College and university endowments that sagged significantly in the recent economic downturn have bounced back in a big way.

That’s according to preliminary findings from a study by the National Association of College and University Business Officers.

“As the economic condition improves, you will see the philanthropic in a better position to share their increased wealth,” said Dale Seuferling, president of University of Kansas Endowment, KU’s nonprofit fundraising arm.

The Council for Aid to Education reported that donors gave about $34 billion to the country’s colleges in 2013, more than $3 billion more than the year before and the most ever raised in a single year — topping the $31.6 billion from pre-recession 2008. A report on the survey of 2014 giving to schools won’t be out until February. But with college endowments regaining strength, it’s a good indication that donors are giving again.

Although the strongest rebounds appear to be happening at Yale, Harvard and other elite private colleges that already were sitting on huge endowment funds, things also are looking rosy for large public universities, including those in Missouri and Kansas.

KU’s endowed funds broke through the billion-dollar ceiling in fiscal year 2006, at $1.05 billion, and grew to more than $1.2 billion in 2008. That was the year the recession hit, knocking the funds back below a billion dollars. Those funds, managed by KU Endowment, now sit at nearly $1.5 billion.
“We had never seen anything like that, when our endowment dropped like that,” said Rosita McCoy, spokeswoman for KU Endowment. “It took us a while to get back to where we were.”

It was 2011 before KU began seeing its endowment return to where it had been three years earlier.

“It has been a steady climb,” Seuferling said.

In December, the university received its largest single donation ever from a private individual. That $58 million gift will boost the university’s endowment for fiscal 2015, which ends June 30.

Key to protecting the school’s endowment, Seuferling said, is “maintaining intergenerational equity or trying to maintain our spending stream so as not to go through peaks and valleys. We are in this for the long term.”

Kansas State University saw its $337 million endowment in 2008 plunge during the recession to $260 million.

“It took fiscal years 2009, ’10 and ’11 for us to recover,” said Fred Cholick, president and chief executive officer for the Kansas State University Foundation. The endowment is up to nearly $500 million.

Good investment management and a generous community, Cholick said, have helped pump up K-State’s endowment. Last year K-State received its largest single private gift in history: $60 million from the Jack Vanier family.

“That really moved the needle for us,” Cholick said.

The University of Missouri four-campus system manages the endowment for its Columbia, St. Louis and Rolla campuses and a portion of University of Missouri-Kansas City’s endowment. The UM System’s Endowment Pool totaled $1.3 billion on June 30 and comprises more than 5,000 endowment accounts.
The system holds $140 million in endowment funds for UMKC, which didn’t form its own foundation until 2009.

At the end of the last fiscal year, UMKC's endowment reached $35 million, up $8.3 million from the previous year.

“It’s a combination of generous donations from our supporters and after the recession we changed our investment strategy,” said university spokesman John Martellaro.

UMKC increased investments in alternative strategies such as hedge funds and real estate investment trusts, he said.

This year, more change is coming for UMKC's Foundation, which after five years has a new president. Steven P. Norris now leads the foundation, succeeding Murray Blackwelder, who retired.

Mizzou International Composers Festival begins crescendo to 2015 edition

By Aarik Danielsen

Monday, January 5, 2015 at 10:30 am

*The Mizzou International Composers Festival is sounding its first notes in 2015, announcing the names of those who will bring the world of new music to Columbia this summer.*

Monday, the festival – which will mark its sixth year July 20-25 – released its list of eight resident composers. These emerging artists will engage with two established, or guest, composers, refining their work through master classes, presentations and rehearsals, before having their music premiered by the festival’s erudite version of a house band, vanguard chamber ensemble Alarm Will Sound.
Leading the list are two current Missourians – University of Missouri graduate student and St. Louis native Justin Pounds and Washington University Professor Christopher Stark.

Also serving as 2015 resident composers are Thomas Dougherty, Houston; Emily Koh, Waltham, Mass.; Andrew McManus, Chicago; Alessandro Ratoci, Lausanne, Switzerland; Anthony Vine, Brooklyn, N.Y.; and Conrad Winslow, Brooklyn, N.Y.

While, in many ways, the careers of these young composers’ are just taking flight, they have already achieved and created some very impressive things. Just a cursory look at their biographies makes it clear how these eight separated themselves from a record number of 231 applicants: Several composers in this year’s class have had their music programmed at Carnegie Hall; the group also boasts several recipients of the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award.

They have worked with a diverse range of artists – for example, McManus has had work performed by eighth blackbird and the Pacifica Quartet while Stark collaborated with country hitmakers Zac Brown Band to arrange one of its songs for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. In 2011, Vine was included on NPR’s list of 100 Composers Under 40, alongside such esteemed names as The National’s Bryce Dessner, Alarm Will Sound’s Caleb Burhans, Ben Frost, Radiohead’s Jonny Greenwood, Vijay Iyer, Gabriel Kahane, Joanna Newsom, John Mackey, Sufjan Stevens and former Mizzou fest participants Anna Clyne and Nico Muhly. These artists are accomplished in fields outside composition as well – Koh, for example, runs the Concert Series at the Boston New Music Initiative and is principal bass for the New England Philharmonic.

The eight resident composers will keep fine company with guest composers Hans Abrahamsen and Andrew Norman. The former is a Danish artist and principal of the “new simplicity” school; AllMusic has described his work as “marked by very light, finely orchestrated textures, a lack of harsh dissonance and the use of collage and pastiche.” The latter teaches at the University of Southern California and his work has been played by the capable hands of the Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics and the BBC Symphony. According to his website, Norman has collaborations with the likes of Jennifer Koh, Jeremy Denk and eighth blackbird on the docket.

With Muhly and Pulitzer winner Zhou Long guiding last year’s field of resident composers, the fifth edition of the festival was a high watermark. The culminating concert, which features Alarm Will Sound playing a premiere by each resident, was once again one of the highlights of the year’s concert calendar.

The schedule for this year’s festival will continue to take shape. Keep up with developments at the festival website.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Panelists discuss beefing up cattle industry at MU summit
Monday, January 5, 2015 | 8:11 p.m. CST; updated 6:51 a.m. CST, Tuesday, January 6, 2015
BY MAY MA

COLUMBIA — Water, rainfall, mud and cornfields — these are some of the key elements that make Missouri a desirable place for raising beef cattle, said Scott Brown, a professor in MU's Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

Despite the nationwide decline in beef cattle inventory, Missouri ranks second in cow and calf inventory, according to data from the Missouri Department of Agriculture. However, of the 1.7 million beef cattle in Missouri, less than 5 percent are processed in-state.

To brainstorm ways to beef up the state's cattle industry, Gov. Jay Nixon held the first Missouri Beef Summit on Monday at the Reynolds Alumni Center at MU.

On Monday morning, panelists, including Brown, discussed how to keep the beef industry's value in-state.

"Ninety-five percent of those cattle that we are doing such a great job raising are leaving the state," said Richard Fordyce, director of the state Department of Agriculture.

"States like Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska are taking advantage of the hard work and the commitment that we've made as cow producers. They are taking advantage by putting value on these cattle outside of the state," Fordyce said.

Ron Plain, an agricultural economist from MU, said that, in general, the beef market is beginning to value quality over quantity.

"The long-term No. 1 buyer of U.S. beef has been Japan, and they like quality beef. They buy the good stuff," Plain said.
Plain explained that the per capita consumption of beef has gone down 40 pounds to 54 pounds in 2014, from 94 pounds in 1976, and has few possibilities of going back to the consumption level of 40 years ago.

"The future of the cattle industry, in my mind, is not so much tonnage as quality," Plain said.

The panel also discussed the facilities that are needed to keep the cattle processed in-state, which would cost up to $1.5 billion, according to Joe Parcell, chairman of the MU Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics.

"One of the biggest challenges is how we are going to come up with that extra $1 billion to $1.5 billion dollars in financing, and in an industry we are not used to financing," Parcell said.

Member of Ferguson Grand Jury Sues Over Lifetime Gag Order

By

Ben Kesling

Updated Jan. 5, 2015 3:31 p.m. ET

A member of the grand jury in the case of the police-involved shooting in Ferguson, Mo., filed suit Monday to break a gag rule protecting the secrecy of the controversial proceedings that led to no charges being brought against the officer.

The juror, identified as Grand Juror Doe, said in the suit that the grand jury in the case of Darren Wilson was conducted in a manner far different from any of the hundreds of other cases presented to the grand jury during its term--and that the county prosecutor wasn’t adequately transparent about how he conducted the proceedings.

“We are not saying that there should never be grand jury secrecy,” said Jeffrey Mittman, the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri, which is representing the juror. “In this particular instance with these particular facts, we believe it is unconstitutional for there to be a lifetime gag order on the grand jurors.”
Mr. Mittman said the juror isn’t available to comment on the case because, “The grand juror is being very respectful of the legal process.”

Under Missouri law, members of grand juries aren’t allowed to talk about their proceedings and can face criminal prosecution if they don’t remain silent. In the suit, filed in federal court, the state’s branch of the ACLU argues that the U.S. Supreme Court has said the secrecy of grand jury proceedings can be trumped by First Amendment rights in certain cases. In this case, the ACLU argues, the juror’s perspective, including disputes with the prosecutor’s office, is important enough to allow the juror to speak out.

The juror is suing Robert McCulloch, the St. Louis County prosecutor, who would be responsible for bringing criminal charges against the juror for breaking the gag order. Mr. McCulloch was also the official who convened the grand jury in the case and who the juror alleges wasn't transparent in the conduct of the grand jury.

“Mr. McCulloch has not been served at this time, so he has no comment,” said Ed Magee, a spokesman for Mr. McCulloch.

The St. Louis County grand jury of 12 members first convened and began hearing cases in May 2014, deciding a number of cases during their weekly meetings in the summer. On Aug. 9, white Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed black 18-year-old, kicking off protests and unrest. Mr. McCulloch then began grand jury proceedings to determine if Mr. Wilson would be criminally charged in the death of Mr. Brown. The grand jury’s term was extended to focus specifically on this case. On Nov. 24, the grand jury returned a no true bill, or no indictment, sparking a night of protests and arson.

During the proceedings, Mr. McCulloch pledged to release all relevant documents from the grand jury. Grand Juror Doe alleges that because of redactions to documents that were released at the conclusion of the proceedings, Mr. McCulloch hasn’t fulfilled his pledge of transparency.

It is a common provision across the U.S. for grand jurors to be bound by gag rules, said Ben Trachtenberg, an associate professor at the University of Missouri School of Law, who teaches criminal procedure. But the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment at times supersedes the need for grand jury secrecy, he said.

In most grand jury cases, the prosecutor will guide the grand jury toward an outcome, but in this case, Mr. McCulloch repeatedly said he was presenting the jury with all available evidence and was allowing them to make the final decision.

It is unusual for the prosecutor to abdicate this role, said Mr. Trachtenberg, and because the grand jury in this case had so much power it makes Grand Juror Doe’s suit more powerful. “Once you pass the buck to the grand jury, the need for the public to know what the grand jurors thought becomes much more urgent,” he said. “Members of the public might benefit from hearing from the horse’s mouth.”

The suit alleges, “From Plaintiff’s perspective, the state’s counsel to the grand jury investigating Wilson differed markedly and in significant ways from the state’s counsel to the grand jury in the
hundreds of matters presented to the grand jury earlier in its term. ” It adds, “The presentation of the law to which the grand jurors were to apply the facts was made in a muddled and untimely manner compared to the presentation of the law in other cases presented to the grand jury.”

Mr. Mittman of the ACLU said Mr. McCulloch currently has a monopoly on the information being released about the grand jury proceedings, which needs to be counterbalanced by other perspectives.

“The current information available about the grand jurors’ views is not entirely accurate—especially the implication that all grand jurors believed that there was no support for any charges. Moreover, the public characterization of the grand jurors’ view of witnesses and evidence does not accord with Plaintiff’s own,” the suit alleges.

#FergusonSyllabus

January 6, 2015

By Colleen Flaherty

NEW YORK -- “The conduct of individual policemen received much adverse criticism from the Negroes. This was to be expected in the circumstances, but disregarding the general prejudices of which white officers were accused, certain cases of discrimination, abuse, brutality, indifference and neglect on the part of individuals are deserving of examination.”

Dated racial language aside, if the above paragraph – ripped from a 1922 commission’s report on the Chicago Race Riot three years earlier – sounds eerily familiar, it should. That’s what a panel of historians said here Monday during a session called “Understanding Ferguson: Race, Power, Protest and the Past” at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association. (There are other parallels: As recent anti-police protests in Ferguson, Mo., New York and elsewhere stemmed from the deaths of unarmed black men and women at the hands of police officers, the 1919 Chicago riot began after a young black man waded into an unofficially segregated beach and drowned after being hit with rocks by white bathers; a white police officer was alleged to have refused to arrest someone for the crime.)

“Ferguson brings us here but it’s a metaphor for a long, ongoing history” of discriminatory police practices, said Khalil G. Muhammad, director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, who chaired the panel. Despite the “keen and prophetic” recommendations about policing and race included in 1922’s “Negro in Chicago” report and others like it since, he said, a lack of political will has
left them “gathering dust” while other, insidious narratives about the black community and crime dominate.

So although historians may be more comfortable working with the past than commenting on contemporary events, speakers said, they’ve got an obligation to help students and society at large understand the context from which the recent protests emerged.

Historians also need to rail against the deleterious “myth” of post-racialism to help promote progress, speakers said.

William Jelani Cobb, associate professor of history and director of the Institute for African American Studies at the University of Connecticut, visited Ferguson four times to report on the protests over the police shooting death of an unarmed man named Michael Brown for The New Yorker, where he is a contributing writer. He said it seemed that the syllabus for his 20th-century African-American history class had “jumped off the page” there, and that many of the dynamics he teaches about seemed to “converge on the ground.”

Black residents in particular tended to speak less about Brown’s death than the “context in which it occurred,” Cobb said, noting that interviewees invoked the 1857 U.S. Supreme Court case involving Dred Scott, a Missouri slave who unsuccessfully sued for his freedom. They asked elected officials who came to Ferguson why local schools were closing, or about housing projects and urban blight. Colin Gordon, professor of history and director of undergraduate studies at the University of Iowa, who studies public policy and political economy, offered additional context for Ferguson, saying that the the area is physically, politically and financially segregated in ways that are similar to but more exaggerated than other semi-urban, minority neighbors.

It all amounted to a strange sense of history repeating itself, Cobb said – hence the name of one his New Yorker dispatches: “Chronicle of a Riot Foretold,” borrowed from the Gabriel Garcia Marquez novella called Chronicle of a Death Foretold, in which a man’s death is predicted but not prevented. Everything that happened during the riot was an “object lesson” in what had brought protesters into the streets in the first place, he added.

Muhammed said recent comments by Rudy Giuliani, former mayor of New York, that “white police officers wouldn’t be there if [blacks] weren’t killing each other 70-75 percent of the time” exemplify racial narratives that must be dispensed with, if progress is finally to be made.

Heather Ann Thompson, an associate professor of history and African-American studies at Temple University, said the backlash against those who have spoken out against alleged police brutality – herself included -- is proof that racism is “not only not dead but more virulent than ever.” (Other panelists said they’d also received hate emails and messages for writing publicly about Ferguson.)

Thompson, a scholar of the civil rights movement, said society has come “full circle,” in that some of the gains achieved since the 1960s have withered. Despite setbacks, however, she said, Ferguson presents an “opportunity to really reckon with the damage done by the myth of post-racialism,” which has made “racism so much easier to spout, espouse and wrap our heads around than it has been in decades.”

It’s also time for historians to definitively link the “weird” gap between public dialogues about the exploding prison population and its “feeder”: overcriminalization, particularly of black men, she said.
But just how should scholars (particularly those whose disciplines may not naturally lend themselves to such conversations) broach those topics, both with students and members of the general public – some of whom may be resistant to such discussions? That’s what several audience members asked.

Marcia Chatelain, an assistant professor of history at Georgetown University who created the collaborative Twitter project for teachers of history called #FergusonSyllabus, said there were multiple ways for non-scholars of American history to get involved. She said architects, for example, could talk with students about how space or urban planning plays a role in structural racism. Chemists, she said, could open up a conversation by talking about tear gas. No one asked about when it might not be appropriate to talk about such issues in college classes, and that topic was not discussed by panelists.

Chatelain discussed the concept of a “shadow syllabus,” saying there’s sometimes a difference between what a professor says he or she is talking about and the underlying lesson.

Thompson said many of her students’ first impulse upon hearing about the Ferguson protests was to “get on a bus” and go there. But she said she encouraged her students to get involved in activism on their own campus and in their own communities. Chatelain, who attended the University of Missouri at Columbia as an undergraduate, said she also encouraged students to get involved in local community activism, and not only during crises. She said she once advised a white student who asked about ways to support communities of color about not just “showing up” when bad things happen.

“Where were you when we were laughing, or happy?” she recalled asking rhetorically.

Chatelain advocated feminist principles of teaching, in which “we talk, we are a community together. We’re always talking about something.” Ultimately, she said, discussions about Ferguson shouldn’t be divisive, as some have suggested in conversations about #FergusonSyllabus, for which a domain name was recently purchased.

“This is not about creating a contentious, upsetting, horrible thing, but modeling for students ... what citizens can do in the world,” she said. “I can’t wait to hear the conversations we’re going to have.”