UM President Continues Push For More State Support

BY DALE SINGER

Continuing his push to build backing for stronger financial support from the state, University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe said Friday that residents, industry and political leaders have to work together to make a convincing appeal.

“We’ve got to stop playing the blame game,” Wolfe told members of the UM Board of Curators in Columbia. “We’ve got to stop pointing fingers. We’ve got to stop looking in the rear-view mirror and start looking through the windshield.”

Since he became president of the four-campus system three years ago, Wolfe – a graduate of the Columbia campus – has been traveling the state on what he calls his “Show-Me Value” tour, making the case that a successful Missouri and a successful university go hand in hand.

Meeting with students, civic leaders and business executives, as well as writing newspaper opinion pieces and using social media, Wolfe said he has been getting his message across to as many people as he can using whatever methods he can.

“We have more reach now than we have ever had before,” he said.

One measure of that success, Wolfe added, was raising matching money from private sources for projects that he said had brought 1,200 jobs to the state. Still, he said, industry often says it is too hard to work with the university in fields like research and intellectual property.

Making such partnerships easier, Wolfe said, will go a long way toward pursuing and perfecting the argument that will benefit everyone: A stronger University of Missouri will mean a better Missouri.

“It is important that we be transparent to our political leaders,” he said. “It is important that we be accountable for the money invested in us.”
Citing Missouri’s failure to fund public schools fully at all levels, Wolfe specifically tried to dispel some of the common explanations for the shortfall.

Is Missouri too conservative? He said that states that are ranked as being even more conservative fund education at a higher level.

Are Missouri’s taxes too low? Wolfe said that the state is about in the middle of the pack in that benchmark, and states with even lower levels of taxes also provide more support for schools.

“We really have some fundamental challenges in the state of Missouri,” he said, adding: “What do we want Missouri to be known for, and how will we change?”

Wolfe cited a recent Post-Dispatch editorial, written after he visited with writers there, that he said had resulted in both criticism and support.

It talked about Missouri being involved in what he called “a race to the bottom” – a phrase he said he had borrowed from Donald Cupps, now chairman of the board of curators. To make sure the state doesn’t end up with the dubious distinction of winning that race, he said that everyone who wants to see progress has to help foster a sense of urgency.

“Complacency is the enemy of urgency,” he said. “The reason why complacency exists it that you have perceived success or arrogance or you need to cling to the status quo, and we need to be sensitive to that.”

But, he added, to make sure Missourians see education as the key to a more prosperous future, there needs to be a strong coalition of all parties who can benefit.

“There’s a lot of pent-up anger and emotion that’s coming out,” Wolfe said. “We’ve got to capitalize on it, but capitalize on it in a positive way.”

Wolfe’s comments came one day after curators approved, on a vote of 6-1, a 0.8 percent increase in tuition and fees for the coming school year. The vote came amid concern expressed by members of the board that students are shouldering too much of the cost of their education at a public university.

In his remarks, Wolfe said he would join the heads of other public colleges and universities to go before lawmakers next week and ask for increases in support for higher education. To be successful, he added, they will have to make a case that higher appropriations will help everyone.

“We’re changing people’s lives in a positive way,” Wolfe said. “We have the opportunity, as taxpayers and citizens of the state, to be more productive, more accountable, more visible.
“Education is the fulcrum of all of the things that we do.”

**Year of the student**

In his first meeting as chairman of the board, Cupps – an attorney from Cassville – said the theme of his tenure will be “Year of the Student.” Saying that he had learned a lot from Tracy Mulderig of UMSL, the non-voting student representative on the board, he said he wants to focus on making progress in five separate areas and asked all four campuses to provide progress reports during the year on possible improvements.

First, he focused on advisement to help students succeed. He noted that the university has already begun an initiative to improve student retention, but more could be done with improved advice.

Second is enhanced learning, not only in the classroom and the laboratory but increasingly online as well. “We need to make sure that the online learning, along with our in-person instruction, is the best that it can be.”

Cupps summarized his third point in these words: “eight semesters.” Though parents and students sometimes joke about their collegiate five years plan, he said the university needs to make sure it does away with roadblocks or bottlenecks that keep students from graduating in four years.

“For a lot of families,” he said, “it’s not a joking matter. If you’re from limited means, an extra semester or two semesters of college increases your debt and increases the burden on your family.”

Fourth, Cupps said students need to have access to what he called “mental health first aid,” the ability to get help to cope with what can be an overwhelming adjustment to college that can lead to illness or worse.

Finally, he piggybacked on Wolfe’s continued press for campus safety by saying all students should have a quick way to use a smart phone or other mobile device to get advice or help with issues of violence or personal safety. “They should have this at their fingertips,” Cupps said. “They shouldn’t have to go anywhere else.”

Praising Mulderig’s input on the issues, Cupps said: “If anyone ever questions the importance of the student representative, they should meet Tracy.”

About using her ideas as the basis of his own, he added: “One attribute of a good lawyer is being able to take others’ work and claim it as your own – and bill for it.”

*St. Louis Public Radio is a unit of the University of Missouri-St. Louis.*
Swallow Hall project on schedule
by Mark Slavit

Watch story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=06a1d64b-6720-4492-b26c-f66dc082275a

COLUMBIA, MO -- A renovation project at one of Mizzou’s oldest buildings is on schedule.

Swallow Hall on Mizzou’s quadrangle is part of a $21 million renovation project.

The renovations in Swallow Hall started in July and are expected to run until February 2016.

Construction crews are adapting the old building for today’s technology.

The entire inside of the building has been gutted.

Crews are making foundation repairs.

Swallow Hall will have more space for classrooms and a 100-seat auditorium.

MU Operations Communications Manager Karlan Seville said, “The classrooms that were in there will be renovated. It will have extra faculty offices for art, history and archeology faculty and anthropology faculty.”

The renovation project does not affect Swallow Hall’s status on the National Register of Historic Places.
The editorial "Mizzou-rah. Sort of" (Feb. 6) is a mass of contradictions and is consequently befuddling. You say, “These kids are being exploited. Willingly, to be sure. But exploited nonetheless.” You ask, “What exactly are America’s universities doing in the business of professional sports?”

However, you seem to be making a case for athletic scholarships to include more than an all-expense-paid education. What is your solution, no athletic scholarships? Many colleges, including Washington University, play football and do not give athletic scholarships. If someone chooses to play sports, he or she knows that there is a risk. No “informed consent” document is necessary.

Frankly, I played many sports and despite two hip replacements, a knee replacement, a shoulder replacement and other orthopedic problems, I would do it all over again. I believe many young people agree with that. If they don’t, they can choose not to participate.

It is true some college sports programs make big money from ticket sales, TV revenues and in other ways related to their success on the field. Other college programs lose money but have teams because their student athletes want to play.

Today exceptional athletes may use college sports to propel them into the millions of dollars of professional sports. Should they pay some of their earnings back to the college that enabled that to happen?

There is no secret guilt. Colleges give athletes opportunity. There are potential mutual benefits for the athlete and the college. I fail to see the exploitation argument of your editorial.

Leonard Adreon • Clayton

Babies Can Assess Complex Social Situations and React Accordingly

Even before they can walk and talk, babies like to see those who do wrong actually punished and they have sympathy for victims of bullies. That’s according to new research out by the University of Missouri. Part of that study is on your screen. The top half shows what the infant is seeing and the
bottom half is the child’s reaction. The Ph.D. candidate leading the study are joining us now. This is very interesting. It actually shows that these babies have emotions and are socially savvy. Can you tell us more about the study? Our study shows that even at 13 months, babies can use their understanding about others perspectives and their social skills to understand complicated social situations. So the parents generously volunteered to bring their babies to the lab and then the babies sat on parents’ lap and we performed puppet show for them. The babies cannot talk so we measure their looking times to gauge their understanding. How did you actually determine that they are aware of someone actually doing wrong and actually having sympathy for a person who might be a victim of a bully? Did the puppets provide that information to you? We measure a baby’s looking time. It’s an expectation thing. Things that are common or expected are boring and babies typically look away but things unexpected or unusual, however, they are interested and babies tend to look longer. So we measure looking time to compare the two events and see whether they can understand and have expectations about these events.


(KTIV-TV St. Louis)

Facebook Use Could Affect Mental Health


COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Stephens College, MU rank among top 50 best fashion institutes worldwide

Monday, February 9, 2015 | 7:21 p.m. CST; updated 10:22 p.m. CST, Monday, February 9, 2015
BY DANIELLE ZOELLNER

COLUMBIA — The fashion schools at Stephens College and MU are among the top 50 fashion institutes in the world, according to a December 2014 ranking by the independent fashion news website Fashionista.
Stephens ranked 48th while MU followed right behind at 49th. Notable schools such as the Fashion Institute in New York are on the list, but Columbia had more schools than the likes of Chicago and Milan, both places considered to be fashion capitals.

The ranking was based on criteria such as tuition, famous and successfully placed graduates, quality of teachers and practical training.

What has made both Stephens and MU stand out? Monica McMurry, dean of the School of Fashion and Design at Stephens, thinks the school ranked because its classes have a real-world setup.

The school offers four fashion majors; three intertwine so students can work in multiple fields.

Britta Belle is a junior fashion design and product development major at Stephens.

“Stephens takes a 360-degree approach to fashion design,” Belle said. “We learn everything from illustration to the actual designing of the clothing.”

Each faculty member at Stephens has hands-on experience in the field, Jessica Wawiorka, a sophomore fashion design and product development major, said.

“With the smaller class sizes, we get one-on-one experience,” Wawiorka said.

Stephens is working on becoming a member of the Council of Fashion Designers of America, of which only 18 schools are members. McMurry said schools have to be invited to participate in the series of scholarships and contests for designers only. She anticipates Stephens will learn over the summer whether it made the cut.

“We feel like we are on par with the other schools involved,” McMurry said.

Stephens also offers its students an opportunity to be involved in a professional fashion show. The marketing and fashion communication majors produce the show, while the designers make the clothing.
"Critics and professional people from the industry will come in and take a professional look at everyone’s work before the show," Wawiora said. "This is a process called jury." This allows the students to make connections with people in the industry and career experience, Wawiora said. The school puts on the fashion show every April.

MU takes more of a business approach, as opposed to the fashion design emphasis at Stephens.

“We take a global perspective from fiber all the way out to the retail and consumer level,” said Pamela Norum, interim department chair at the school. The textile and apparel management department is one of the largest programs at MU and has a good retention rate, Norum said.

There are two sides to the program: product development, and merchandising and marketing.

“The program ... allows me to be on the design side and still have a business minor built into it,” said Kathleen Kowalsky, a junior textile apparel and management major with an emphasis in product development.

Kowalsky is involved in the sustainability side of fashion, a passion of both hers and the entire textile and apparel management program. Fashions can be more sustainable by incorporating strategies such as reducing dye or cutting down on the transportation of clothing and materials around the world.

Sustainability has become a key area of emphasis built into every class in the school. There is an understanding that not all students will go into companies that focus on sustainability, but MU wants it to be part of its students’ mindsets.

“When students can effect change and be aware of how it came about,” Norum said.

Both Stephens and MU have placed students with companies such as Dillard’s, Target, Nordstrom and with designer labels, helping them to create broad alumni networks.
U.S. Farmers Watch $100 Billion-a-Year Profit Fade Away

(Bloomberg) -- The squeeze on U.S. farmers is getting worse as low crop prices and rising costs erode incomes that not long ago were the highest ever.

Illinois grower Jason Lay said he will buy 30 percent less fertilizer for his 2,500 acres of corn and soybeans, and 7 percent fewer seeds for spring planting. After his most profitable year ever in 2012, Lay said he upgraded his combine, tractor, sprayer and planter. With crop futures now near five-year lows, he has no plans to buy any new equipment.

“You spend when times are prosperous so you don’t need to when they’re not,” Lay, 41, said by telephone from outside Bloomington, Illinois. “That’s how you make it through.” He estimates his profit is down by a quarter from its peak.

Farm income in the U.S., the world’s top agricultural producer and exporter, is poised to drop for a third straight year in 2015. While raising livestock remains profitable, as tight meat supplies keep prices high, growers of corn, soybeans and wheat saw crop and land values fall faster than many of their costs. That’s pinching sales for equipment maker Deere & Co. and seed and chemical producers including DuPont Co.

“The budget picture for corn and soybeans is as negative as we’ve seen in a long time,” said Brent Gloy, an agricultural economist at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. “You will see some farmers not able to cover their production costs.”

USDA Forecast

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, in a report today at 11 a.m. in Washington, probably will forecast 2015 net-cash income from all farm activity at below $100 billion, which would be the lowest since 2010, Gloy said.

Last year, cash income dropped 17.5 percent to $108.2 billion, as expenses jumped to a record $370 billion and crop receipts tumbled 11.5 percent, USDA data show. Even a 14 percent increase in livestock receipts, which topped crop revenue for the first time in eight years, wasn’t enough to prevent a 2014 decline in overall farm profit.

The agriculture industry has boomed over the past decade as record land and crop prices boosted sales of seed and farm equipment. Net net-cash income touched a record $137.1 billion in 2012.
Land values have kept rising, up 8.1 percent last year to an all-time high of $2,950 an acre, while beef and pork prices were the highest ever.

**Crop Slump**

Record-high crop prices in 2012 helped fuel a surge in global output, creating a surplus that sent futures tumbling. Corn traded at $3.8925 a bushel by 11:52 a.m. London time on the Chicago Board of Trade, down 54 percent from a record in August 2012, and soybeans were at $9.7675 a bushel, down 45 percent from their all-time high.

Bumper crops weren’t enough to prevent crop receipts last year from dropping to $193.5 billion, the lowest since 2010, USDA data show. At the same time, seed costs rose 2.7 percent and rents paid by farmers on land they didn’t own rose 2.9 percent. That’s eroding Farm Belt income that the USDA says insulated rural areas from the worst of the recession that lasted from the end of 2007 to mid-2009.

Moline, Illinois-based Deere, the largest manufacturer of agricultural machinery, said last month it will lay off 910 factory workers as profit falls for a second straight year. Monsanto Co., the world’s top seed seller, said last month there will be fewer U.S. corn acres planted this year, which will be a drag on the St. Louis-based company’s profit.

**Cheaper Fuel**

Farm income this year may benefit from cheaper fuel, which accounts for about 5 percent of expenses. Amid a glut of crude oil, the price of diesel used in tractors and harvesters is down 22 percent since Oct. 31, touching a five-year low of $2.793 a gallon on Feb. 2, motoring group AAA said.

Property values are also showing signs of easing. Lower-quality farmland has dropped about 15 percent from its peak, while prices for better land has leveled off, Farmers National Co., which manages 2.1 million acres of farms in 24 states, said Feb. 5.

Such declines may not provide much help this year to farmers who rent their land in multi-year agreements, said Pat Westhoff, an agricultural economist at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

“Many farmers are paying a lot more in rent now than they were three-four years ago, and once you take that into account, some will actually lose money,” Westhoff said in an e-mail.

**Livestock Profit**

While crop farmers are getting squeezed, most livestock producers are making money and probably will surpass crop receipts for a second straight year, said Chad Hart, a farm economist at Iowa State University in Ames.
In 2014, revenue from chickens, cows, hogs and other animals jumped to a record $208.7 billion, surpassing crops for the first time since 2006, USDA data show.

That’s prompted a shift on Don Steinbeisser Jr.’s farm and ranch near Sidney, Montana, where he has 3,500 acres of crops and grazes about 650 cattle. He is planting less corn and using it to feed his livestock rather than sell in the market.

“With corn under $4, we’ll take that for the cattle,” said Steinbeisser, who also grows wheat, soybeans, barley and sugar beets. “Times like these, I’m glad I’m diversified.”

UMKC chancellor apologizes for use of flawed data in pursuit of rankings

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS AND MIKE HENDRICKS
02/09/2015 7:12 PM

A week after the University of Missouri-Kansas City was stripped of its four top-25 Princeton Review rankings for falsifying data, Chancellor Leo Morton apologized for the first time to students, staff, alumni and the city.

“This is very serious to me because this is not what we are about, and I want everyone to know that we are addressing it in a very serious way,” Morton said Monday on KCUR-FM’s program “Up to Date.” He made the same statement later in a letter to the UMKC campus.

Morton previously had accepted responsibility, a UMKC spokesman said, but “felt it was important to apologize today before sharing the university’s next steps forward to ensure this issue never happens again.”

The Princeton Review stripped UMKC from the lists of the best college and business school entrepreneurial programs after an audit conducted by the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers confirmed that university officials had submitted false data related to the number of student clubs and mentorship programs and some enrollment information.

The audit was requested by Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon after a Kansas City Star article last summer described a pattern of exaggerations, misstatements and cherry-picked data by Bloch School officials in their pursuit of top rankings for the Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

Kraske, who also is a political columnist for The Star, asked Morton to address other questions raised about the validity of a separate business school ranking that was published in the Journal of Product Innovation Management, or JPIM. A 2012 article, submitted by two Chinese scholars who at the time were visiting UMKC, named the university No. 1 in the world for research in the field of innovation management.

Morton said on the radio that when he first heard that the JPIM study had ranked UMKC ahead of elite schools such as Harvard, Yale and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, his alma mater, he questioned it.

But he said he was assured the ranking dealt with “a very narrow” research area. And he said that an analysis by a retired business professor who reviewed the PricewaterhouseCoopers audit “validated” the ranking study.

Morton said the false data submissions to the Princeton Review could be traced to one administrator who he said was “pushing the envelope. ... You just cannot predict the actions of a single individual.”

The PwC audit report revealed that UMKC administrator John Norton submitted bad data because he felt pressured by his boss Michael Song, who headed the Regnier Institute at the time.
Morton said he wanted “to assure everyone that we are doing everything humanly possible to ensure that this issue never happens again.”

He said the Bloch School and the Regnier Institute have new leaders. “Any problems that were identified occurred before their stewardship and they are working to strengthen the academic integrity of the program,” he said.

Morton said he endorsed the plan by David Donnelly, dean of the Bloch School, to create a new faculty review committee to oversee all future ranking applications for the business school.

“We have to get broader input into the process, and we will,” Morton said.