from increasing.

"Obviously, loan repayment assistance provides assistance after the fact, and that has value," he said. "But it would be better to charge less in the first place."

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