Missouri university report suggests student union renovation

University of Missouri report recommends student union undergo renovations

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A University of Missouri-commissioned report says that the school's student union is need of renovations after parts of the building were found to be in poor condition.

The Columbia Missourian reports that a $35,000 study conducted by a consulting firm recommended that the Memorial Union North undergo renovations that would include fixing and expanding the building.

Memorial Union North's renovation would include redoing the building's second floor and the addition of a third floor that would hold a 10,000 square-foot ballroom. Renovation would likely be funded by Mizzou Store sales and reservation fees paid by off-campus organizations to use the center, according to Student and Auxiliary Services spokeswoman Michelle Froese.

The report also says that a new Welcome Center could be ideal for donor and football recruiting events, but its construction shouldn't be a priority for the school.

Thorson encourages hard look at MU journalism school's strategic plan

By Ashley Jost

Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at 2:00 pm
If she were dean of the University of Missouri’s School of Journalism, Esther Thorson would take a hard look at the college’s strategic plan.

Thorson, a professor and associate dean for graduate studies at the MU school, is the only internal finalist for the dean position.

At an open forum Monday afternoon in the Reynolds Alumni Center, Thorson outlined four “areas of change” in the industry, journalism education and specifically at the MU journalism school. The changes Thorson mentioned ranged from disruption of funding models for higher education and the challenges that come with that to bridging gaps between research and practice or implementing those findings in newsrooms.

Thorson cited a slew of changes to address the problems she outlined, including having a defined strategic plan for the college.

“I’m guessing a lot of you haven’t seen it,” she said to the crowd about the school’s current strategic plan. “It’s expired.”

When goals are not well-defined, like increasing diversity among students and faculty, nothing will change, she said. The college’s leaders need to find ways to nurture and fund programs that help reach objectives laid out in the plan, and the plan “must deal with” faculty “not having competitive salaries.”

Another theme for Thorson’s forum was the need to increase MU’s visibility in national public discussions involving media events and issues. That responsibility falls on the dean, she said.

Elevating MU in national discussions and having a defined strategic plan requires funding, which Thorson said also falls on the dean’s list of responsibilities. Donors want to be involved with goals that are outlined and showing progress.

In a “turbulent state of media,” Thorson said, great journalism is more important than ever before and journalism educators need to be leading that charge.

“The great days of journalism are not over,” she said. “Doing it right is good business.”

Students, faculty, staff and alumni provided questions for Thorson during the forum. Alumna Beth Carpenter asked via Twitter what expansion opportunities exist between business and strategic communication skills for journalism graduates.

“Many of our journalism alumni now say, ‘I feel bad I wasn’t able to develop strategic communication tools because I’m starting my own company or in charge of promoting my news product,’” Thorson said. “Why not have a special sequence that’s combined journalism and strategic communication where you learn the basics, but also some basic and advanced courses in strategic communication?”
Thorson said such changes would require fundraising, like other efforts, but it is one of many ideas that could be added to an updated strategic plan.

The fourth and final candidate, Thor Wasbotten, director of the Kent State University School of Journalism and Mass Communication, will be on campus for interviews later this week. His open forum is 4 p.m. Thursday in the leadership auditorium of the MU Student Center.

Journalism dean candidate Esther Thorson discusses current issues, future plans

Associate Dean Esther Thorson took the podium Monday to outline her vision for the Missouri School of Journalism as the third of four finalists for the position of dean.

Thorson, who also serves as the director of research for the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute, shared her insight on the current status of the Missouri School of Journalism and view what the future holds for the field with the students, faculty and alumni who attended the open forum.

After being introduced by search committee chairman and law professor Gary Meyers, Thorson started by commending the achievements the school has made thus far, stressing pride in established professional outlets that embody the “Missouri Method” and contribute to innovations in research and training through collaborative work across the campus. Thorson also presented her understanding of the challenges the school now faces, along with solutions to combat these difficulties that she would put in place as dean.

Thorson praised that the combination of practice and research is “nowhere better realized than in MU’s journalism school,” yet she said she thinks there’s still room for improvement in terms of articulating what the Missouri Method yields.

“Guaranteeing that our experience in research and practice is shared within the industry, the press and the citizens is the responsibility of the dean,” she said.

Thorson discussed her thoughts on ensuring continued growth toward Association of American Universities’ criteria. After losing top scholars in recent years, she said she is on a quest to regain strength through partnering with leading industry practitioners and scholars, along with integrating doctoral programs with the communication branch in the College of Arts and Science to pump up funding and increase research productivity.
Thorson said she is eager to tackle the issue of rising education costs and student debt.

“Our J-school can and should play a leadership role in meeting with these challenges in higher education,” she said. “To free ourselves from the dependence on the state, we need to turn to development, partnerships and independent external funding for researchers and projects.”

Using the school’s 14-year-old online master’s program as an example, Thorson said she hopes to further promote the potential of an online education. Between the a rich curriculum offering and the faculty’s full support and combined with digital-based hybrid education offered through the journalism school, Thorson recognized its prospective progress.

“Online courses offer the opportunity to bring the Missouri Method to a global audience,” she said.

A strategic plan calling for collaborative effort is the first building block in her plan.

“If a strategic plan is not actively involved in decision-making, important goals get ignored.” Thorson said.

She said she recognizes that diversity is posing a huge challenge not only for the journalism school, but also for the industry. She later admitted that the lack of minorities in the newsroom, like at the Columbia Missourian, remains an issue to be addressed.

“Only by focusing on well-defined objectives to nurture diversity can we achieve success,” she said.

Thorson shared her observation on the rising rivalry in the industry, which is rendering the education environment between prestigious institutions across the country more competitive than ever. Facing challengers such as the University of Southern California, New York University, Northwestern University and Columbia University, important steps must be put in place to maintain the school’s national recognition and excellence to “know where we stand” and use better metrics to determine “whether we are progressing to where we want to be,” she said.

Thorson then went on to focus on the school’s visibility in public discussions, stressing the fading presence and influence of the journalism school on the national and international stage.

“Yes, we have this wonderful tradition, this wonderful reputation, the Missouri Medal, the ‘Missouri Method,’ first school of journalism, but when you read the coverage … where did we go?” Thorson said. “People forget if you don’t remind them. This rich, discovery-oriented environment is not being effectively communicated to the world, including our history.”

Thorson said she believes it’s the responsibility of the dean to correct the course and to spread the school’s influence and promote active engagement through better communication.

“The dean needs to be the articulator of our learning and responsible for the effectiveness of how influentially it is shared,” Thorson said.
In her final remarks, she stressed the importance of journalism to a healthy democracy and how the journalism school should evolve with the ever-changing era.

“It’s time to leave pessimism behind,” Thorson said. “And (to) become the voice and hope for action, growth and success in quality journalism and strategic communication.”

Associate Dean Lynda Kraxberger, a member of the search committee, said the candidate’s insight on the internal relations between research and community is an advantage.

“(Thorson) has great understanding and knowledge of research and the way research ties to the larger lifeblood of the university and to our community,” Kraxberger said. “I think that makes her a strong candidate.”

Frank Russell, a doctoral student representing graduate students on the search committee, said he has a lot of loyalty to Thorson in part due to her efforts and accomplishments for the doctoral program.

“I thought she did an excellent job, especially (in) presenting a vision for the school and how she would achieve that vision,” he said.

Provost Garnett Stokes will review all four candidates — Thorson, David Kurpius, Sonya Forte Duhé, who have both already visited campus for an open forum, and Thor Wasbotten — for the position of dean and consult the search committee before making a hire.

Wasbotten will visit campus Thursday and present at an open forum beginning at 4 p.m. in Leadership Auditorium in the upper level of the MU Student Center.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU student diagnosed with rare type of meningitis
Tuesday, February 24, 2015 | 9:18 p.m. CST; updated 6:44 a.m. CST, Wednesday, February 25, 2015

BY ALYSSA SALELA, JILL DEUTSCH

COLUMBIA — During a weekend at home in mid-February, MU freshman Shelbi Basler began experiencing flu-like symptoms.
Then she began to have a headache, a pain worse than she could even describe. The trip home to the St. Louis area turned into three days in the intensive care unit, another week in the hospital and at least two weeks at home.

**Basler was diagnosed with meningococcal B meningitis, an illness so unusual in Missouri that doctors may see only one case per year.**

"On the first night, they did not know if I was going to make it," Basler said.

Meningococcal vaccines, which protect against most types of this bacterial illness, are required for all residents of university-owned housing at MU.

Although Basler lives in a residence hall and received the vaccine, it protects only against four of the five main strains that cause the disease, said Michael Cooperstock, pediatric infectious disease specialist at MU Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

There has been no vaccine for this type of meningitis because a coating on the bacteria is similar to the human cell, making a traditional vaccine impossible because the body will not make antibodies against itself, Cooperstock said.

"You have to find other targets for the vaccine to work against," Cooperstock said.

Vaccine manufacturers have used a method called reverse vaccinology. The conventional approach to creating vaccines is to cultivate pathogens, but with reverse vaccinology, scientists use genomic information to study vaccine development, according to the National Institute of Health.

This decreases the time needed to identify candidate vaccines and provide new solutions for those vaccines.

Two new vaccines have been created to help protect against meningococcal B meningitis. Both have been approved by the FDA for use in people ages 10-25, but they have not been widely recommended for the public by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

The committee will meet this week in Atlanta to discuss a possible recommendation for the new vaccines.
Cooperstock said he had not heard about Basler’s case, but if it is a single case, then the disease is still uncommon and the vaccines may not be critical.

"We always worry about it, but in Missouri, I don’t see an urgency," Cooperstock said. "It is at a low level historically. Right now there is not a need to jump ahead of the proper vaccination testing procedure."

Cooperstock said a vaccine has been used in outbreak situations of the B strain and has been effective. However, the success so far could be due to other factors. The CDC defines an outbreak as three or more cases of the same strain within three months.

“It is not proof that it is effective, but it is proof that it did not fail,” Cooperstock said.

Meningococcemia can be fatal, evolving rapidly over the course of 12 to 24 hours. Cases are rare, however. Cooperstock estimated one case in central Missouri per year.

“We need to be on the lookout for that though,” he said. “We don’t want to miss it when we see it.”

The treatment for meningococcal meningitis is antibiotics. According to the CDC, patients may also need breathing support, medication to treat low blood pressure and wound care for damaged skin.

Basler said antibiotics made her non-contagious after 48 hours. She hopes to return to school between March 2 and March 9.

For now, she said, she is happy to be out of the hospital and recovering in her own home.

MU student group hosts panel discussion on education issues for black students

Talk centers on racial disparity.
A new student organization in the University of Missouri College of Education hosted its first event Monday to talk about educational experiences for black children.

Organizers with the MU chapter of the National Alliance of Black School Educators said the group’s inaugural event was designed to create a dialogue about the state of black education and share ideas for correcting disparities in access, discipline and more.

Among the biggest issues discussed during Monday’s event was racial disparity in access to quality education.

“I had to face the inequities of the U.S. education system,” Kathryn Chval, MU College of Education associate dean for academic affairs, said about her time teaching math in Chicago Public Schools. “The zip code you live in defines your access to learn.”

Chval talked about experiences with teachers who told kids in inner-city Chicago they could not learn, they were stupid and they were not going to college. She also mentioned “subtleties that were unspoken,” including lack of resources to schools serving impoverished, black students, along with “ignorance and fear and assumptions” about students because of their skin color.

A few questions were posed to the education students and a few interested community members who filled the room. The questions also were posed to a panel of four representatives from the college, including Selena Van Horn, a doctoral student and director of education for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Columbia, Stephen Whitney, associate professor, and Sarah Diem and Ty-Ron Douglas, assistant professors.

The panel answered a question of how teachers can use black history to inspire black students to achieve the highest educational accomplishments, despite disparities in access and other obstacles.

“We need to start having these discussions early,” Diem said about educating students on the realities of black history. “Children don’t have problems talking about things, they’ll talk about anything. Adults are the ones who have problems talking about things. We put these barriers up.”

Diem’s research focuses on how teachers are prepared to engage in conversations about race.

She also looks at social, political and geographical factors that affect education.

Van Horn said Common Core tells teachers what students need to learn, but educators should use leeway in the tools they use in the classroom to select books that represent diverse populations. There is even room for black history education in science and math, she said, by talking about the work done by black scientists or using statistics about racial issues in math problems.
“We talk about things like, ‘What does it mean when someone talks about history in a way that represents the dominant group all the time as a winner?’ ” she said about conversations she has had with students.

Eckles Hall

_Eckles Hall stands on Rollins Road, close to the eastern border of the University of Missouri campus._ It was a conveniently far-flung location for students in the building a century before: just across the street, the 100 or so cows and bulls in the university herd grazed in the space now occupied by the veterinary school. At that time, Eckles Hall was just called the Dairy Building, home to the first collegiate dairy husbandry department in Missouri.

The Dairy Building was part of a group of MU buildings designed in 1901 by the architectural firm Cope and Stewardson, who were renowned for the Collegiate Gothic style that swept through American colleges at the turn of the century. In April of 1901, the Missouri Legislature created the department and designated $40,000 (a little more than $1 million when adjusted for inflation) to the school for “laboratories for livestock judging, dairy instruction and veterinary science.” C.H. Eckles was appointed department chair, with almost immediate success.

The school gained international notoriety in 1910, when a cow nicknamed “Old Jo” set a number of worldwide dairy production records. Old Jo proved to be a useful recruiting tool, and an addition to the building was added in 1938 to accommodate the department’s growth in students and researchers. Eckles Hall was in close proximity to the dairy barn until 1959, after a fire destroyed a section of the barn and the herd was moved to a new site west of Columbia.

Until 1972, MU-brand dairy products were sold in a small retail shop inside Eckles Hall. The internal production also included three flavors of ice cream for sale. The shop was a forerunner to Buck’s Ice Cream Place and its signature Tiger Stripe flavor.

Ice cream research began in the 1920s and grew through the work of professor Wendell Arbuckle, who would later go on to consult for Baskin Robbins. After fiscal issues caused the dairy plant to shut down in 1972, it took the fundraising and endowment efforts of Arbuckle to restart ice-cream research in 1989. New equipment was donated, and the current location of Buck’s Ice Cream opened the same year.
The last major development of Eckles Hall came in 2000, with the addition of the William C. Stringer Wing on the east side of the building, which inched the building closer to Old Jo’s former stomping ground.

MU team makes reality of Missouri food insecurity ‘easy to digest’

Though he tried, associate professor of geography Matthew Foulkes was unable to summarize the stories of his work on the Missouri Hunger Atlas. There’s a lot to tell.

“I know, I know, I can't do this succinctly,” Foulkes said, laughing.

The Missouri Hunger Atlas breaks down data on hunger throughout Missouri by county in the form of a 144-page softcover book. The book is the brainchild of Foulkes and professor Sandy Rikoon, Curators’ distinguished professor of rural sociology and the director of the Interdisciplinary Center for Food Security since 2004.

Research for the atlas began in 2004 and now the pair has three editions of the book to show for their work. Foulkes and Rikoon originally teamed up with two other professors for the research, but the project now requires a combined effort from a team of MU professors and graduate students from multiple areas of study. The most recent edition of the book was published in 2013, and an updated version is due out in 2016.

The goal of the atlas, as stated on its first page, is to assess “the extent of food insecurity in the state of Missouri,” as well as begin to “gauge how well public programs are doing in meeting the needs of those of our fellow citizens who have difficulty acquiring sufficient amounts and qualities of food.”

The Hunger Atlas distinguishes between those who are worried about having enough food and those who actually experienced hunger. Rikoon said someone who is food insecure often worries about acquiring sufficient food, whereas someone who is food secure doesn’t have to.

“Then the third category is either called ‘very low food security’ or, what we like to call it, ‘food insecure with hunger,’” Rikoon said. “Meaning that slightly more than half of the people that worry about getting enough food manage to do it because of the federal programs, because of food pantries, sharing with neighbors … and then other families actually experience hunger in terms of having to skip meals, reduce intake, things like that.”
Foulkes and Rikoon originally worked alongside Joan Hermsen, associate professor of sociology and chairwoman of women’s and gender studies, and Nikki Raedeke, an assistant teaching professor and director of dietetics, nutrition and exercise physiology.

“We had been asked, and got some funding to do a survey of households that participated in the food pantries,” Rikoon said.

The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri in Columbia asked the team to do a systematic survey of pantries and households. This survey was conducted during the summer of 2005 with 1,300 households participating.

“At the end they said, ‘Well, where are we missing people?’” Rikoon said. “So you know where our pantries are, how many people are using them. So now, sort of in the context of where hunger is in Missouri, are there geographic gaps in our coverage?”

A great question, the team thought, but almost impossible to answer.

At the time, there was no one in the state collecting information on the amount of hungry people, the amount of people participating in food programs or where food insecure people were located throughout the state of Missouri.

Although they now have extensive information about the people using food pantries in Missouri, they had only surveyed those who used food pantry services, meaning they didn’t know anything about people that had little to eat but did not have access to a food pantry.

“Then a light bulb went off and we're like, ‘Wouldn't it be cool if we could somehow estimate where there's need?’ which is kind of a different question than what we were doing with them,” Foulkes said. “So, Sandy ran with this idea, and building on the momentum of this client survey in 2005, we started working on (the Hunger Atlas).”

From the original survey of food pantries came a comprehensive, county-by-county breakdown of food insecurity in Missouri, with the first edition published in 2008. Using statistics collected from several public agencies, the team was able to come up with a way to estimate some of the data that is impossible to survey.

“Some of the data we have is actual real counts, and some of it we model based on our best expectations of what we know are the demographics of the area and then we know their likelihood, say, of being food insecure and things like that,” Rikoon said. “But if you had a million dollars or something, we could go out and actually survey people, but we don’t have the resources to do that.”

It was a much larger undertaking than the original project, but one that would end up becoming an important tool for policymakers because of its easy-to-use format.

“We felt that (making the atlas) would be much more effective than us rambling on and on about it or writing papers in academic journals because … policymakers don't really read academic
journals,” Foulkes said. “We could have published this stuff in Rural Sociology maybe, but who's gonna read Rural Sociology and how's that gonna help the state of Missouri? Rural Sociology is a great journal, but the outreach part of the Hunger Atlas was always at the forefront in our minds.”

Putting all of the collected information about hunger in one place and presenting it in a series of easy-to-read maps and charts allowed them to use it as a new tool to help in enacting social and political change.

“The main mission is, I think, to raise awareness of the severity of hunger in Missouri,” Foulkes said. “We want to do that by providing information to academics and policymakers in a way that's easy to digest and makes clear the scope of the problem.”

Foulkes also said that the maps included in the atlas help to explain the relationship between geography and food insecurity.

“There's a spatiality to poverty, and so, by extension, there's a spatiality to food insecurity,” Foulkes said. “There’s pockets of higher employment, there’s pockets of lower employment, there's different jobs that are available certain places than others, a lot of places where there are not many jobs, and so, that's where it's really tied into geography. And that’s why we have the maps.”

Foulkes said the maps show that where someone lives can play a role in the probability of food insecurity.

“It's not the only thing, but certainly your personal characteristics, your skills … a lot of things go into determining whether you're food insecure or not, but where you live actually plays a role for job opportunities, how much your housing costs are, whether there's a food pantry nearby, you know, all those things,” Foulkes said.

To construct the Missouri Hunger Atlas, the team of researchers collects secondary data and uses their modeling method to estimate statistics.

However, Foulkes said working with data concerning people who are unable to acquire a sufficient amount of food is still hard, especially when they are required to personally survey people in the field.

“It is actually a very emotional thing to see these numbers,” Foulkes said. “I'm a population geographer and demographer, so I'm used to seeing maps and I've worked with a lot of poverty and it's pretty horrifying. When you think about the Hunger Atlas, it makes me upset thinking that we have this level.”

Foulkes said that emotionally, there is a tendency for people to be removed from the reality of poverty.
“That's why the surveys have been so good, because then you go out to the pantries and talk with people who are actually at the pantries and obviously that moves the needle,” Foulkes said. “That changes things because you're face-to-face with people's lives and you don't walk away from them unchanged. I know our students we've worked with on the project, they're very emotional. It takes a toll on them, our students that did the surveys.”

Rikoon said that although working with data on hunger can affect anyone involved with the projects emotionally, what results from the data collected is change.

“(The students) come back totally changed by the experience because they’re actually talking to the folks that actually use the food pantries and hearing their stories — and it has to have an impact on you because most of us don’t experience food insecurity if we’re, you know, graduate students or professors,” Rikoon said. “And so, it does take a toll, but it also is a sort of jolt to taking action.”

He said the Hunger Atlas can act as a call to action for some people.

“The good thing about the University of Missouri is we’re not just researchers, we’re also people who are interested in working with communities and trying to improve the situation,” Rikoon said. “It’s one of our missions as well: service. So, it’s a good jolt. It results, I think, for students and faculty, in positive social action.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

EDITORIAL: If facts mattered, Medicaid would be a slam dunk in Missouri

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CST

BY ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

When it comes to Medicaid expansion, it’s time for the Missouri Republicans who control the legislature to play a high-stakes game of truth or dare.

If legislative leaders like Speaker of the House John Diehl, R-Town and Country, and Senate President Pro Tem Tom Dempsey, R-St. Charles, really don’t believe that Medicaid expansion would be good for both the Missouri economy and the general revenue budget, then they should hold a hearing and prove Medicaid expansion advocates wrong.

One real hearing. One wide-open debate. One moment where the truth matters.
You would think that a party that is so convinced that Obamacare is the job-killing scourge of a nation that it must be stopped at all costs wouldn’t be afraid to make its case, right?

You would be wrong.

Various Democratic proposals to expand Medicaid have been summarily ignored for the past three years.

Rep. Jay Barnes, R-Jefferson City, gave it a good two-year try, but his colleagues wouldn’t listen when he laid out the financial reality: Bringing in billions of federal dollars to Missouri’s health care industry actually improves the state’s budget picture.

And in the Senate? State Sen. Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, can’t even get a hearing on his proposal to expand Medicaid, even if it is just to Missouri veterans and their families, who, for the record, have come strongly out in support of Mr. Silvey’s plans.

**Truth tellers**

So what are Mssrs. Diehl and Dempsey so afraid of?

Kentucky.

This month, the office of Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, a Democrat, issued a report on his state’s first year under an expansion of Medicaid to the working poor, as called for in President Barack Obama’s Affordable Care Act.

The report, prepared by Deloitte Consulting LLC, found that everything promised by Medicaid expansion proponents came true.

The same thing has happened in most every one of the 28 states that, unlike Missouri, have expanded Medicaid to cover people making up to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

The Kentucky report should be particularly persuasive to Missouri lawmakers, as the two border states have so much in common economically, politically and culturally. Kentucky is a state with two Obamacare-hating Republican U.S. senators who realize that the Medicaid expansion part of the ACA has been good for their state.
How good? An increase in 12,000 jobs and a $1.6 billion economic impact in one year. Kentucky had the second-largest decrease in its uninsured population in the nation. It doubled projections of the number of people who would sign up for new insurance through its state-run marketplace, adding 310,000 insured through Medicaid expansion.

Based on the first year numbers, the report projects that by 2021, Kentucky’s budget will experience a net-positive impact of more than $900 million. The projected overall economic impact during that time? $30 billion.

Here’s what Mr. Beshear said about the report in a news release:

“For all the naysayers who claimed that expanding Medicaid was a budget-busting boondoggle, take a look at the facts. It’s working, and it’s literally paying off. The state is saving money, hospitals are earning more, and our people are getting healthier.

"The facts are overwhelming. We would have lost money in the state budget and lost opportunities for job growth, not to mention allowed our people to suffer continued poor health, if we had allowed this opportunity to pass.”

None of this should be surprising to anyone living in a fact-based world.

**MU reports**

**The University of Missouri predicted similar results for Medicaid expansion in the Show-Me State. Lawmakers brushed off the numbers.**

Health care officials told lawmakers the state would lose jobs if it didn’t expand Medicaid. Indeed, there have been layoffs in the industry in Missouri. One southwest Missouri hospital CEO took his jobs across the border to Arkansas, which also expanded Medicaid.

Even as they work on next year’s budget, key Republican lawmakers in Missouri are strenuously ignoring data provided them by Linda Luebbering, Gov. Jay Nixon’s budget director. The number show that $117 million more would be available to next year’s very tight budget if Medicaid is expanded.

The same is true each of the next several years because even as Missouri’s portion of Medicaid expansion rises to a high of 10 percent, the amount of additional federal money pouring in and improved health outcomes on the population create a financial windfall in terms of increased tax revenue and economic activity.
The math isn’t lying, and the experience in Kentucky drives that point home.

Missouri’s Republican leaders are purposefully choosing fewer jobs, less revenue, a worse economy and poorer health outcomes for the state’s citizens simply to appease anti-Obamacare know-nothings. These “leaders” don’t have the courage to go where facts say they should go.

They won’t help veterans who want health care for their families.

They won’t admit that they are hurting the Missouri economy and costing real people their lives because they can’t access the health care system.

They are afraid to allow an actual Medicaid expansion debate. They can’t handle the truth.

Berkeley hosts national conference on college sex assaults

NO MU MENTION

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — More than 500 university administrators, staff members and researchers from across the nation are convening in Berkeley, California, for a professional conference on preventing and addressing sexual assaults on college campuses.

The two-day conference that started Tuesday is being hosted by the University of California, Berkeley. Campus spokeswoman Janet Gilmore says it’s designed to give college counselors, deans, student affairs coordinators and other employees a frank look at why so many sex crimes involving students happen and why victims often feel dissatisfied with how their cases are handled.

Among the schools sending speakers are Spelman College in Atlanta, Wayne State University in Detroit, the University of Michigan and the University of New Hampshire.

UC Berkeley student Sofie Karasek says some assault victims and activists plan to protest at the event because they think it’s being used to mask the campus’ failings.
A new promise to Missouri families

By Clint Zweifel

NO MENTION

Last month, President Obama proposed a rollback of 529 college savings plan tax benefits, which I opposed. It struck a chord with me and parents all across America because it sent the wrong message. We need to make higher education more affordable for families, not less.

The fact is substantial hurdles to an accessible higher education remain. The biggest obstacle of all is the rising cost, which is approaching insurmountable for many families. Janice and I both graduated from the University of Missouri-St. Louis, and even 20 years ago, college was a financial challenge for both of us. However, with the help of scholarships, part-time jobs, and some assistance from mom and dad, we were able to borrow enough to cover the remaining costs and graduate with a manageable debt load. It wasn’t easy, but it worked.

Over the past 25 years, the cost for a public college education has nearly tripled, while families’ income levels have remained essentially the same. In Missouri, funding for our higher education system is 46 percent less than our neighboring states. Furthermore we rank in the bottom fifth nationally in state funding of higher education, meaning that 80 percent of the country is working harder to send their students to college than we are in Missouri. Needless to say, there is a lot of room for improvement.

For many working families, the cost of college seems so staggering that the possibility of going to school isn’t even part of their future plans. The debt college students accrue is dragging down our economy. It is straining young families’ pocketbooks, hindering them from buying their first home, starting a business, and preventing many from realizing their dreams.

Something has to change. We need to speak directly to Missouri families.

It should be a foregone conclusion for every Missourian that if you want to go to college, you can. In order for that to happen, we must send a message to families that for anyone willing to work hard and seize opportunity, we will invest in your success.

And now is the time to make a substantial commitment to our future. Throughout my time in public service I have been developing an idea called Missouri Promise. It is based on the notion that the most powerful thing we can do as a state is invest in our future. It is time to make this promise to Missouri families: If your child
gets a 3.0 in high school, performs community service and maintains a 3.0 in college, Missouri will pay tuition and fees for your student to attend Missouri colleges.

Missouri Promise is about creating a culture of expectations, one that includes an element of responsibility for both parents and students. It empowers students early on to work hard, get good grades and demonstrate good citizenship. When we encourage meaningful investments in families, we also make a promise to Missouri employers that we will have a ready supply of high-quality human capital available to compete in the global workforce.

History has shown us that when we make broad-based, lasting investments in our citizens that expand opportunity, we see in return an educated, diversified workforce, long-term economic growth and a robust middle class.

But Missouri Promise is about much more than our economic outlook — it is about our commitment to families. It is about telling families to keep working hard, to keep aspiring for more for their children’s future. It is a reflection of one of the strongest American values — that real opportunity awaits those who work for it.

It is time to make the difficult decisions that will move this state forward. We cannot allow our differences to blind us from our shared goals, most importantly creating a better future for our children. We have the chance to show every family in Missouri that we believe in them and that dreaming big and working hard pays off. Now is the time to ensure a college education is no longer a dream out of reach, but instead a promise, the Missouri Promise.

*Clint Zweifel, a Democrat, is Missouri’s treasurer.*

**OUR TOWN: MU junior wins slam poetry competition**

By Nick Schnelle

Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at 2:00 pm

*Since middle school, Sequoyah Moore has been expressing herself by writing poetry. Although she has been creating it for years, Moore had not performed for a crowd until the*
Black History Month Protest Poetry Slam competition Friday at the University of Missouri Student Center.

“Since black me was tall enough to bury black chalkboards in white chalk, I’ve been duped into thinking this month was something other than white supremacy playing Barbies with black bodies,” Moore spoke into the mic during her performance.

Moore’s poem ended with a stirring commentary that wowed the judges: “But now I ain’t saying I’m Morgan Freeman ’cause I know my people’s history must be heard, but when that month of history is bleached all those who drink it will get burned.”

The strategic communications junior at MU beat three other competitors to win $100 in the original poem category. The competition was created to prompt discussion regarding past and present events significant to people of African descent.

Moore said personal feelings about Black History Month inspired her to write the poem.

“I personally feel as though we have been fed stories that fit society’s narrow view of what it means for black people to be deserving of just treatment and human rights. There are many important heroes and stories that we aren’t made aware of in our general education because they don’t fit into this standard of respectability,” she said, referring to black groups and individuals she feels are marginalized or silenced based on identity, practice and thought.

Moore said writing poetry about her thoughts and experiences as a black woman in the 21st century is an act of self-love that is personal and empowering.

“Winning this competition means a lot to me, and the fact that people are taking an interest in my voice and the work that I do is truly humbling,” she said.

Upon graduation, Moore would like to work on media campaigns and visual promotional materials for nongovernmental organizations — NGOs — or not-for-profit organizations.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

FROM READERS: Rugby culture one of respect

Wednesday, February 25, 2015 | 6:00 a.m. CST

BY LUKE TRIPP/MISSOURIAN READER

Luke Tripp is a senior at MU. He plays open-side flanker on the school's club rugby team.
Rugby is often seen as a sport of acquired taste. People who are not directly involved with the sport as a player or fan by relation (family member, boyfriend) seem to never give the sport a chance.

This is why rugby struggles to grow in America. An American often gets into the sport because a friend or family member recommends it to them or they were a previous high school/college athlete and miss the competition and fellowship. It lacks mainstream popularity. In fact, many people do not even realize that the USA Eagles represent our country in rugby on an international level.

However, with the growth of the sport nationwide, cable networks have begun to air professional games on television much more frequently. This is great for rugby in America because it is giving the sport a much more familiar presence in households across the country.

Yet, what watching rugby on TV cannot do is provide viewers with a sense of the rugby culture. This is what I wish people knew more about.

The "rugby culture" is something that Mizzou encompasses with its own Mizzou Men’s Rugby Club. It is a game synonymous with respect.

As a senior, I am in my last season playing for Mizzou as an open-side flanker. My time with this team has been incredible. Every match I have played in with Mizzou Rugby has been 80 minutes of gut-wrenching physical and mental activity that my teammates and I help each other work through.

The end goal is victory, and I am proud to say that we often accomplish just that. In turn, our opponents do their best to throw that same aggression at us.

However, because opposing teams have a mutual understanding of the hard work that goes into training for one match, once the game ends, the mentality of coaches and players changes dramatically at the snap of a finger. Win or lose, both teams shake the hands of one another and pat each other on the back in congratulations for their play and toughness.

Then, our Mizzou team hosts a social event for our players and our opponents to celebrate together before the away team travels back to their own homes. We get this same treatment when we travel for games. This is one of many examples of what I mean by the rugby culture — the respect that is rugby.
It is said that rugby is a hooligan's game played by gentlemen. It is a difficult sport. Players have to push their bodies to physical exhaustion and, once there, we have to push even further mentally to convince ourselves that we are not finished — that there is plenty left in the tank. But, with a team like Mizzou’s, I look forward to the 80 minutes of hell every Saturday.

My teammates are some of my best friends, and the blood, sweat and tears they give me every week is something I am obligated to give back to them. It’s the great feeling of friendship that makes everything worth it.

A rugby player’s love for the purity of competition and the camaraderie that comes with the sport is what makes rugby one of the greatest games in the world. We, along with all other collegiate teams, appreciate any recognition that we can bring to the sport we enjoy most.

All it takes is for a prospective fan to watch one game and they are hooked for life. People are amazed at the amount of sportsmanship that associates with such a brutal sport.

Rugby should not be looked at as an acquired taste. It is more so a unique taste that everyone can enjoy.

Come out and support us Mizzou Tigers! Our next two home games are March 7 vs. Kansas and March 21 vs. Truman at Epple Field.