MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

January 25, 2016
Retirement looms as city prosecutor nears decision on controversial case

By ALAN BURDZIAK

Sunday, January 24, 2016 at 12:00 am

As Columbia City Prosecutor Steve Richey prepares to retire, he said one case during his tenure has gotten far more attention than any other: a simple assault case against a University of Missouri professor that happened during November protests on campus.

While he has yet to decide whether to charge Melissa Click, an assistant professor of communication, with a misdemeanor, Richey said he was not concerned with how people might perceive his choice.

"I'm just not," Richey said plainly in a phone interview Wednesday.

Richey said he plans to announce his decision within the next week.

Click drew ire from lawmakers, First Amendment advocates and others nationwide after a video went viral of her and Janna Basler, associate director in MU's Department of Student Life, trying to stop two student journalists from covering protests Nov. 9 on MU's campus.

The video shows Basler confront Tim Tai, an MU student, as she and Click tell Tai and student Mark Schierbecker, who shot the video, to leave the area. At the end of the video, Click yells, "I need some muscle over here!" when Schierbecker refuses to leave.

The two faculty members were supporting a demonstration by the group Concerned Student 1950, which had protested for days calling for the ouster of former UM System President Tim Wolfe; Wolfe resigned that same day.

Since the video's release, people both within Missouri and beyond have called for Click's resignation or firing, including more than 100 Republican state lawmakers and UM System Curator David Steelman. More than 100 MU faculty members responded with a letter publicly supporting Click.
Schierbecker filed a complaint with the MU Police Department, which forwarded the matter to Richey. Tai has not pursued charges against Basler.

Richey, 61, plans to focus on leisurely activities such as fishing and golfing after March 4, his final day as city prosecutor. A former public defender and Marine, Richey has been in his current role for six years. He also plans to do some legal work for veterans, he said.

Margrace Buckler, director of the city’s Human Resources Department, said the city is working to find Richey’s successor. Buckler said 36 applicants applied for the job, which pays $72,300 to $112,000 annually. Richey’s current salary is $81,236, Buckler said.

City Counselor Nancy Thompson and Deputy City Counselor Cavanaugh Noce will interview the applicants and choose Richey’s eventual successor. Noce said no interviews had been conducted or scheduled.

“We hope to get it filled before Steve retires, obviously,” Noce said.

Charges uncertain against Missouri assistant professor

January 25, 2016 in News

By: The Associated Press

COLUMBIA (AP) — Columbia’s city prosecutor expects to announce soon whether charges will be filed against a University of Missouri assistant professor after an incident from the November campus protests.
Steve Richey, who retires as Columbia city prosecutor next month, told The Columbia Daily Tribune he has yet to decide whether to charge Melissa Click with a misdemeanor.

Click, an assistant professor of communications, garnered national attention after she confronted student photographer Tim Tai and another student videographer during the protests. The students were filming after University System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned amid protests over what some saw as indifference to racial issues.

The student videographer filed a complaint with university police, which forwarded the matter to Richey.

Richey says he'll announce his decision within the next week.

Interim MU chancellor kicks off series of informal chats

By MEGAN FAVIGNANO
Saturday, January 23, 2016 at 12:00 am

University of Missouri sophomore Jannice Newson said she has more interest in who holds administrative roles at the university this school year.

“Before this year, I didn’t really pay any mind as to who was in the administration,” Newson said. “But now I want to know.”

Newson attributes her heightened awareness to a group of students known as Concerned Student 1950. The group held demonstrations this past fall over MU’s racial climate and called for the ouster of former UM System President Tim Wolfe, criticizing him for being negligent in addressing race issues. Wolfe resigned Nov. 9.

That newfound interest in MU administrators brought Newson to Interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley’s first “chats with the chancellor” Friday afternoon.

When Foley arrived at the Jesse Hall rotunda, he told the attendees that the time was meant to be a social hour for people to get together and talk.
“We haven’t done this before, but I hope that it might become a Friday afternoon tradition,” Foley said.

Foley plans to be available from 4 to 5 p.m. every Friday in Jesse Hall. In an email to students, faculty and staff, he said no appointments will be necessary and conversation will be informal.

“Establishing a consistent channel of dialogue with you — our university community — is a priority for me,” Foley said in the email. “Come share with me your thoughts, concerns, suggestions or successes as we continue to work to make this university even better.”

About 20 people attended Friday’s chat. Newson and fellow sophomore Melanie Hawkins said they attended Friday’s event to get to know Foley better.

“It’s very cool he’s trying to get to know everyone,” Hawkins said.

Foley became interim chancellor in November after former MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned. Loftin’s resignation came after two faculty departments and nine deans wrote letters to the UM System Board of Curators expressing a lack of confidence in his leadership. He transitioned into a new role at the university as director for research facility development.

Faculty members Amanda Hinnant and Megan Moore attended Friday’s chat as representatives of the group Moms Demand Action. The organization encourages lawmakers and officials to create common-sense gun reforms.

“We’re concerned parents in the community,” Hinnant said. “We wanted to ask Chancellor Foley what the administration is doing” about “legislation in Jefferson City that would allow guns on campus.”


Munzlinger’s bill would only allow concealed carry if the school is unable to provide security screening at every entrance of every building.

The two bills are set for hearings with the Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee on Wednesday.

Hinnant said the potential repercussions and costs — particularly insurance costs — of allowing people to carry concealed weapons on campus are not worth the change. Moore echoed Hinnant’s remarks and said having guns on campus would be dangerous.
“Luckily, the chancellor seems to agree with that,” Moore said.

Rachel Bauer, vice president of the MU Graduate and Professional Council, said the event showed a “refreshing” change in the office of the chancellor.

“It's really nice” to have an administrator “that is willing to come down, almost from the ivory towers, and say, ‘Hi, Tell me about yourself. Let's talk.’ ”

Bauer said she plans to attend as many of the Friday afternoon sessions as possible and that she will encourage other students to participate. Hinnant said the informal chats show transparency from Foley.

“I would have thought I have to write a long letter on letterhead to reach out to the chancellor,” Hinnant said.

Chats with the Chancellor begin at MU

January 22, 2016 in News

By: Paxton DiBlasi, KOMU 8 Reporter

COLUMBIA - MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley held his first chat session with students and staff Friday.

People in attendance had an opportunity to talk to Foley about what is going on around the MU campus and to keep the channels of communication open throughout the university. The chat sessions are very informal and open to anyone.

Rachel Bauer, the Vice President of the MU Graduate Professional Council, thinks this is a great opportunity for any student who wants to have their voice heard in administration. The GPC advocates for the rights of MU graduate students.

"I think the objective really is to bring students closer to the administration and to make the students realize and know that the administration wants to hear from them and wants their input," Bauer said. "I think it will ultimately make a stronger university."
This new openness comes after a semester full of protest and the removal of two university officials, partly due to a lack of communication. This is an opportunity for weekly communication with anyone who chooses to attend.

"I think it shows that they're willing to listen and really willing to find out what the students need in order to make their education here useful," Bauer said.

The chats will be a weekly event held in the Jesse Hall rotunda from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays.


Interim Chancellor Hank Foley gets to know students and staff at meet and greet

During the first Chats with the Chancellor, an informal meet and greet, interim Chancellor Hank Foley walked around the first floor of Jesse Hall on Friday afternoon, answering and asking questions of those in attendance.

Foley will host the chats each Friday for people to meet with him and discuss any issues of importance, according to the event flyer. Foley, who took over as chancellor on Nov. 12 after former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned Nov. 9, will introduce himself to the MU community next Wednesday, Jan. 27, during his State of the University address.

Sophomore Jannice Newson attended the meet and greet with the hope of getting to know the chancellor better and what he has planned to implement this semester.

“The last chancellor was supposed to be setting up a diversity training for incoming freshman so I hope to see him follow through with that for the next academic school year,” Newson said. “I think it will be good for students to have open conversations with
the chancellor in order to express their concerns and ideas for anything they want to see on campus.”

Although a majority of those in attendance came to just meet the chancellor, freshman Noah Chidoub came with a hearty list of questions, including what Foley was going to do to start coordinating with the Missouri Students Association. Chidoub said he was surprised by the nature of the event.

“I originally thought this was going to be a lot more formal, but this is something else,” Chidoub said. “This is a lot more personal and I feel like he’ll actually remember the faces of those he’s discussing with, so I’m excited to meet him.

Boone County House members promise to oppose UM budget cuts

Boone County’s five House members pledged Thursday to work together to protect the University of Missouri’s budget from cuts intended to punish the school for the turmoil that ousted top leaders during the fall semester.

State Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, told about 80 people gathered for the Boone County alumni’s annual legislative reception at Grand Cru restaurant that he and Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, would put aside their competition for a Senate seat to help the university.

“I am going to fight like hell” to protect the budget, Rowden said. “If that requires standing up to people in my own party, I am going to do that.”

Many of the school’s loudest critics “actually want to damage the university,” Webber said. “This is the time that we all need to stand up and proclaim loudly who we are and what we’re about and to fight for what we believe.”

The Concerned Student 1950 protests that included a hunger strike and threatened boycott of athletic activities by the Tiger football team helped push out UM System President Tim Wolfe in
November. At the same time, faculty discontent and pressure from lawmakers to sever ties with Planned Parenthood, along with other issues, led to the resignation of Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Legislators also have questioned the system of faculty teaching waivers and called for the firing of two employees for their roles in attempting to intimidate media covering the student protests. Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin, has said UM’s budget should receive a “haircut.”

Retired university Vice President Mike Nichols said lawmakers are intruding where they don’t belong.

“I really don’t think they should try to micromanage the university,” he said in an interview after the reception. “The university needs to be able to manage its own business.”

Interim Columbia campus Chancellor Hank Foley told the gathering that the university must emphasize the benefits it provides to the state.

“I hate to hear the things that have been said,” Foley said. “A lot of it is not true. A lot of it we have to work on and get better.”

Each of the five House members — Rowden, Webber and Reps. Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, Caleb Jones, R-Columbia, and Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia — promised to work across party lines on the university’s behalf.

“The one thing that the University of Missouri has always done to the Boone County delegation is it’s allowed all of us to sit down together, put aside our partisan politics and actually work with one goal, with one thing in mind,” Jones said. “I don’t think a lot of people understand how much that has really helped the University of Missouri.”

State Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, did not attend. Schaefer, who is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has joined in questioning whether the university should get a full appropriation if it does not fire Assistant Professor Melissa Click and staff member Janna Basler for their actions at the protests.

The number of lawmakers who agree with Schaefer might be a majority, Kendrick said.

“They’re upset about it, so their response is to do damage to the university by proposing senseless legislation, dangerous legislation, and by threatening budget cuts to the university,” he said.
The best argument against using the budget to punish the university is that it would not touch the intended targets, Basye said. Employees such as groundskeepers or other support staff would suffer, he said.

“I know a lot of my colleagues are very upset,” Basye said. “I am going to do everything I can to prevent any damage, as far as funding. I don’t think that is the right approach.”

Faculty discuss call for review of MU, UM System relationship

The University of Missouri Faculty Council will vote next month on a resolution that asks administrators to have an independent consultant examine the UM System’s organizational structure, the relationship between MU and the UM System and a possible consolidation of the MU chancellor’s and UM System president’s office.

Faculty members discussed a draft of the resolution at their regular meeting Thursday. Art Jago, management professor and Faculty Council executive committee member, said now is a good time to review the system’s structure.

“The timing of the examination occurs because of the very unusual event that both positions — the chancellorship and the presidency — are vacant,” Jago said. “This has not been the case since the system was created in 1953.”

Interim officials are filling in until permanent replacements are found. UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned in November after weeks of student protests calling for his removal over MU’s racial climate. MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned the same day after two faculty departments and nine deans expressed concerns in Loftin’s leadership and weeks of criticism over a variety of issues.

When the UM System was created, Elmer Ellis, who had been the president of the Columbia campus, became the president of the newly created system. Ellis was both MU chancellor and UM president until he retired in 1966. After his retirement, the two positions were occupied by separate people.
Some flagship schools that are part of a state university system, including the University of Michigan and Purdue University, have combined chancellor’s and president’s offices, according to the proposed resolution.

The UM System’s administrative budget for 1964-1965 — the first academic year when all four campuses were under the system — was 1.08 percent of the university’s total expenditures, according to the proposed resolution. In the fiscal 2016 budget, UM System administration expenditures are 2.54 percent of the total system budget.

Tuition was 13 percent of the system budget when the system was established and is 58 percent of the budget now. The increase in tuition and decrease in state appropriations “augments the rationale for a greater degree of local authority,” according to the resolution.

Nicole Monnier, Faculty Council vice chairwoman, said it is important to audit the UM System to ensure it is using money efficiently.

“We are at an interesting moment in our history,” Monnier said. “This is an opportunity to see what system does for us and what it costs us.”

UM System spokesman John Fougere said the Faculty Council should review university policies. Fougere said not having a system as it currently is constructed would be costly for each university and the state. The system has a top credit rating, and each campus might have higher borrowing costs if it were not part of the system, he said.

“We’re confident that when they look at the data and review the numbers they’ll come to the calculation that having a university system is beneficial to our four campuses,” Fougere said.

During interim UM System President Mike Middleton’s first address to the Board of Curators in December, Middleton said that without the system, operating separate services for each campus would at least double costs system-wide.

Jago said the Faculty Council’s executive committee discussed the resolution and agreed it is an important opportunity to examine what value the system adds. The council will continue to discuss the resolution and vote at its Feb. 11 meeting.
COLUMBIA — Columbia police were investigating a shot fired incident early Saturday morning near Campus Bar and Grill.

**MU Alert sent out an email and a mass text alert at 12:39 a.m. saying MU police received a report of a fight at Campus Bar and Grill. The alert system sent another message at 1:02 a.m. saying someone fired a gun near Ninth and Elm streets before getting into a car headed south toward MU's campus.**

Witnesses were able to provide a license plate number to police, according to the alert.

Two groups were fighting in the area outside the bar before a man got out of a vehicle and fired one shot into the air, Columbia police spokeswoman Latisha Stroer said in an email. No one was injured and no property was damaged.

Campus Bar and Grill owner Chris Flood said Saturday morning that the fight occurred outside the bar. Flood said a manager working Friday night told him about the incident.

"There was no fight and no guns inside the bar," he said.
Police respond to report of shots fired near MU campus

Columbia, MO. -
**Columbia police are currently investigating a report of shots fired near MU campus.**

An alert was sent out just after 12:30 Saturday morning notifying students and anyone in the area to "take precautions" but it didn't say where it happened.

ABC17 News talked with some students and staff on campus Saturday to find out what they thought about the alert. Some people on twitter responded to the alert, asking if the school could specify the location.

One teaching assistant said saying something happens "near MU campus" is too broad of a term.

"I'm slightly upset by the vagueness of the email," said Josh Huber, a graduate assistant. "They often send these out [where] that's not very specific and when you're saying shots were fired somewhere around the MU campus, that encompasses a large area."

He also added that adding a location might keep people from getting panicked.

"I suppose you don't really want people showing up to check it out," he said. "It would be nice to have some more specificity because that seems like a way to induce a general panic among the people receiving the emails."

It apparently happened during a fight at Campus Bar & Grill on 9th and Elm Street. Police say one individual shot a gun into the air, and then headed south toward campus. Witnesses were able to provide a license plate number to police.

No description of the suspect is available at this time. Police ask that you call MUPD (882-7201) if you see anything suspicious on campus and Columbia Police (442-6131) if you witness anything off campus.

ABC 17 News is continuing to reach out to officials and will update this story as soon we get any further information.
Shots fired at Campus Bar and Grill

January 23, 2016 in News
By: Alex Dostaler, KOMU 8 Digital Producer

COLUMBIA - University of Missouri Police said a fight broke out at Campus Bar and Grill at 9th and Elm late Friday night that led to shots fired.

MUPD received report of a suspect firing shots into the air, then got into a car and drove south towards MU campus at 12:39 a.m.

Witnesses gave police license plate identification, but at this time there is no description of the suspect.

According to the Columbia Police Department, the suspect fired one shot in order to break up a fight going on between two groups of people. CPD said it was continuing to investigate the report.

Police asked people to call MUPD at (573) 882-7201 if they see anything suspicious on campus and the CPD at (573) 442-6131 if they see anything related to the event off campus.

Police investigate report of shots fired outside downtown bar

Sunday, January 24, 2016 at 12:00 am Comments (3)

Police are investigating a report of shots fired early Saturday morning as part of a fight outside Campus Bar and Grill, 304 S. Ninth St.
The University of Missouri Police Department posted a message on MU Alert at about 12:39 a.m. Saturday that said authorities had responded to reports of a fight at the bar near Ninth and Elm streets.

One person fired a gun into the air and then headed south toward campus in a silver minivan, Columbia police Sgt. Chad Craig said. No one was injured in the incident, police said.

Witnesses were able to provide a license plate number, police said, though no description of the individual was available.

MUPD Maj. Brian Weimer said Columbia police were handling the investigation and referred all questions to the Columbia Police Department.

Craig said Saturday afternoon that police had not made an arrest in the case.

Shots fired at Ninth and Elm, suspect heads toward campus

Columbia Police Department is investigating the report of a fight at Campus Bar and Grill in the early hours of the morning on Jan. 23 on the corner of Ninth and Elm Streets. Witnesses said someone fired a gun into the air, got into a car and drove south toward campus, according to MU Alert.

MU Police Department first received the report, but Maj. Brian Weimer said the incident was not under MUPD jurisdiction because it did not occur on campus.

He gave no further comment, saying that anyone looking for information on the situation should go to the MU Alert website. MU spokesman Christian Basi agreed and said that MU Alert would provide updates as more information became available.
Students were alerted via email at 12:30 a.m. that shots were fired near campus. A 12:39 a.m. post on the MU Alert website gave the preliminary report of the incident, and a 1:02 a.m. post described it in further detail.

“Witnesses were able to provide a license plate number to police,” the second post said. “No description of the individual is available at this time.”

STRIPES temporarily delayed its activity and its cars returned to headquarters in the wake of the incident.

UM System selects 18 students for entrepreneurial program

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Saturday, January 23, 2016 at 12:00 am

The University of Missouri System selected 18 students from the system’s four campuses to participate in the Entrepreneurial Scholars and Interns Program.

This is the second year for the program, which gives students a foundation in entrepreneurial principles and allows them to learn from a mentor. The 2016 cohort will take entrepreneurial-related classes this spring and will complete a 10-week paid internship this summer.

The students include:

- Ricky Abnos, University of Missouri-Kansas City
- Meagan Burwell, University of Missouri-St. Louis
- Robert Caffrey, MU
- Brenda Cortes, MU
- Austin Denney, MU
Creighton DeYoung, MU

Phuc Ho, UMKC

Nicholas Jones-Fielder, MU

John Kovacs, Missouri University of Science and Technology

Ellen Lundstrom, MU

Kevin Ly, UMSL

Ciara May, MU

Vivion Nguyen, UMKC

Bryan Scanlan, MU

Tanner Schaack, Missouri S&T

Dallas Selle, UMSL

Connor Wolk, Missouri S&T

Laura Wymer, UMKC

The UM System in October received $145,000 from the Missouri Technology Corp. to expand the program.

The program’s first cohort had 14 students.

UM System announces new members of entrepreneur program
COLUMBIA- Friday the UM System announced the 18 new members of the Entrepreneurial Scholars and Interns Program (ESIP).

Students from all four of the University of Missouri campuses were eligible to apply.

Program participants will complete 9-12 credit hours of entrepreneurial-related courses followed by a ten week, paid summer internship.

Two of the students in the program, Bobby Caffrey and Creighton DeYoung started working together prior to applying.

“We have been developing a product for the last two years. Creighton and I have been able to do some significant work since we have been here at Mizzou,” Caffrey said.

He and his partner, DeYoung, want to create a consumer appliance company “to invent products that will help eliminate time and solve real issues.”

Another student in the program, Brenda Cortes, said that she has already started her own cosmetology business in her hometown Marshall, Missouri.

“I have a lot of clientele back in my hometown. And I want to own my own hair salon one day. So, I thought that this would be a great opportunity to have the chance to know what entrepreneurship is all about,” Cortes said.

In a news release, UM System Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, Research and Economic Development Bob Schwartz said, "Creating this new wave of well-educated entrepreneurs in Missouri benefits the local, regional and national economies."

Cortes said she hopes ESIP and a bachelors in Strategic Communications will fully prepare her to start her own business after graduation and cosmetology school.
Concerned Student 1950 to receive NAACP award

The NAACP will recognize University of Missouri’s Concerned Student 1950 with the Chairman’s Award at the organization’s 47th Image Awards next month.

The Chairman's Award is given to individuals and organizations who were “agents of change,” according to a news release.

A group of MU students who called their movement Concerned Student 1950 protested on campus last fall, calling for changes to improve the racial climate on campus and for UM System President Tim Wolfe to resign. Wolfe resigned in November after weeks of student demonstrations.

The group's protests inspired similar demonstrations on college campuses throughout the country.

Aside from Concerned Student 1950, seven others also will receive the award from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People: Brittany “Bree” Newsome; Justice League NYC; The University of Mississippi NAACP College Chapter; the Rev. Otis Moss III; the Rev. Howard-John Wesley; the Rev. Jamal Harrison Bryant; and Jussie Smollett. The awards presentation will be broadcast live at 8 p.m. Feb. 5 on TV One, which is channel 99 on Charter Cable, 157 on Centurylink and 328 on DirecTV.

MU Health Care names chief operating officer

Saturday, January 23, 2016 at 12:00 am

Jonathan Curtright has been named chief operating officer of University of Missouri Health Care.

Curtright, an MU alumnus, will begin the new job Feb. 22. He will be responsible for acute and ambulatory care operations and professional and support services.
Curtright has been the chief operating officer at Indiana University Health since 2013. While there, he served as the chairman of a group that is merging a large community hospital with an academic health center.

He will take over the position from Mitch Wasden, who has served as both chief executive officer and chief operating officer for MU Health. Wasden will continue to work as the chief executive officer.

Improved access: Disabled, advocates see progress in public accommodations

By ROGER MCKINNEY
Sunday, January 24, 2016 at 12:00 am

The Americans with Disabilities Act was hailed as a major civil rights achievement when Congress approved it in 1990.

People with disabilities and officials say Columbia is a good place to live for those with a disability, but challenges still exist and improvements are needed. Advances in technology, particularly smartphone technology, have led to significant improvements for people with disabilities.

So what is access to public services and buildings like for people with disabilities in Columbia?

Mike Peplow has used a power wheelchair to maneuver since a spinal cord injury made him a quadriplegic 40 years ago at age 17. He is vice chairman of the Columbia Disabilities Commission.

“I've seen a marked improvement over the last 30 years here in Columbia,” Peplow said.

Peplow retired from the University of Missouri, where he said some buildings are better than others for people in wheelchairs.

He said the recently completed $8.5 million renovation of Jesse Hall, which included installation of two elevators, improved accessibility there.
“I think part of the problem is that many of the buildings in Columbia are older and some are historic in nature, which makes it much more difficult to make them fully accessible,” Peplow said.

The renovations to City Hall and the addition of the government center in 2010 were major improvements for the disabled, Peplow said. The building was built in 1917 and bought by the city in 1972.

The Columbia Public Library also is accessible to people with disabilities, but some problems remain. The Daniel Boone Regional Library Board last week approved an ADA Transition Plan and discussed the long south ramp.

“It can be taxing for some people because of the length,” Peplow said. “It does meet the ADA requirements in terms of its slope.”

The steep ramp leads into the building from the main parking lot behind the library. There’s additional parking across the street at Broadway and Garth Avenue, with the entrance from Garth. The crosswalk is pedestrian-friendly, and there’s no slope into the front library entrance.

“Wabash Station is a good example of taking a historic building and making it accessible,” Peplow said. Accessibility at Wabash Station was part of $1 million worth of ADA improvements approved by the city in 2011.

Dawn Zeterberg has cerebral palsy and uses a manual wheelchair in her house and a power wheelchair around town. She’s a member of the Disabilities Commission, the Public Transit Advisory Commission and the Mayor’s Task Force on Pedestrian Safety.

“I moved here from St. Louis to go to Mizzou 33 years ago and never left,” Zeterberg said in an email. “I discovered that I could get around easier than in St. Louis. Now, I have a life here and I’m very active in town. I’m on three city commissions helping make a difference! At least, I’m trying!”

The Columbia Disabilities Commission on Thursday approved sending a survey to taxi companies and other transportation companies to determine their interest in filling gaps during times not served by Columbia Public Transit. The city buses and Para-Transit buses, for people with disabilities, operate until 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and not at all on Sundays. Riders must schedule rides with Para-Transit.
“We really want to find out what it would take” to get transportation companies involved, said Chuck Graham, chairman of the Columbia Disabilities Commission and associate director of the Great Plains ADA Center at the University of Missouri.

Zeterberg said in an email that it would be ideal if city buses ran around the clock, but that isn’t going to happen because ridership is too low. She said she uses city buses to get almost everywhere.

Columbia Public Schools must accommodate all students with permanent or temporary disabilities, said Michelle Baumstark, CPS spokeswoman. The ADA applies to the district, but so does the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. There are 1,859 CPS students with disabilities out of a school population of almost 18,000.

Section 504 prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities to ensure they receive an appropriate education, said Jessica Moorman, CPS’ 504 coordinator. She said there must be a plan for every student with any type of disability, even those who broke an arm or leg over winter break.

Baumstark said the district interacts with three groups of people with disabilities — students, employees and the public.

David Wilson, CPS special services director, said students with a visible disability are a small percentage of the total student population with disabilities.

Several CPS buildings are more than a single story with stairs and no elevators. They include Grant Elementary School, which opened in 1911; Lee Expressive Arts Elementary School, 1904; Midway Heights Elementary School, 1956; Ridgeway Elementary School, 1923; and Douglass High School, which opened in 1915 in its current building.

Renovation plans at Grant would add an elevator to make it accessible. Wheelchair lifts are part of the plans at Douglass High School. There also are preliminary plans to upgrade Lee Expressive Arts Elementary School, but that is dependent on the outcome of the April 5 bond issue. Superintendent Peter Stiepleman has said officials would revisit the plan in two years if the bond issue is approved.

Wilson said when a student uses a wheelchair or when a disability otherwise prevents the student from using stairs, the district explores its options, including transportation to a building that is accessible.
He said if a sibling is in the less accessible school, the district will try to keep them in the same building, possibly by rearranging classes so that the classes for the sibling with a disability are on the ground floor of the building.

Alex Brooks is a junior at Rock Bridge High School. The 17-year-old has cerebral palsy. He uses forearm crutches and also has vision problems.

He said he fits in well at Rock Bridge.

“The teachers are really helpful,” he said. “They make sure I can understand things very clearly and that I get projects done efficiently and on time.”

Alex’s mom, Nancy Brooks, said when Alex attended what was then West Junior High School, he could not make his way through the narrow, crowded hallways with his crutches. She said he had to use a wheelchair, for which students were more willing to clear a path.

Baumstark said West Junior High School was nearing capacity for students when it became West Middle School a few years back. She said in 2011-12, before reorganization, enrollment at West Junior High was 936. This year the enrollment at the middle school is 636. The reorganization moved ninth-graders from the junior high schools to the high schools.

“Our middle school structure has dramatically changed hall traffic,” said Linda Quinley, CPS chief financial officer. “Additionally, a challenge was getting into and out of the guidance office due to an unusual door configuration. We heard that concern and addressed that over the last two summers with modifications.”

Wilson said in situations where a congested hallway is difficult for a student with a disability, a student can be allowed to leave class early to give extra time to get to the next class before the hallways become congested.

Alex and his mom said that’s what Alex does now at Rock Bridge High School.

“Rock Bridge is very easy to get around,” Alex said.

“All in all, I think Columbia Public Schools is pretty great to work with,” Nancy Brooks said. She said Alex blends in well.

Alex now is getting training through Boone County Family Resources on riding city buses.
“It’s making me more independent,” Alex said. “It’s helping me to familiarize myself with Columbia more.”

Stan Shawver, Boone County ADA coordinator and director of resource management, said the Boone County Government Center, where most county offices are located, was designed with accessibility in mind. He said the courthouse underwent a major remodeling in 1990 and has been remodeled since then to improve access.

“There’s so much more technology to assist people,” Shawver said. Smartphone applications are available to help people with hearing or sight impairment, and county employees are trained to assist people with those disabilities.

“By leaps and bounds, this is by far the best time to be blind in the world’s history,” said Gretchen Maune, who is blind. She demonstrated a voice-over screen reader on her iPhone that allows her to hear text messages, emails, documents and other information. She said she also can use it for walking directions.

She said smartphone technology is a real boon for the blind. Maune lost her vision in her early 20s, the result of a rare genetic condition.

“Everything takes me a little bit longer,” Maune said. She said people who lose their sight later in life have a difficult time adjusting. She uses a guide dog but said it’s rare that anybody tries to tell her to leave a business with her dog.

Maune is a community organizer for Grass Roots Organizing, or GRO, a not-for-profit advocacy organization. She said the organization works against predatory lending and for Medicaid expansion, social justice and other progressive issues.

The social justice aspect of GRO’s work includes advocating for people with disabilities. She said some disabilities are invisible, including cognitive disabilities and mental illness. She said having a disability can make it harder to compete in the job market and harder to gain acceptance.

The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2014 that 17.1 percent of people with disabilities were employed, compared with 64.6 percent of people without disabilities. The unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 12.5 percent. The report is the most recent available, from June 16.

Maune is a member of the Columbia Disabilities Commission. During a commission meeting Jan. 14, Randy Cole, in the city community development department, reported on plans to upgrade the
intersection at Worley and Clinkscales to improve accessibility. Questioned by Maune, Cole said the improvement would include an audible pedestrian signal.

Maune advocates for audible pedestrian signals. At signals without them, she said she simply listens for traffic, which can be treacherous.

Adam Kruse, city ADA coordinator, said the audible pedestrian signals are expensive and it’s not realistic to install them at every intersection. The city has funded and is installing the signals now at College Avenue and Broadway, Providence and Stewart roads, Providence and Business Loop 70, Broadway and Old 63, and, if funding is available, College and Ashland Road.

There are five other intersections that are targeted for audible signals but not yet funded.

The city received only one ADA complaint in 2015. There also was one in November 2014. The 2014 complaint was from Mark Prelas, father of Alexander Prelas, 27, who has a brain injury that leaves him unable to walk, talk or eat. The complaint alleged the lack of a lift into the hot tub at the Activity & Recreation Center discriminated against Alexander. Kruse said the hot tub was built to 2010 ADA standards, but the Parks and Recreation Department, with involvement of the Disabilities Commission, installed the lift in August.

Alexander Prelas’ mother, Rose Roberts, said the effort took a long time but that her son uses the hot tub twice a week.

“The facility is just fantastic,” Roberts said of the ARC. She said she and her husband feel fortunate to live in a town that values accessibility.

The February 2015 complaint by Steven Spauro requested that all city meetings aired on the city television station include close-captioning or an interpreter for the deaf. His wife has a hearing impairment. The city implemented a new policy in October to provide interpreters for all meetings that are aired and captioning for all programs on the city website. Kruse said captioning for all city programs would be provided in the future.

Amber Cheek, ADA compliance manager for the University of Missouri, said she thinks the Columbia campus is better than most.

“There’s definitely room for improvement,” Cheek said. “It’s a very historic campus. We have a lot of small issues.”
She said student housing on campus is a bright spot, with many students with disabilities telling her accessible housing is the reason they chose MU.

“Mizzou’s really becoming a mecca for students with disabilities,” Cheek said. She said many of the dormitories, especially the newer ones, use universal design concepts. Universal design includes ideas like no-step entries, wider hallways, wider restroom doorways with no tight turns required for entry and lever-style door handles.

“All these things help everyone” not only people with disabilities, Cheek said.

Barbara Hammer, director of the MU Disability Center, said just fewer than 1,178 students in 2014-15 requested accommodations or services from the office. About 35,000 students were enrolled at MU that fall. She said there probably are many more students with disabilities who do not require special accommodations or services and don’t make their disabilities known to the school.

Cheek said she works with the architect in planning every building renovation to improve accessibility. She said recently completed renovations at Jesse Hall include two new elevators, which would be a big improvement for those in wheelchairs. She said there’s still just one accessible entrance to the building.

Cheek said the LaFerre Hall project also would incorporate accessibility and universal design. It will have an at-grade entrance with no ramp or steps. The Stewart Hall renovation would bring an accessible entrance to the front of the building, where previously those in wheelchairs had an accessible entrance only at the back of the building.

“People shouldn’t have to go around to the back of the building to enter it,” Cheek said.

She said if everything goes right, the GoMizzou smartphone application beginning in April will include information about accessible building entrances and accessible restrooms on campus.

Maune has bachelor’s and master’s degrees from MU. She said there’s not always Braille labeling on campus, including in residence halls.

“I still find some here and there that aren’t labeled well, and it’s very frustrating,” Maune said.

She said two or three years back she and a friend made an attempt at a “guerrilla Braille action” in the lower level of the MU Student Center, where they discovered signs that had no Braille labeling. They had a Braille printer and printed clear, Braille labels to place on the signs. She said when she returned a few days later, the labels had been removed.
Michelle Froese, spokeswoman for MU Student Unions, said she thinks those are what she referred to as wayfaring signs, informational signs that could be moved or changed. She said those types of signs aren’t covered by the ADA.

Of the 719 public housing units in the Columbia Housing Authority, 209 are accessible to people with disabilities, said Phil Steinhaus, CHA chief executive officer. Renovation of Stuart Parker Apartments will add 24 accessible units when it’s complete in June 2017. Renovations of the Bear Creek and Oak Tower apartments will add 16 and eight accessible units, respectively. Work at Oak Tower is scheduled to be complete in March 2017 and Bear Creek in May 2017. That will bring the total accessible units to 257.

All 200 units at Paquin Tower, 1201 Paquin St., are accessible. Resident Janis Fiedler, 67, said she has a bad leg and a mood disorder for which she takes medication.

“This is really a good place,” Fiedler said of the apartment building. “They bring your food. They do cleaning for you. It’s about the best in the world.”

Bobby Neubauer, 52, said he has mental health issues and a bad back. He said Columbia has been “a sweet place to live.” He said Paquin Tower also is a good setup.

“Living here has helped me a lot,” he said. He said the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department has programs for residents and that university students have assisted residents with computer skills. He praised staff member April Steffensmeier for helping him fill out paperwork.

“These are wonderful people,” Neubauer said. “You couldn’t ask for better people.”

Cole, with the city Community Development Department, said all houses the city builds through its affordable housing program use universal design.

Peplow said homeowners don’t often consider when building or buying a home that if one lives long enough, everyone will be disabled in some way.

“A lot of contractors don’t really take that into account when they’re building subdivisions,” Peplow said.
State Support on the Rise
State support for higher education is up 4.1 percent this year, according to a new report.

No MU Mention
The Grapevine report, released today, shows a slow but steady increase in state funding over the last few years. Between the 2015 and 2016 fiscal years, 39 states reported increases in state funding, while only nine reported decreases.

The remaining two states -- Illinois and Pennsylvania -- have yet to finalize their budgets and are not included in the report. Once those data become available, the national averages could change significantly, given the two states' size and significance.

The report, conducted annually by the Center for the Study of Education Policy at Illinois State University and the State Higher Education Executive Officers, compares state spending from the current fiscal year to spending in past years. It includes state appropriations -- money set aside for operating support for colleges and universities, financial aid, and state scholarships, among other things -- but doesn't include money from student fees or most federal sources.

It also doesn't take enrollment increases into account, which means the results don't reflect how much money states spend on each student.

This year's report marks the third consecutive year that state support has increased. State funding went down by 7.6 percent back in 2012 -- the largest decline in at least the last half century -- and in 2013, it went down by just 0.4 percent. Since then, it's gone up every year.

"Many states are experiencing an ongoing but slow recovery from the losses of the last recession," said James Palmer, a professor at Illinois State and author of the report. "State support for higher education pretty much tracks the ups and downs of the business cycle of the economy."

The numbers reflect patterns that researchers have observed since the Grapevine project began back in 1961, Palmer said. Recessions are often followed by a period of retrenchment -- and then when the economy starts to pick up, funding begins to recover.
That’s where the states are now, according to Palmer, and the data from the last five years support his conclusion. Including federal stimulus money allocated to higher education in the years following the recession, 15 states spent less money on higher education in 2016 than they did in 2011. And if that number seems high, it’s important to compare it to last year’s data: In 2015, half of states spent less on higher education than they did in 2010.

But even so, firm conclusions can’t be drawn until the Illinois and Pennsylvania data come in.

“This is the first time in the 15 years that I’ve been working with Grapevine in which we’ve had states that weren’t able to report figures by now,” Palmer said. “If they eventually weigh in with decreases between fiscal year 2015 and fiscal year 2016, that national increase would go down.”

Illinois increased its funding 21.1 percent between fiscal years 2014 and 2015 -- more than any other state. Most of that money, however, went to public employee retirement plans, not classrooms. And now, in the midst of a budget impasse, universities are covering the cost of 125,000 students’ Monetary Award Program grants, which are meant to be covered by the state. Pennsylvania, meanwhile, is facing the longest budget stalemate in modern state history.

And even though the current national average shows a modest increase in state support, the numbers vary widely from state to state. Increases range from 0.1 percent in Kentucky to 16.2 percent in Oregon, while decreases range from 0.1 percent in New Jersey to 14 percent in Arizona.

Arizona’s been struggling for a while. Since the recession, Arizona has decreased state funding and increased tuition more than any other state, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Back in March, the state moved to pull all funding from two of its largest community college districts. And earlier this month, when the think tank Young Invincibles graded states on their support for public higher education, Arizona received an F.

On the other side of the spectrum, the increased spending in Oregon follows years of deep budget cuts. When the recession hit, enrollment in higher education went up and state investment went down -- and while most states cut higher education funding after the recession, Oregon’s cuts were some of the largest.
“The recent reinvestment on the part of the Legislature reflects really turning the corner for the state,” said Ben Cannon, executive director of Oregon’s Higher Education Coordinating Commission. “We’re out of the cellar and closer to the ground floor, but we’ve got a long way to go.” Cannon is cautiously optimistic about the increases in Oregon. While the state is starting to recover and return to pre-recession levels of funding, Cannon thinks it is still far from where it once was.

“We’re certainly pointed in the right direction,” he said. “But I think we have to be also cognizant of our history and revenue and spending structures that create no assurances that this trajectory can be sustained.”

Palmer is equally hesitant. It’s easier to reduce funding for higher education than it is for many other items in state budgets, he said, and higher education’s recovery is tenuous.

“There is a sense among many analysts that over the long haul, these recoveries have not yet been full recoveries,” he said. “That over the long haul, we’ve been losing ground.”

**Percent Change in State Appropriations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>One-Year Change</th>
<th>Five-Year Change, Including Stimulus Funds</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
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<td>Average (Excluding Ill. and Pa.)</td>
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