COLUMBIA, Mo. • After the Missouri football team captured its first SEC division championship last fall, athletics director Mike Alden made it clear he expected to reward coach Gary Pinkel during the offseason. Pinkel, who turns 62 next month and has four years left on his current contract, has agreed to terms on a revised contract, PowerMizzou.com first reported, following the Tigers’ 12-2 season.

The University System Board of Curators must approve a new deal. The board has called for a meeting scheduled for Wednesday morning and will hold a closed executive session for “consideration of certain confidential or privileged communications with university counsel, negotiated contracts and personnel matters.” The curators will not be present for the meeting, which will be held on a teleconference.

Missouri has not officially announced a new contract for Pinkel and would have to wait for the board’s approval before disclosing terms.

Pinkel agreed to his current contract following the 2010 season, shortly after he turned down an invitation to interview for the head-coaching job at Michigan. Instead, Mizzou extended his contract two years through 2017 and gave his coaches significant raises. Pinkel’s base salary is $2.35 million. He can make up to more than an additional half-million dollars in annual bonuses. Last season, he made at least $375,000 in bonus pay, for the following:

Win 11 games: $25,000

Win SEC East advance to SEC title game: $50,000

Play in non-BCS bowl: $75,000

MU sells 45,000 season tickets or averages 60,000 for home games: $150,000

Finish among top 10 in final BCS standings: $75,000

Pinkel is also eligible for a $100,000 bonus if “the established goal or goals for academic accomplishment for that year are met and the established goal or goals for social responsibility and conduct for that year are met.”

After Mizzou clinched the SEC Eastern Division in November, the University of Washington made overtures to Pinkel’s agent about possibly interviewing Pinkel for the Huskies’ head-coaching job. John Caponigro, Pinkel’s agent, confirmed he had multiple discussions with Washington athletics director Scott Woodward. Pinkel never interviewed with UW and instead reaffirmed his commitment to
Mizzou. When the team arrived in Atlanta for the SEC championship game, Alden said he planned to talk with Pinkel after the season to discuss the program’s future.

“We talk all the time,” Alden said in December. “What do we have to do to keep moving forward? Man, we’ve got to add these facilities faster. ... We’ve got to adjust our recruiting. We’re going to change our budget. When we get done with this season, we’re going to do those things.

“Particularly, when you're doing that, I want to recognize the significance of what that guy has done for the University of Missouri — not just football but for the university. What do we need to do to not only keep the program moving forward but to recognize that guy and our staff?”

Pinkel’s staff could be in line for raises, too. Defensive coordinator Dave Steckel and offensive coordinator Josh Henson agreed to new contracts last year, two-year deals paying them annual salaries of $550,000 and $500,000, respectively. According to Pinkel’s contract, his 12 full-time staffers earned a split of $60,000 in bonuses for winning the SEC East and reaching the SEC title game, while his nine position coaches also received one month’s salary for playing in a non-BCS bowl game.

MU panel of Ukrainian scholars explores conflict in their home country
Tuesday, March 4, 2014 | 10:31 p.m. CST
BY CASSA NIEDRINGHAUS
COLUMBIA — The Ukrainian crisis runs deeper than politics.

It includes conflicts in culture and language, said three MU graduate students from Ukraine who conducted a panel sponsored by the MU International Center, the Division of Applied Social Sciences and the Department of Geography.

The panelists Tuesday addressed the situation in Ukraine, a country they described as struggling with governmental corruption and deep, historical conflicts. Protests in Ukraine recently turned more violent, leading the president to leave the capital and parliament to remove him from power.

The panelists were from different hometowns and regions of Ukraine, according to the event website:
Roman Kolgushev is an MU journalism graduate student originally from Donetsk, Ukraine, and previously worked in Ukrainian media.

Vitaliy Yurkiv, originally from Kharkiv, Ukraine, is an MU graduate student and Fulbright scholar in educational leadership and policy analysis.

Kateryna Goychuk is originally from Kiev, Ukraine. She is now a post-doctoral fellow at the MU Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute.

The panel was titled, "Ukraine: Past, Present and Possible Futures."

They referenced three possible futures for their country: a war between Russia and Ukraine, the deployment of observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the disintegration of Ukraine.

"Where you come from in Ukraine determines what you think about the events," Goychuk said.

She said Ukraine faces deep divisions because pieces of the country used to belong to Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Russia. Goychuk cited an Economist article that calls the country "an artificial creation rather than a natural, coherent state." The panelists said these cultural divisions contribute to the conflict, as well as divisions between Russian and Ukrainian speakers.

"We want to show that the protests were very much anti-corruption, anti-cronyism, anti-oligarchs," Goychuk said. "But once the protests started, there was also these different moods and attitudes toward Russia."

Additionally, Yurkiv said, there remains a lack of strong leadership figures, a lack of coherence in government, and uneven representation in the new government.

Kolgushev addressed the divisions in Ukraine but said that he has seen some attitude shifts even within his own family. He said his grandfather in Ukraine is pro-Russia and anti-Ukraine. Kolgushev said his grandfather has become more receptive to the idea of the new Ukrainian government since he became aware of the extravagance of former President Viktor Yanukovych's estate and the luxuries he enjoyed.
"He said, 'You know what, I'm actually ready to listen to what the new government has to say and has to offer. I think I'm going to change my mind,'" Kolgushev said. "Though there is a huge gap, it's a lot about what people see and what people are being told."

William Meyers — director of international programs in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources — moderated the panel. Meyers has visited Ukraine a number of times, most recently for work on a U.S. Agency for International Development-funded policy analysis project. He said the project's goal is to provide Ukraine with information and experiences about how other countries deal with similar agriculture issues.

Meyers said in an interview after the event that the voices of Ukrainian scholars in the panel were important sources of information.

"It's better to hear from people who know the situation very well and come from the country itself," Meyers said.

Protests in Ukraine began in November, when Yanukovych backed out of a deal with the European Union. Since then, the panelists said, protests have grown and brutality between protesters and police has escalated. Yanukovych left Kiev on Feb. 22, and a parliamentary vote officially removed him from power. Elections for his replacement are set for May 25.

"My suggestion would be to watch everybody," Kolgushev said of possible presidential candidates. "I know there are a lot of people, but (Vitali) Klitschko is certainly one of the most interesting politicians to watch. First of all, as a matter of fact, his ratings are around 60 percent right now in any kind of situation, any presidential election."

Klitschko is a former professional boxer and is a leader of the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform, one of the parties opposed to Yanukovych's government. Kolgushev said Yulia Tymoshenko is another person to watch. Tymoshenko was a businesswoman and former prime minister. She was a prominent figure in Ukraine's last revolution and was recently released from prison after charges against her were dropped. In 2011, she had been sentenced to seven years in prison for abuse of power. Kolgushev also said he thought it would be good to give the new government a chance.

"Despite there being a lot of questions for the current government, I couldn't have imagined a more difficult situation for them," Kolgushev said. "I would actually take the liberty of giving them a chance to prove themselves."
MU students and faculty fill Tiger Plaza on Tuesday to take part in an ESPN commercial promoting the Southeastern Conference.

| ALEX SCOTT/Missourian
COLUMBIA — Truman the Tiger led cheerleaders in chants from atop a gold firetruck Tuesday as MU students and faculty filled Tiger Plaza to take part in an ESPN promotional commercial for the Southeastern Conference.

The ESPN camera crew started on top of the firetruck before moving down into the crowd to get the faces of students as they called Z-O-U back to Truman and the cheerleaders. About 20 minutes later, the crowd dispersed as the truck left with Truman and the camera crew.

March 5, 2014

**Obama's Budget Proposes Incentives for Student Success**

By Kelly Field

Washington

**NO MU MENTION**

The maximum Pell Grant would increase by $100, and states and colleges would get billions of dollars in incentive grants under President Obama’s 2015 budget proposal, released on Tuesday.

The spending plan seeks $7-billion over 10 years to reward colleges that do a good job of graduating Pell Grant recipients and $4-billion over four years to encourage states to maintain their higher-education spending and adopt performance-based funding models.

The plan asks Congress to provide $6-billion for job-training programs at community colleges and requests $75-million in competitive grants to "reduce costs and improve outcomes" at minority-serving institutions. It also seeks $100-million more for the
president’s "First in the World" innovation competition, which Congress seeded with $75-million this year.

For students, the proposal would raise the maximum Pell Grant to $5,830 and make permanent the broadest tuition tax credit, the American Opportunity Tax Credit. It would extend the student-loan program’s most generous income-based repayment plan, Pay as You Earn, to all borrowers, and would exempt from taxation any loan forgiveness provided under that plan.

Like several past budgets, the proposal for the fiscal year that begins on October 1 would change how campus-based aid is allocated to institutions and would remake the Perkins Loan program, expanding it from $1-billion to $8.5-billion.

But the president’s ambitious proposals will face an uphill climb in Congress, which has already set spending limits for 2015 and has little appetite for costly new programs.

**Accountability Agenda**

Several of the president’s ideas build on previous budgets and plans he announced during last summer’s "college cost" bus tour.

In speeches on campuses in New York and Pennsylvania last August, Mr. Obama proposed "Pell bonuses" for colleges and pledged to work with Congress to make the Pay as You Earn loan-repayment plan both broader and better aimed.

Tuesday’s budget fleshes out those proposals, detailing how institutions would qualify for a bonus and how the revised repayment plan would work. Under the president’s plan, colleges would get bonuses based on their number of on-time Pell graduates, multiplied by a tiered bonus amount per student, varying by institution type. Colleges that continued to improve the performance of their Pell recipients would be rewarded with larger bonuses.

Colleges could use the bonuses to increase need-based aid to students, enhance academic and student-support services, or put in place changes aimed at improving student learning, lowering costs, and accelerating graduation.
Under Mr. Obama’s loan-repayment plan, all borrowers would be eligible to repay their loans under the Pay as You Earn program, which caps monthly payments at 10 percent of discretionary income and forgives borrowers’ remaining debt after 10 to 20 years. Currently, only recent borrowers with no older debt qualify.

The budget would also tweak the program to focus it on the neediest borrowers and guard against graduate programs’ using its debt forgiveness as an excuse to raise tuition.

Under the revised plan, loan forgiveness for public-sector employees would be capped at the aggregate loan limit for undergraduates who are independent of their parents, while private-sector employees with balances greater than that amount would have to pay for 25 years before receiving forgiveness.

To ensure that high-balance borrowers "pay an equitable share of their earnings as their income rises," the proposal would eliminate the program’s standard payment cap. And to protect low-income borrowers from ballooning balances, it would limit the amount of interest that can accrue when a borrower’s payment is insufficient to cover interest.

The idea of offering incentive grants to states first appeared in the president’s 2013 budget, in the form of a $1-billion "Race to the Top" competition for higher education. It reappeared in the next year's budget but has never received funding from Congress. This year Mr. Obama upped the ante to $4-billion and renamed the plan the "State Higher Education Performance Fund."

**Community Colleges**

The proposed community-college job-training program is a successor to the $2-billion "Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training" program, which was financed under the 2010 health-care-reform law and will run out of money this year. It would offer competitive grants to community colleges and other groups to offer training programs and apprenticeships aimed at preparing students for in-demand careers.
In another piece of good news for community colleges, the budget would partially restore eligibility for Pell Grants to students who lack a high-school diploma but pass an "ability to benefit" test.

Minority-serving institutions would receive level funds under the budget (excluding the proposed grant competition), as would Federal Work-Study and Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and the TRIO and Gear Up college-preparatory programs.

The 2015 Budget, Real and Illusory

March 5, 2014

BY Michael Stratford

WASHINGTON -- President Obama on Tuesday sent Congress a budget request that would keep most student aid and basic research programs level-funded; the 2015 plan also included several ambitious new higher education proposals.

But the new proposals stand little chance of passing a gridlocked Congress that is gearing up for the midterm elections this fall.

The president’s budget is largely a political exercise this year, since Congress has already set top-line budget levels for federal spending. Senate Democrats said they will not produce a budget but will instead proceed directly to allocating funding program by program. House Republicans, meanwhile, have indicated that their budget, coming later this month, will feature overhauls of social programs.

The budget seeks to keep discretionary funding for the Pell Grant program at the same level as last year, which would allow the maximum award to jump $100 to $5,830 because of an automatic, mandatory increase in funding. That increase would take effect in the 2015-2016
academic year. Other aid programs would continue to receive their current levels of funding. (See chart at the bottom of the article for a program-by-program breakdown.)

New Programs

The most ambitious higher education proposals in the President’s budget are a $4 billion competitive matching-grant program for states and a program that would award bonus grants to colleges that successfully graduate students from low-income backgrounds.

The administration proposes a state higher education “performance fund” that would provide four-year matching grants to states that adopt “critical higher education reform policies,” such as allocating state financial aid primarily based on need and improving consumer information about the return on investment at colleges.

The funds could be used to “support and scale up effective and innovative practices,” such as academic support services, accelerated degree pathways, competency-based education and reforms to remedial education.

“We think this is nothing more than Race to the Top under a different name,” said Terry W. Hartle, senior vice president of government and public affairs at the American Council on Education, referring to the higher ed version of the K-12 program that the president had previously proposed.

Hartle said that the group was previously skeptical of Race to the Top for higher education because it would provide the Education Department with more authority to attach strings to federal funding of higher education.

The $4 billion in mandatory spending that the administration is proposing for the program is also a big ask of Congress, Hartle said.

“The likelihood that this would go anywhere in Congress is about the same chance as me flying to the moon,” he said.

A second ambitious program the president’s budget proposes is an $8 billion initiative over 10 years that would reward colleges that successfully enroll and graduate a significant number of low- and moderate-income students on time. Under the plan, colleges would be rewarded with a grant calculated based on the number of Pell Grant-eligible students they graduate on time. The grant could be used to fund innovations and other interventions aimed at increase college access.

The budget also proposes a $75 million new competitive grant program for minority-serving institutions. Under the initiative, minority-serving institutions would compete for federal funds to implement innovative and cost-saving strategies aimed at improving student outcomes.

Changes to Pell
The administration's budget plan also issues a call, somewhat cryptically, to "strengthen academic progress requirements in the Pell Grant program to encourage students to complete their studies on time."

The Education Department can, on its own, change the definition of “satisfactory academic progress,” which students must meet as a condition of continuing to receive Pell Grants.

“This is absolutely something that causes us great concern,” said David Baime, vice president for government relations and policy analysis at the American Association of Community Colleges.

Under the current rules, Baime said, students effectively have to pass two of every three classes they take in order to satisfy the requirement.

“Since the standards were tightened a couple of years ago, we’ve heard concerns from our campuses,” he said, “So anything that would go further in the direction of tightening them is something that we would be looking at carefully.”

Still, Baime praised the administration’s other proposed changes to Pell Grants. The budget asks Congress to restore a pathway to Pell Grants for students who don’t have a high school diploma or GED. Congress axed that route to federal aid, known as the “ability to benefit” provision, in 2012.

**Tuition Tax Credits**

Higher education and student advocates heaped praise on the administration for proposing in its budget a permanent extension of the American Opportunity Tax Credit. The benefit provides up to $2,500 in partially refundable tax credits for tuition, but is currently slated to expire after December 2017.

The administration also proposed changing how that tuition tax credit formula treats Pell Grants so that Pell recipients would either see a reduction in their taxes or an increased tax credit.

**Student Loan Changes**

In addition to reiterating a previous proposal to revamp the Perkins Loan Program, the President’s budget calls for the expansion the “Pay As You Earn” income-based repayment program to all student borrowers regardless of when they took out their loans.

The program, which caps monthly loan payments at 10 percent of a borrower’s discretionary income and forgives the remaining balances after 20 years of payments, is currently available only to borrowers who took out loans after October 1, 2007 and demonstrate a “financial hardship.” Students who opt for certain government and nonprofit jobs can have their debt forgiven after 10 years.

The administration is also seeking to trim some of the benefits that high-income, high-debt borrowers receive under the “Pay As You Earn” plan. For instance, the budget proposes
removing the cap on payment, so that all borrowers will pay the same proportion of their discretionary income regardless of income.

It would require borrowers with more than $57,500 in debt to make payments for 25 years before it could be forgiven. The amount of debt forgiveness for public-sector workers would also be limited to $57,500 to “protect against institutional practices that may further increase student indebtedness.”

Education Secretary Arne Duncan told reporters Wednesday that the administration would “need to partner with Congress” to make those changes to the income-based repayment program.

The proposal responds to concerns that the “Pay As You Earn” program is a windfall for students at expensive professional schools who incur high debt but also then get high-paying jobs that allow them to repay that debt.

In addition, the Education Department reiterated its support for legislation that would allow debt collectors to call federal student loan borrowers’ cell phones using automatic dialing systems and prerecorded voice messages. The practice is already allowed for land lines, and consumer advocates have previously criticized efforts to expand it to cell phones.

**Ratings System Funding**

The budget request also reaffirms the administration’s priority of developing a national college ratings system to “encourage colleges to improve and help students compare the value of colleges.”

The Education Department is requesting $52 million for a group of initiatives aimed at evaluating and experimenting with higher education programs, $10 million of which would be used to “further develop and refine the college rating system,” the department said.

The department is currently using money from its existing budget to develop the ratings system but anticipates it may need more funding down the line, according to Dorie Nolt, the department’s press secretary.

“Given that this is a significant undertaking, there might be costs that the department cannot absorb internally,” Nolt said in an email. “We thought it would be prudent include a relatively minor fiscal request to ensure we have the resources we need to get it done well and carefully and to continuously adapt and improve the system once it’s in place.”

The department still plans to push ahead with developing the ratings plan -- a draft of which is expected in the next several months -- regardless of whether Congress approves the additional funding.

**Would-Be Windfall for Research and Community Colleges**
Beyond the Education Department, the picture is much the same: the core budget contains little if any new money for scientific research and other programs important to colleges, but the administration’s plan holds out the promise -- though almost certainly an illusory one -- of a windfall in the form of a big new initiative.

Called the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative, the $56 billion effort would provide a huge influx of funds for research agencies such as the National Institutes of Health ($970 million) and the National Science Foundation ($552 million), and it would provide $1.5 billion in 2015 as the first installment of a new Community College Job-Driven Training Fund, which is designed to double the number of apprenticeships in the United States. The latter program is meant to succeed the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training program, a temporary program established in 2010 that will end this year.

But funding for the new initiative would be dependent on Congress reaching agreement on major changes in the tax code (in the form of new taxes on retirement funds for wealthy Americans) and on a series of other industry-related fees, and chances are less than slim that Congress will do any of those things.

So without those almost fanciful new funds, few federal programs would see increases in 2015.

The National Institutes of Health would receive a total of $30.2 billion, up ever so slightly from the $3.15 billion the biomedical research agency is receiving this year. The National Science Foundation would receive a 1.2 percent increase over all, to $7.255 billion from $7.18 billion in 2014, but most of that increase would be for education programs and operations, resulting in a 0.03 percent dip for research funding. As seen in the table at bottom, research funding at a few other agencies would rise or fall meaningfully, but basic research over all would decline slightly, to $32.1 billion. (A table with the administration's proposed budgets for basic research is below.)

The administration emphasized the importance of science -- "Scientific discovery and technological breakthroughs are the primary engines not only for expanding the frontiers of human knowledge but also for responding in innovative, practical ways to the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century," the White House said in its budget proposal for science and technology -- but a lot of unhappy advocates for research argued that the funding levels did not live up to the rhetoric.

"The President’s FY15 budget does disappointingly little to close the nation’s innovation deficit," the Association of American Universities said in a statement. "When it comes to research, its modest spending increases in a few key research agencies are not sufficient to put this nation on an investment path that can ensure we remain the world’s innovation leader."

"The United States once stood firmly at the forefront of the research revolution, but after a decade of budgets that have not kept pace with inflation and last year’s across-the-board sequestration cuts, NIH has seen a more than 20 percent decline in its purchasing power and can only fund one in every seven research grants it receives," added United for Medical Research, a coalition of research groups and major universities. "As such, the U.S. is slipping in its position as the global leader in the life sciences. President Obama’s proposed NIH budget won’t
meaningfully turn us in the right direction toward restoring hope to millions of patients, advancing scientific innovation and spurring further job growth."

Among other elements of the administration's 2015 budget request that are important to colleges:

- The budget for the National Endowment for the Humanities would be held level, at $146.1 million.
- Funding for the State Department's educational and cultural exchange programs would rise slightly, to $577.9 million from $568.6 in 2014. But the core Fulbright Program would see its funding cut by about $30 million, to $204 million from 2014's $234 million.

Organizers of daylong event hope to inspire future female leaders

By Catherine Martin

Tuesday, March 4, 2014 at 2:00 pm

As the gifted teacher at Rock Bridge High School, Kathryn Fishman-Weaver works with some very smart kids. But she said she thinks there is a myth in the system that if you are smart, you have all the tools you need to do well in life.

Fishman-Weaver agrees that being smart is important, but there are other lessons she wants her students to know, like finding something they are passionate about and learning about balance and leadership.

Four years ago, she started a women's empowerment group at Rock Bridge to focus on those topics. Earlier today, she expanded the opportunities for those girls with a Women's Leadership Day at MU.

"I see tremendous leadership potential in this group. They are bright, young caring. … I wanted to inspire them with stories of accomplished and admired leaders," she said. "I also want to provide them with the tools and skill sets to rise into leadership."
The day featured a "women in leadership" panel, a lesson on professional dress, an etiquette lunch and a talk on character and leadership.

Fishman-Weaver said she approached the University Of Missouri Trulaske College of Business about the proposal, and the school quickly got on board.

Joan Gabel, dean of the Trulaske College of Business, said the school likes the ability to create a smooth pipeline for future successful business leaders through partnering with K-12 schools, and the leadership day was a good way to do so.

The event was also an opportunity for the group of driven high school junior and senior girls, she said.

"These are high-achieving young women. They are really busy, and there are a lot of expectations on them. They don't often get to reflect on what the next phase of life is going to look like," Gabel said.

Gabel was among four women who served on the leadership panel, which also featured Marnie Clark, director of the Cancer Research Center; Vicki Russell, publisher of the Tribune; and Shubhra Gangopadhyay, director of the International Center for Nano/Micro Systems and Nanotechnology.

The women shared their experiences, lessons they have learned over the years and advice, emphasizing collaboration, trust, honesty, persistence and following a passion.

Johanna Zhang, a Rock Bridge senior, said a lesson she will take away is to "not waste energy worrying about who put up the wall and instead figure out how to get around it."

"It's a more efficient use of time," she said.

Johanna said she was especially struck by hearing Gangopadhyay's story of growing up in a town in India where girls had few options. It's a story Johanna said reminds her of her father, whose parents were born in China and received little education. Joanna's dad is now an engineering professor at MU.

"It's so inspiring to think of where they started. If they got this far, how much can I do?" she said.

Right now, Johanna said she wants to go into biological engineering, but she said that could be a springboard for medical school.

Johanna and classmate Kelsey Harper said they hope Women's Leadership Day will continue.

"I think it's a really valuable experience for girls in high school to have, especially juniors and seniors that will transition to college soon," Kelsey said. "It shows you how to dress and talk to people of authority and to be more comfortable and confident."
MISSOURI WOULD HURT ITSELF BY RAISING MINIMUM WAGE

A commentary in the Post-Dispatch on Feb. 26 endorsed a bill in the Missouri Senate that would raise the minimum wage in Missouri from the current $7.50 to $10 per hour. The author claimed that this would have a large effect in reducing Missouri poverty with inconsequential effects on employment. We at the Show-Me Institute disagree.

The prevailing minimum wage in Illinois is currently $8.25, and $7.25 in every other bordering state. Common sense as well as basic economics tells us that current and potential future businesses, particularly those employing low-skilled workers near Missouri state borders, will respond to such a massive increase in labor costs. Moreover, the individuals deprived of employment by such a radical policy would be among the least skilled in the workforce.

If Missouri unilaterally raises its minimum wage to $10, jobs will be lost to other states. But damage will occur even if all states raise their minimum wages. A recent study by the Congressional Budget Office predicted that increasing the federal minimum wage to $10.10 would eliminate up to 1 million jobs.

Raising the minimum wage to fight poverty is well-intentioned but misguided. It is possible to help the low-wage working poor without pricing them out of the market, and without creating collateral damage to Missouri businesses. Missouri could follow the lead of more than 20 other states by extending the federal Earned Income Tax Credit to a state income tax credit. Interested readers should read the 2012 policy study by University of California economist David Neumark, which is available at www.showmeinstitute.org.

Rik Hafer, professor of economics, Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville

Joseph Haslag, professor of economics, University of Missouri-Columbia

Michael Podgursky, professor of economics, University of Missouri-Columbia

Show-Me Institute
Kappa Pi Beta is the first Asian interest fraternity in Missouri

COLUMBIA – The Chinese students who joined Kappa Pi Beta fraternity now understand the meaning of brotherhood.

Most of them belong to a generation in China where almost no one has siblings. They were born under the one-child policy, a restriction imposed in 1979 to control the country's population growth.

Before joining his fraternity, Zhun Xu, 24, said the only important relationship he had was with his parents.

"I used to only live my life for my parents," Xu said. "After I joined Kappa Pi Beta, I live my life for my brothers, too."

**Kappa Pi Beta is the first Asian-interest fraternity in Missouri. It was organized as a colony at MU in November with the intent to join the MU's Interfraternity Council and ultimately become the third colony in the nation.**

The seven members have a range of backgrounds and interests. Phillip Nguyen, 20, the president, was born in California and moved to Kansas City when he was in fourth grade. Nguyen studies civil engineering at MU.

Mark Won, 19, and John Hu, 20, are also Asian-Americans. Won is an international business major and Hu is a biology major with a sociology minor.

The rest of the members are international students: Vincent Su, 21, is from Taiwan; Adrian Chee Keat Hong, 20, is from Malaysia; and Josef Huang, 21, and Zhun Xu, 24,
are from China. Their majors include business and communications. Xu is a graduate student studying statistics.

The beginning
Kappa Pi Beta Fraternity was founded March 16, 2000, at the Northern Illinois University campus. A second chapter was established in 2008 at the University of Illinois at Chicago, according to the organization's website.
A service and social fraternity that emphasizes strong academic standards, its vision statement vows to "defy the common stereotypes of fraternities."

"We strive to uphold our virtues of respect and discipline while maintaining a high academic standard. Our goal is to help the community through community service, and spread Asian awareness while instilling leadership and gentleman values," according to the organization's website.

Students at MU were approached a year ago by the members of the Northern Illinois University chapter to see if they wanted to form a group in Missouri.

"We would be making history," Nguyen said.
The founder became friends through the Asian American Association at MU, drawn together because they shared similar backgrounds.

Growing pains
When they decided to form a colony, they assumed it would be easy. Instead, they discovered that the effort demanded outreach, commitment and discipline.
MU requires a minimum number of 15 members to start an organization. Then, because the organization was recognized late in the spring, the group had trouble staying together over summer.

"People started to lose interest." Nguyen said.
Eventually, the organization was struggling to keep any men at all, and because the process was lengthy, it began to take its toll on the remaining members. The process was starting to jeopardize the academics of some members.
"We were working on this group for too long." Nguyen said.

A major blow occurred when Danny Poon, who was president before Nguyen, left the organization for personal reasons.
"I think because of that, I decided to become the president," Nguyen said. "I saw that the group was going to fall apart. If I didn't do something, we would never make it."

In the end, the seven core members stuck it out and stayed together. "Because of the hardship we went through, it has made us a lot closer as brothers." Nguyen said.

**Recruiting strategy**

While established Greek organizations often recruit 70 or 80 members, Kappa Pi Beta makes a deliberate effort to manage its growth.

"We try to keep our numbers small and selective," Nguyen said. "That way, we get quality over quantity of brothers."

The fraternity does not intend to remain exclusive, however, and welcomes non-Asians. Its charter statement vows not to discriminate against race, creed, religion, and sexual orientation.

"We accept males of all races and ethnicities," Nguyen said. "One of our main goals is diversity, as well."

All of the chapters have adopted a no-hazing policy, and while acknowledging that "being in a fraternity will always have its fun parties and social events," philanthropy has proved to be an important aspect of the college experience, Nguyen said.

The national philanthropy for Kappa Pi Beta is Type 2 diabetes, but the three chapters have volunteered for a breast cancer walk, Earth Day, a women's shelter and elementary school reading programs.

On April 14, from 7 to 9 p.m., the Kappa Pi Beta is holding an event called Asian Night Market in collaboration with Alpha Phi Gamma Sorority and the Asian American Association.

The purpose is to celebrate the richness of Asian cultures at MU. It will be a festive night filled with games and an assortment of Asian cuisines, Nguyen said.

**International brothers**

Hong said the fraternity provides an opportunity for international students to join the Greek community.
Because most fraternities are dominated by Caucasians, international students often believe they can never be a part of the campus Greek community, he said.

"We want to reach out to them and break out (of) the stereotype."

Vincent Su, the vice president, grew up in a family that moved around quite a bit. He acknowledged that he felt as if he didn't fit in anywhere. Joining the fraternity helped him discover where he belonged.

"A lot of times I got depressed because of the responsibilities and the long process," Su said. "Then one time I walked into the Student Center, and I saw my brothers there. At that moment, I felt the joy inside."

After Su joined, his friends say they successfully uncovered the "real him."

"I think he (Su) is the one who has changed the most," Nguyen said. "We knew he was responsible but shy. But now, he is completely opposite of shy."

Huang said belonging to the fraternity has given him many brothers.

However, his parents were shocked when he told them that he had joined a fraternity because the word has a different connotation in China.

"In their opinion, fraternity means 'mafia'," Huang said.

He explained to his parents that this fraternity performs community service and benefits members through camaraderie and national networking.

Alexis Gatica, 26, chair of Alumni Relations, Extensions and Brotherhood on the National Board of Kappa Pi Beta, said the members have performed exceptionally well so far.

Gatica said they are dedicated and funny, and he expects them to uphold the values they have identified and be heavily involved with the community.

"I have the utmost trust in them," Gatica said.