Editorial: Missouri Promise is the proper path for economic gain

March 13, 2015 4:30 pm  •  By the Editorial Board

Late last month on these pages, Missouri Treasurer Clint Zweifel called for a major shift in public higher education policy. Dubbing his plan the Missouri Promise, Mr. Zweifel suggested that all high school graduates in the state who maintained a 3.0 grade point average in high school, performed community service and continued to get good grades in college should have their full tuition paid by the state.

This is the sort of aspirational thinking that has been missing in a state government that lately has measured progress by how little ground it loses. Consider the discussion we had with University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe in January, in which he lamented the state’s pitiful ranking of 44th in the nation in college funding.

“If we don’t change, we will be in a race to the bottom and we will win the race,” he told us.

In that meeting, Mr. Wolfe endorsed the idea of increasing the state’s lowest-in-the-nation tobacco tax, currently 17 cents per pack of cigarettes, to help raise the state’s moribund higher education funding rankings. Last weekend in Hannibal, speaking at a gathering of state Democrats, Attorney General Chris Koster, who is running for governor, married the two ideas. Mr. Koster endorsed a hike in the tobacco tax to specifically fund the goals behind Mr. Zweifel’s idea of the Missouri Promise: Making college more affordable and increasing the state’s attainment rates.

Make no mistake: This didn’t happen in a vacuum. There are politics at play here as Mssrs. Koster and Zweifel look to 2016. But that shouldn’t diminish the facts: As Mr. Wolfe told us, Missouri is ranked low in all the wrong categories, and it is a direct result of state lawmakers refusing to invest in economic drivers like education at all levels.

This week, for instance, the Missouri House passed its version of next year’s budget, which as it does almost every year included more money for both K-12 schools and higher education than the previous year. This is what will happen if that becomes the final budget:

Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, will crow about putting more money into schools.
The Republicans who lead the Legislature will brag even louder that they put more money into education than the governor did.

Both of those statements will likely be accurate, but they will also miss the point.

Missouri will still rank near the bottom of the states in the entire nation in nearly all meaningful education funding categories. And it will still be funding both K-12 schools and higher education at a lower percentage of the overall general revenue budget than it was decades ago. Funding for K-12 schools will still be $400 million less than called for in state law.

Even with additional higher education funding as called for in the House version of the budget, the state’s funding for colleges and universities will still be $47 million less than it was at its high point in FY2001.

**These are the numbers** that matter. They show that the state no longer is as committed to education as it once was. Adopting Mr. Zweifel’s Missouri Promise idea would change that. Increasing the tobacco tax (or other revenue sources) to increase the state’s investment in education, would change that.

If you think that finding more funding for higher education is about Republican vs. Democrat ideology, think again. Gallup’s most recent poll of “most conservative” states came up with this top 10, in order: Wyoming, Mississippi, Idaho, Utah, Montana, Arkansas, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Alabama. Every one of those self-identified conservative states spends significantly more state money in per-capita and per-student funding for higher education than Missouri does. Every one of Missouri’s border states spends more per-capita and per-student than Missouri does.

Ask virtually any lawmaker in the Missouri Legislature what the state’s best economic development tool is and he’ll tell you investments in education.

So why are they letting Missouri fall behind every one of its neighbors? Because they think investing in education, while good, is not as good as raising taxes is bad.

There are competing interests targeting a tobacco tax increase, as a group seeking more funding for early childhood education is also preparing for a ballot initiative in 2016. Whether its early childhood education or higher education, both are worthy goals. The state needs to start doing more to invest in education, and the important thing to remember is: It can do so while still keeping the state’s tax burden far below the limit allowed by the Hancock Amendment in the state constitution.

In 1980, Missouri voters passed Hancock to limit the amount of revenue lawmakers could raise in the budget to an amount equal to 5.6 percent of Missourians’ personal income. Currently, the state is $3.6 billion — yes, billion, with a “b” — below that limit.
Is it any wonder Missouri is falling behind? It’s trying to get by on significantly less than the 1980 tax burden and the Legislature’s Republican leaders want to cut taxes even more?
This is madness.

Imagine what the state of Missouri’s economy might be like if it had been investing $3.6 billion more each year in schools, in roads, in construction projects, in the state’s future. Imagine the money parents would have in their pockets right now if we all invested a few more pennies in our lowest-in-the-nation taxes so that middle-class working folks didn’t have to take out thousands of dollars of federally subsidized loans so their kids could go to a state university that a generation ago was affordable?

That’s what the Missouri Promise is about. It’s time for the state’s elected officials to show real commitment to investing in the Show-Me State’s most important resource: its people.

Let the debate begin.

Protesters march through Greektown, rally outside chancellor's house

By Ashley Jost

Friday, March 13, 2015 at 12:25 pm

University of Missouri students and supporters of MU 4 Mike Brown marched through Greektown and parts of the campus for what organizers called a “celebration of blackness.”

The march, which included about 60 students, started at Cornell Hall at about 8:45 p.m. and ended close to 10:30 p.m. at the on-campus residence of Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

The students expressed frustration that they have presented their calls to action to the administration during the past few months to address concerns about racism and discrimination on campus but have not seen any results.

“Call him out … for not doing anything,” Kierra Otis, MU 4 Mike Brown supporter, told the crowd gathered on Loftin’s doorstep.
The chancellor said Friday morning that he was told Thursday morning that students would be gathering on campus for a demonstration, but he had not heard it would lead to a march ending at his home. He went to bed about 30 minutes before students arrived, and he said the sound of the students chanting with a megaphone did not wake him.

“I listen. I was responding to tweets up until 9:40 last night before I went to bed,” Loftin said. The first tweet to him he saw Friday morning sent just after 10 p.m. “They got to me after the fact, but why not before the fact? It’s a courtesy I would ask of them. Had they rung the doorbell, I probably would have come out in my pajamas if necessary to talk to them.”

Loftin said he hopes the students who participated in the march will attend the next campus forum on race at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday in Keller Auditorium of the Geology Building to discuss concerns raised Thursday night.

Before the march, graduate student Jonathan Butler told the students gathered at Cornell Hall that organizers wanted to use this demonstration as an opportunity to celebrate diversity. He suggested any students who had antagonistic motives had no place in the demonstration.

Reuben Faloughi, the acting spokesman for the student group at the event, said it had been planned a few weeks in advance, but the event at the University of Oklahoma involving Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity members singing a racist song on a school bus affected the timing of the march.

“Greektown is symbolic of a lot of nasty things on campus,” Faloughi said. He used examples of students being called racial slurs when walking through the area as examples. “But instead of talking about that, we want to celebrate ourselves.”

The signs students carried ranged in sayings from “black is resilient” to a “pride” sign in rainbow colors for LGBTQ support. Students left some of the signs on the chancellor’s doorstep.

The chants ranged, too, including “they want to kill us; they want to try, but we don’t die, we multiply.” About 45 minutes into the march, students added a chant: “Back up, back up, we want freedom, freedom. All these racist … Greeks, we don’t need ’em, need ’em.”

Janna Basler, director of Greek life and leadership, said the march was “a great way for students to find their voice on campus.”

“But also, it was a great way for our Greek students to be aware of what was going on and educating themselves on why those students were in Greektown,” she said. Basler said Greek leadership will attend the forum next week.

At least four police officers traveled near the march along the way, never engaging with the students.
MU Police Department spokesman Brian Weimer said the officers were already on duty working sports events but wanted to attend “just to be there” because the department was aware the event was going to involve several dozen students.

“There were no problems, no issues and no complaints made or anything,” Weimer said. “We were just trying to stay out of their way while the students expressed their free speech rights.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

DEAR READER: Ferguson, OU haven't cornered the market on hate
Friday, March 13, 2015 | 6:57 p.m. CDT
BY TOM WARHOVER

Dear Reader,

It’s not us.

Is it?

On Monday, we woke up to the chant of young, white men on a bus, proudly boasting that “there will never be a n----- at SAE,” the University of Oklahoma fraternity to which they pledged allegiance. "You can hang 'em from a tree,” they sang, "but he'll never sign with me."

Greek organizations nationally and at MU quickly condemned the chant and the men who voiced it. MU’s Sigma Alpha Epsilon colony President Garrett Knox called the video, quite correctly, appalling.

Yet the Confederate flag still waves at some MU fraternities, according to women who discussed race at a sorority association meeting this week. Women have been denied entrance to fraternity parties, they said, because of their race.

An article called “Cotton balls scattered in front of MU’s black culture center” was one of the most-read on ColumbiaMissourian.com on Friday morning. The report was from February 2010 and had been tweeted with #NotJustSAE.
It’s been a busy week for reporters on the hate beat.

An idiot (or idiots) helped cement racial divides this week by shooting two police officers in Ferguson. One was shot in the face; as of Friday, the bullet remained in his skull just behind his ear. A bullet entered the shoulder of the other officer and exited through his back.

We don’t know at this point who did the shooting. So I shouldn’t speculate that they were idiots. Maybe they were just evil.

But it confounds a conversation about the institutional racism existing in Ferguson, described in painful detail in the Department of Justice report released on March 4.

The Department of Justice’s report on the city reads like a road map for hate. Consider the emails sent by police and court officials on company time. The slurs against President Obama are nickel ante stuff when stacked against the jokes comparing black people to dogs or describing an abortion by a black woman as effective in preventing crime.

But that’s just off-color (read: anti-color) jokes by a few bigots, right? The Justice report showed that system in Ferguson is a revenue machine that harvests its dollars on the backs of blacks and the poor.

A member of the Missourian Readers Board wrote to me this week to ask a question he has asked before: Is the difference between Ferguson and Columbia simply a matter of degree, rather than kind?

He pointed to a series of graphics in The New York Times. They showed:

- Police stopped black motorists at a rate that’s 1.4 times their share of the population. Columbia’s rate is 2.4.

- The Ferguson municipal court collected $1.7 million last year, or $80 per resident. Columbia averaged $11 a person.

- Ferguson had 567 non-traffic cases per 1,000 people last year. Columbia had 25.

By themselves, the numbers don’t tell us enough. They suggest the need for more reporting.
Perhaps we don’t discriminate here. Perhaps we don’t hate here. Perhaps here is the island of tolerance and acceptance that’s a model for the rest of the state and the country.

If we’re honest, I think we’ll discover otherwise.

Campus demonstration ends at Loftin’s doorstep

MU4MikeBrown promoted the event with #WEBACK.

The words ran together as rain splattered on the paper posters laid down in front of the chancellor’s house.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin did not come out to greet the demonstrators gathered at his front door Thursday night. A light did not turn on either as the students let out a war cry to end a roughly two-hour march. As the protest wrapped up, organizers called on those in attendance to continue the fight.

The march, organized by MU4MikeBrown, began at Cornell Hall. Students then made their way through Greektown. MU4MikeBrown would not speak to The Maneater for this story.

While organizers did not explicitly say that Thursday’s march was in response to recent events surrounding the Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter at the University of Oklahoma, the fraternity was mentioned during a chant.

“SAE men,” an organizer yelled through a megaphone. “We got to fight back,” the crowd responded.

In addition, the protesters stopped in front of FarmHouse and other Greek chapters, chanting, “Back up, back up, we want freedom, freedom. All these racist-ass Greeks, we don’t need them, need them.”

At the start of the night, organizers said the march was to celebrate blackness, to spread awareness for other identities and to speak out against violence toward women and people of color.

“No more rape in our community, no more,” was a frequent refrain during the march.
Word of the event spread via social media and MU4MikeBrown promoted it with #WEBACK.

The march was the first major event of the semester for the organization, which was started last semester in response to the killing of Michael Brown by former police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2014. Despite the rain, about 30 people marched from start to finish.

The protest attracted its fair share of attention. Members of the Greek community watched the protest in near-silence from the sidewalk, front porches, upper decks or inside the houses. Not everyone stood idly by. Three women from Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority offered candy to the protesters, who thanked them for the treats.

Organizers stressed that the event was a nonviolent march. However, they had the demonstrators pair up before the march for safety. Demonstrators were urged to stay by their buddy during the march, and they were told to not engage with non-marchers.

During the protests, a “Black&Greek@MU” handle began trending on Yik Yak. Several posts mentioned National Pan-Hellenic Council chapters at MU. One Yak said, “There [sic] 6 historically black Greek chapters at MU. If your [sic] black & protesting you might wanna think about that.”

Director of Greek Life Janna Basler watched the protest and said she expected the non-reaction from Greek community members.

“I think it was a lot of different things,” Basler said. “Students are finding their voice. I think there are a lot of things we can all do from more conversations and understanding what inclusion is. We all have work to do, whether it’s Greek Life, whether it’s the university, whether it’s our students. We all have work to do.”

Basler was one of several campus administrators on hand. Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs lent her support to the demonstrators, as well. Before the march, she said she wanted to make sure the students were safe.

At one point, Basler helped direct traffic as protesters gathered on the corner outside Phi Gamma Delta fraternity.

After two laps through Greektown, organizers decided to make an impromptu stop at Francis Quadrangle. The demonstrators walked silently with fists raised as they climbed the stairs to Chancellor Loftin’s home.

MU sophomore Kierra Otis wrapped up the night with a call to action to continue last semester’s efforts. MU administrators announced Wednesday that an open forum to discuss race relations will be held 5:30 p.m. March 17 in Keller Auditorium.

“It’s our duty to fight for our freedom,” organizers said to end the night.
Letter to the Editor: March on Greek Town makes incorrect assumptions

MU4MikeBrown's march was within the First Amendment, but unfairly stereotyped the Greek community.

Editor’s note: This is a letter to the editor written by a member of the MU community who is not part of The Maneater’s staff. It is not the opinion of The Maneater or its editorial board. In accordance with our letters policy, we publish every letter submitted to us barring personal attacks or hate speech; we welcome responses to this and everything we publish via a letter or in our comments section.

I am a member of a fraternity and I have some thoughts on the MU4MikeBrown rally on Thursday night. I fully support their right to free speech, and to gather and march for something they’re passionate about. I think the 1st Amendment is the best thing about this country, and the fact that MU4MikeBrown is raising awareness for issues like racism, homophobia, and sexual assault is a great thing. However, last night’s march crossed the line from raising awareness to an attack on the Greek community.

The first issue I have with the march was exclusivity of its location. Before walking up to Chancellor Loftin’s house, the march only took place in Greek Town. To me, this says that MU4MikeBrown felt like Greeks were the main source of transgressions against women and African-Americans. I can assure you this is not the case; most Greek chapters encourage ideas like friendship, morality, and service. A few bad eggs that get publicity from the media does not mean we are all the same.

The second issue I have with the march was the fact that MU4MikeBrown essentially stood outside my house and insulted me; saying that because I am Greek, that I am a racist. The march stopped on the corner of Richmond and Rollins and chanted, “we want freedom, freedom. These racist-ass Greeks, we don’t need ‘em, need ‘em.”

First off, I’d like to remind them that there are historically black Greek chapters at Mizzou. These chapters are recognized by Mizzou Greek Life and were incorporated into Greek Week last year. Secondly, I resent the assumption that all Greeks are racist. We are NOT all Oklahoma SAE. I am not a member of the Mizzou SAE, but I can assure you that not all SAE chapters are like Oklahoma. While I do not consider myself racist, the incorrect stereotype of Greek Life nurturing racism is something I’ve accepted that I will have to endure. However, for MU4MikeBrown to stand outside my house and chant that I am a racist takes it to another level. That is an attack on a very personal level. MU4MikeBrown claims their event was meant to be
peaceful, but an incendiary chant that claims all Greeks are racist contrasts the idea of “peaceful”.

MU4MikeBrown, you have the American right to say whatever you want. You can use that to gather and express your ideas in any way you please. I encourage you to use that power wisely and responsibly. I beg you to not lump all Greeks in with OU SAE, contrary to popular belief we have members of all backgrounds in our community. We are supposed to be One Mizzou, and Thursday night’s rally was far from that.

Oklahoma is latest to address race problems at fraternities

By KIMBERLY HEFLING and JESSE J. HOLLAND

NO MU MENTION

WASHINGTON (AP) — Their reputations sullied by race-tainted incidents, many colleges are clamping down on campus fraternities. Despite some swift and tough actions by schools — and in some cases, public humiliation — episodes such as the racist chants by members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon chapter at the University of Oklahoma keep surfacing.

In recent years, numerous other fraternities have been suspended and students expelled from school for racially tinged parties or behavior, such as hanging nooses or shouting racial profanities.

"All too often the outcry has been, 'Look at those bad apples we need to root out,'” said Nolan L. Cabrera, a professor in the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona. "When in fact the conversation we need to have is, 'Why is this occurring on such a widespread level throughout the country?'"

Many incidents come to light after the students themselves post pictures or videos online, drawing public attention; others are reported by onlookers or whistleblowers.
Either way, "it's hard to ignore a current on many, many campuses of behaviors that are just offensive and disgusting at the far end and maybe just lack common sense at the other end," said Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, a professional organization.

For example, Sigma Alpha Epsilon suspended all activity at Clemson University in South Carolina in December after white students dressed as gang members at a "Cripmas" party. That same month Phi Delta Theta halted its chapter at the University of Pennsylvania for issuing a holiday card with members posing with what it called a Beyonce sex doll.

Other examples:

—Arizona State University banned Tau Kappa Epsilon last year after its Martin Luther King Jr. Day party had guests flashing gang signs and holding watermelon-shaped cups.

—Kappa Sigma suspended its Duke University chapter in 2013 after students held an international-themed party that mocked Asians.

—Sigma Phi Epsilon shut its doors last year at the University of Mississippi after three of its members draped a Confederate banner and placed a noose around the statue of the school's first black student.

—Lehigh University suspended Sigma Chi in April 2014 and expelled members after racial slurs were spray-painted and eggs thrown at a multicultural residence hall.

Sororities have had similar problems. In 2014, Chi Omega closed its Penn State chapter in connection with a photo appearing on the Internet showing members wearing sombreros and fake mustaches and holding offensive signs — one read, "Will mow lawn for weed + beer." The University of Alabama announced in fall 2013 that more than 20 minority women were being offered membership in historically all-white sororities after accusations surfaced of black women being denied membership.

At Oklahoma, the university quickly expelled two students and banned Sigma Alpha Epsilon last week after fraternity members were filmed engaging in a racist chant that referenced lynching and indicated that black students never would be admitted to that university's chapter. Two students identified in the video have apologized publicly.

The national fraternity condemned the incident and started investigating racism allegations at universities in Louisiana and Texas after hearing that young men at two schools sang or knew of the same racist chant.

But the damage was done. The school's president, former Sen. David Boren, D-Okla., said the fraternity "won't be back — at least not as long as I'm president of the university."
Fraternities, both historically white and those mostly made up of minorities, long have been a fixture of university life. Defenders point to the system's charitable works and social and professional benefits for members.

Research by Nella Van Dyke, a professor at University of California, Merced, found that ethnic and racially biased hate crimes are more likely to be reported at predominantly white campuses and those with a large fraternity population. She said the problems are not everywhere, but they do exist.

Beyond racism, fraternities in recent years had to confront issues of sexual assault, binge drinking and hazing among their members. "I think many fraternities have a culture that makes them prone to conflict and kind of bigoted interactions, whether it's against women or against minorities," Van Dyke said.

Matthew Hughey, a sociology professor at the University of Connecticut who studies racial identity, estimated that about 3 percent or 4 percent of the members of the majority-white fraternities and sororities are nonwhite. "We shouldn't be surprised when unequal and segregated organizations say racist things. Of course they do," Hughey said.

The national fraternities are working to eliminate this kind of behavior and to train members to speak up instead of being pressured to conform, said Peter Smithhisler, president and chief executive officer of the North-American Interfraternity Conference.

"It's about the constant re-education of our membership," Smithhisler said. "And we have to be diligent in addressing our community members, sharing with them our expectations, teaching them about our values and acceptable behaviors and holding individuals accountable when they stray from that."

Fraternities have about 372,000 members among 7.7 million male undergraduate college students, according to the North-American Interfraternity Conference. They also have outsized influence on their campuses, with fraternities claiming major college donors, state lawmakers, governors, members of Congress and presidents as members. Nineteen presidents have held undergraduate or honorary fraternity membership, the conference said.

Boren's actions may become the standard among university officials, said West Virginia University President E. Gordon Gee, who froze fraternities' activities last fall after the death of an 18-year-old student at a fraternity house.

"We can't blame all the ills in society, or the ills in universities, on fraternities and sororities but we can have a high level of expectation because very often these are students who are leaders on our campuses," Gee said.

Some colleges such as Bowdoin in Maine have done away with fraternities all together, while others have forced changes. In September, Wesleyan University in Connecticut announced a requirement that all residential fraternities become coed within three years. The announcement came after several highly publicized issues at fraternity houses, including allegations of sexual assault.
Others say it's unfair to pin all problems on fraternities that really need to be addressed within higher education as a whole. "It is really a mistake to make a blanket judgment," said Michael Poliakoff, the vice president of policy at the American Council of Trustees and Alumni.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan told MSNBC that he thinks "the vast majority of fraternities and sororities and their members conduct themselves very well and contribute to their university communities, are leaders on campus, but where we have places where racism is part of the culture, we have to challenge that."

**THE COLLEGE FIX**

**Muslim students protest campus screening of ‘American Sniper’**

Some Muslim students at the University of Missouri protested an upcoming campus screening of “American Sniper” and clamored to have the film’s debut there canceled.

At the heart of the controversy is a Muslim student activist who declared showing the film on campus would make her feel “unsafe” and demanded an “apology and explanation” as to how and why the movie was even selected for Mizzou audiences.

The uproar was taken quite seriously, and prompted the student government to conduct a meeting to determine whether the flick should be shown.

“This film is blatant racist, colonialist propaganda that should not be shown under any circumstances and especially not endorsed by a branch of student government that purports to represent me and have my best interests in mind,” student Farah El-Jayyousi had stated.

She made the comments in a letter to the editor to the campus newspaper earlier this month, denouncing the decision to show the blockbuster – the highest grossing film of 2014. El-Jayyousi accused the movie of dehumanizing Muslims and glorifying the murder of Iraqis, and referred to Chris Kyle, the Navy SEAL featured in the film, as “a killer with no regard for human life.”

El-Jayyousi, described by the University of Missouri’s website as a psychology and women’s and gender studies double-major and social justice advocate, went on to declare in her letter:

> I do not feel safe on this campus and for good reason. The fact that this film is being shown, the fact that I have to explain why this film is not only problematic but harmful makes me feel even more unsafe. Showing this film will create an even more hostile environment for me and other Arab, Muslim, South Asian and people of color on this campus.

> I am requesting that this film not be shown and that it either be replaced with a film that does not glorify violence or support existing systems of domination and oppression, or an event addressing
“American Sniper” and similar films and media texts using a critical lens. This film is blatant racist, colonialist propaganda that should not be shown under any circumstances and especially not endorsed by a branch of student government that purports to represent me and have my best interests in mind.

Lastly, I would like to clarify that this is not an attempt at censorship but an affirmation of my right to feel safe in my body and identity wherever I may be, including this campus. Freedom of speech should not come at the expense of anyone’s humanity and right to be viewed, talked about and treated with basic respect and dignity.

I am asking that this film not be shown and that an official, public apology and explanation be issued by all parties involved in approving the screening of American Sniper on Mizzou’s campus.

After its publication, the student government stated it received “numerous letters from students asking for the film to be cancelled.”

But the Missourian reports “many took offense to the article … [and] a common thread in the debate is the tension between free speech and a student’s right to feel safe on campus.”

The controversy prompted the student government to meet last week to discuss whether the screening should continue.

“At this moment we have not made a decision as to whether we are going to cancel the film or not,” Missouri Students Association President Payton Head had said at the time.

On Friday, the students association finally weighed in, saying the movie will be shown as originally planned on April 17 and 18 – but promised to have some sort of event to help “cultivate an inclusive campus climate.”

“Throughout our discussion, many opinions were expressed both for and against showing this film on campus,” the student government stated. “MSA and other student organizations will utilize the screening to create new conversations about the issues presented in the film. We will use these conversations to help cultivate an inclusive campus climate.”

“Additional programming to educate the campus on these issues will be announced as plans come together.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: Amid controversy, MU to show American Sniper

Friday, March 13, 2015 | 9:06 p.m. CDT; updated 12:06 p.m. CDT, Saturday, March 14, 2015

BY CRYSTAL DUAN
COLUMBIA — **The Missouri Students Association announced in a statement Friday that it will continue with its plan to show the film "American Sniper" on campus in April, despite opposition from members of the Muslim community and other members of the student body.**

In a statement on its website, MSA said that it would use conversations fostered by the screening to "help cultivate an inclusive campus climate."

MU student Farah El-Jayyousi wrote a letter to The Maneater on March 3 that said the depiction of Arabs and Muslims in the film "bolstered the idea that Arabs and Muslims are less than human and somehow deserving of the devastation that has been wrought on their bodies by the U.S. military."

"The film glorifies the mass murder of Iraqis, including civilians who are men, women and children," El-Jayyousi said in her letter.

El-Jayyousi said in her letter she also was worried about how the film would affect the campus culture and safety of Muslim students at MU.

"I do not feel safe on this campus and for good reason ... Showing this film will create an even more hostile environment for me and other Arab, Muslim, South Asian and people of color on this campus."

The film is based on the memoir of Chris Kyle, a Navy SEAL known as the most lethal sniper in American military history. The film is being shown as part of the MSA and Graduate Professional Council sponsored on-campus film series.

In its statement Friday, MSA acknowledged the controversy surrounding the film. The statement reads, "The Missouri Students Association has received numerous letters from students asking for the film to be cancelled. Members of MSA have been in contact with students, faculty, and administration at MU to learn about the issues surrounding and objections to the film's screening."
The decision came after MSA met with veterans and members of the Muslim community on Monday to discuss objections to the film.

"We have already begun to work with many students and administrators to address points that were brought up in discussion," the statement said. "Additional programming to educate the campus on these issues will be announced as plans come together."

MSA Director of Student Communications Curtis Taylor Jr. said that MSA is working on a long-term agenda for responding when similar situations arise in the future.

"It's still a work in progress. There's no set timeline because we want to integrate student voices into our plans," Taylor said.

El-Jayyousi declined Friday to comment on MSA's decision to show the film. It will be shown April 17 and 18 at Wrench Auditorium in Memorial Union as part of the semester's regular film series.

**MSA won't cancel ‘American Sniper’ screening**

*A March 3 letter to the editor asked DSA to not show the film, and that “an official, public apology and explanation be issued by all parties involved in approving the screening of American Sniper on Mizzou's campus.”*

The Missouri Students Association is still hosting a public viewing of "American Sniper," despite receiving “numerous letters from students asking for the film to be cancelled,” according to a press release dated Friday, March 13.

MSA’s decision to show "American Sniper" was challenged publicly via a letter to the editor published by The Maneater on March 3.

*The letter, which was written by an MU student, implored MSA to not show the film, and that “an official, public apology and explanation be issued by all parties involved in approving the screening of American Sniper on Mizzou's campus.”*
The student’s chief complaint was that the film would create an “even more hostile environment” for Arabs, Muslims, South Asians and people of color at MU.

Missouri lawmakers want to exempt faith groups from campus discrimination rules

BY JASON HANCOCK
03/15/2015 10:59 PM

JEFFERSON CITY - The University of Missouri demands that student groups stick to the school’s anti-discrimination rules.

Groups can’t deny a student membership based on things like race, religion or sexual orientation.

Missouri lawmakers may change that.

While Republican legislators say the school policy comes with good intentions, they argue it stifles the freedom of religious expression and association. That’s led critics to question the GOP’s intentions, fearing the end result of any change could be legalized discrimination against gay and lesbian students.

Two bills making their way through the Missouri General Assembly would allow student religious organizations to reject membership to anyone who doesn’t comply with the group’s religious beliefs and standards of conduct and doesn’t commit to furthering its religious mission.

Universities would be prohibited from enforcing policy that denies a religious student association benefits available to any other student association.

Similar legislation is being considered in Kansas and a handful of other states.
“We want to recognize our country was founded on religious speech and religious association,” said Missouri state Rep. Elijah Haahr, a Springfield Republican. “That must be protected.”

To its critics, the bill is an example of pushback against years of hard-fought progress on gay rights. Students who want to form exclusive societies are not prevented from doing so. The only question, critics argue, is whether groups that discriminate should enjoy official recognition — and the resulting public funding through student activity fees or the use of school facilities.

“This bill not only allows, but it requires, universities to turn a blind eye to blatant discrimination,” said Sen. Jason Holsman, a Kansas City Democrat. “We are essentially protecting organizations’ right to discriminate.”

The current debate stems from a 2010 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that determined a public university did not violate the First Amendment by withdrawing recognition from a Christian student group that excluded gay students.

Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the majority, said groups that “exclude or mistreat Jews, blacks and women” must be tolerated in a free society. But “it need not subsidize them, give them its official imprimatur or grant them equal access” to university resources.

But universities around the country aren’t applying the same standard to all groups, said Joshua Hawley, an associate professor at the University of Missouri School of Law.

“Universities are singling out student faith groups and saying you and only you may not select your leaders based on your faith,” said Hawley, who recently was part of the legal team representing Hobby Lobby before the U.S. Supreme Court in its successful challenge of the federal health care law’s contraception coverage mandate.
“Meanwhile, sororities aren’t being forced to accept men. Fraternities are not being forced to accept women. Democratic groups aren’t being forced to accept Republicans. That is a form of discrimination.”

Proponents concede there have been no religious groups targeted on Missouri campuses. But they point to other states where universities have punished evangelical Christian student groups by revoking their official status.

Christian groups were stripped of recognition at California State University campuses last year because they refused to sign a nondiscrimination policy requiring clubs and organizations to open their memberships and leadership to all students. Similar actions were taken by Vanderbilt University in Tennessee.

“It’s not a hypothetical situation,” Hawley said. “It’s a real and present danger to student religious liberty on campus.”

In the Missouri Senate, Republican Sens. Kurt Schaefer of Columbia and Ed Emery of Lamar are co-sponsoring the legislation, which was approved earlier this month by the Education Committee on a party-line vote.

There was a time, Emery said, when people choosing to segregate themselves with those who shared their beliefs wasn’t seen as improper. But now, he said, certain groups are demanding that anyone who doesn’t share their worldview be silenced.

“These groups, which are usually pretty small groups like the homosexual community, are saying you have to accommodate us,” Emery said. “We don’t care if you don’t agree with us. You have to accommodate us.”

Hawley said the question is not “is this person gay, straight, bisexual or whatever,” but rather, “can they agree to a statement of faith.”

“This bill does not permit discrimination,” he said. “It actually is designed to prevent discrimination. It says you can’t single out people of faith, whatever the faith, and tell them they are not welcome on campus.”
Kansas Sen. Steve Fitzgerald, a Leavenworth Republican, told the Wichita Eagle the Kansas legislation may allow campus Christian groups to discriminate against gay students. But because a sincere Christian would know gay students could benefit from being part of a Christian group, he said, it’s unlikely they’d face discrimination.

“It’s like a hospital saying that you can’t come in because you’re sick,” he said. “It’s silly.”

Kyle Piccola, senior field organizer for the Missouri lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights group PROMO, believes the argument is simple.

“Every student that pays tuition also pays a student organization fee,” he said. “This fee goes into a pot and it is dispersed to various student organizations. We shouldn’t allow a student group to deny membership to a student that’s already paid to be a part of that group.”

Such bills, Piccola said, are the “last breaths of a dying beast. They are grasping to stop the inevitable.”

“The legislature should be focusing on ways to lift up Missouri’s universities,” he said, “not targeting groups of students for discrimination.”

The U.S. Supreme Court will issue a ruling later this year that could ultimately legalize same-sex marriage nationwide. But even if gay couples win the right to marry in Missouri, Piccola said, state law currently would permit them to be fired from their job, kicked out of their apartment or refused service at a restaurant for being gay.

The effort to add sexual orientation and gender identity to the groups protected by Missouri’s Human Rights Act has fizzled for years.

“The saying now is ‘married on Sunday, fired on Monday,’” he said. “Instead of taking a step backward, we should be working towards making Missouri a more welcoming place.”

Haahr, the Springfield Republican sponsoring the House version of the bill, says his goal is simply to ensure a robust debate on university campuses.
“Without these types of protections,” Haahr said, “we could end up with one majority viewpoint that every group on campus must subscribe to, and no diversity of thought.”

Missouri bills could keep immigrant students from college

By SUMMER BALLENTINE

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri students brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents could face the prospect of receiving no federal financial aid, state aid or in-state tuition under measures moving through the state Legislature.

That, some immigrant advocates and school counselors say, could also mean no college.

Already, Missouri has blocked funding to any public college or university granting such students in-state tuition. The measures in the House and Senate target the estimated 6,000-7,000 immigrant K-12 students in Missouri, although refugees and others seeking asylum in the U.S. also could be affected, American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri policy director Sarah Rossi said.

Republican lawmakers say it's unfair to share already-thin taxpayer-funded education resources with noncitizens, but the bills' sponsors note that the intent isn't to block the immigrant students from attending college.

The Senate bill, sponsored by Farmington Republican Gary Romine, would require students be permanent residents or U.S. citizens in order to get the state's A+ Scholarship, which provides two years of free tuition at community colleges. Shell Knob Republican Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick's bill and the House higher education budget would block state-funded scholarships for students without legal status and require them to pay the international rate of tuition.
Federal aid, such as student loans or need-based Pell Grants, is closed to such students. And though some might qualify for amnesty from deportation under President Barack Obama's Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, many would have few options under these bills, unless they or their parents can pay their tuition in full. They may have to return to their home countries to study or not attend college at all.

"The economic situation is not the best" for many immigrant students at Kansas City's Alta Vista High School, parent liaison Paola Vera said, noting many of those kids qualify for free or reduced lunch.

Legislation that could bump up tuition "discourages our children, and the families," said Vera, who acts as a go-between for the school and parents who sometimes struggle with English. "It makes it extra hard, and I don't see the reason for that."

Students who would be affected by the measures were reluctant to speak with The Associated Press.

It's unclear what effect Fitzpatrick's bill could have, because most Missouri colleges and universities don't have an international tuition rate and instead charge international students out-of-state tuition — the same rates already mandated for immigrant students without legal status.

So far, no students spared deportation under Obama's program have received the A+ Scholarship, Missouri Department of Higher Education spokeswoman Liz Coleman said, although a department rule set to take effect March 30 would clarify that they're eligible.

A Senate hearing for Fitzpatrick's bill, which passed the House 111-41, has not yet been scheduled. Romine's bill won initial approval last week, but needs a second Senate vote before it can move to the House.

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College scholarship bills are: HB 187, SB 224.

Online:

House: http://www.house.mo.gov

Senate: http://www.senate.mo.gov

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

College of Arts and Science announces $1 million gift to fund education excellence
Friday, March 13, 2015 | 2:15 p.m. CDT
BY PAIGE ANTOLIK

COLUMBIA — A St. Louis wealth adviser donated $1 million to the MU College of Arts and Science to help the college recruit and retain prominent faculty.

The Mark A. Wilkins Fund for Excellence, named for donor Mark Wilkins, who graduated from MU in 1990 with a degree in political science, might include the funding of faculty salaries, staff support, teaching materials, and research and travel expenses for educational projects, according to a news release.

In the release, MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said that the gift will help MU attract high quality educators for many years, which is essential to keeping MU among the country's top institutions of higher education.

Wilkins works at Merrill Lynch's Private Banking and Investment Group as a private wealth adviser. During his time at MU, he was involved in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps and eventually served in the U.S. Army after graduation. He is also a member of the College of Arts and Science' Strategic Development Board.

"When I stumbled on the campus in 1986, there was no way I would have envisioned myself doing this," Wilkins said.

Loftin said Wilkins has a great success story and worked his way up from a job at McDonald's with his focus and planning.

"By any measure, Wilkins has been successful, and that is something we want to hold out in front of our students," Loftin said.

Wilkins said he was inspired by his professors and called MU an institutional foundation in his life.
"It's those great minds that impacted me and made me strive for more," Wilkins said.

Wilkins said he sees the world as a place that is rapidly changing and he challenges people to think about the question of staying great, getting better and becoming the best. He said he wants the Wilkins Fund to be a thank you gift, but he also hopes the donation will help MU plan for the future.

He said attending MU was his first inkling that the world was a big place, and he became exposed to new ideas and ways of thinking. This exposure made him want to learn more and strive to be the best.

"You can either be overtaken by the tide, or you can learn to surf," Wilkins said.

Alumnus donates $1 million to MU College of Arts and Science

By Ashley Jost

Friday, March 13, 2015 at 11:16 am

The University of Missouri celebrated its second $1 million gift of the week Friday morning.

MU alumnus Mark Wilkins, a private wealth adviser for Merrill Lynch’s Private Banking and Investment Group in St. Louis, gave the MU College of Arts and Science $1 million to create a fund in his name to benefit faculty recruitment and retention.

Speaking about his gift to a room of his former professors and friends, as well as his two children and his nephew, was “humbling,” he said. In his mind, he is still the 17-year-old who decided he did not want to spend the rest of his life working at the McDonald’s in Waynesville, so he hopped into his Volkswagen and went off to college at MU.

The Mark Wilkins Fund for Excellence will fund faculty stipends, staff support and research and travel expenses for research and education presentations. The gift is unrestricted, said Tom Hiles, vice chancellor for development and alumni relations.
Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin described Wilkins as success-driven, which Wilkins agreed with — even to a fault at times.

“I do believe in better,” he said. “I don’t even believe in better, if I’m being brutally honest, and my kids know that. I believe in best. That’s what I see for this university.”

Wilkins graduated in 1990 with a degree in political science. He currently serves as a member of the College of Arts and Science Strategic Development Board.

“This gift is a testament not only to Mr. Wilkins’ generosity, but to the excellent faculty MU has benefited from and the significant role they have played, and continue to play, in educating and preparing students,” Michael O’Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science, said in a news release. At the announcement, he called Wilkins one of his best friends.

Chancellor Loftin called gifts like Wilkins’ “vital” to the university mission because of the push to gain high-caliber researchers and teachers.

Wilkins stressed that this gift is both a “thank-you for what happened in the past, but a challenge for what needs to happen in the future.”

**University of Missouri receives $1 million dollar gift**

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri has received another major gift.

ABC 17 News was there for Friday morning's announcement at the Reynolds Alumni Center.

Mark Wilkins, a resident of St. Louis, gave the College of Arts and Sciences $1 million to create the Mark Wilkins Fund for Excellence.

The money will go towards faculty enhancement so the college can recruit and retain faculty members.
Wilkins said he wants to give current and future MU students access to quality faculty members, like he had when he was a student.

Donor gives $1 million to MU for Arts & Science improvements

COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri said Friday an alumnus of the university and Merrill Lynch wealth adviser donated $1 million to the school for faculty enhancement.

Mark A. Wilkins' donation will create the Mark A. Wilkins Fund for Excellence in the College and Arts and Science. The university said that money will allow it to recruit and retain "prominent faculty". Wilkins said he wants students to have the same kind of access to quality instructors as he did.

Wilkins said, "During my time at Mizzou, I enjoyed tremendous faculty who taught me how to think and how to be better. I want all MU students to experience that during their education at Mizzou."

The university said the funds could go toward funding faculty salary stipends, staff support, teaching materials, and research and travel expenses for educational projects.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin said, "Gifts like this one are vital to the mission of this university. Mr. Wilkins’ gift will go a long way toward elevating the university among our peers."

Wilkins graduated from MU in 1990 with a degree in political science. He served as a cadet battalion commander in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps during his time at the school and served in the U.S. Army after graduation. He is an active member of the MU College of Arts and Science Strategic Development Board.
Ex-NSA director: China has hacked 'every major corporation' in U.S.

By Jose Pagliery  @Jose_Pagliery

Mike McConnell, when he was still national director of intelligence at the tailend of the Bush administration.

The Chinese government -- seeking to steal valuable secrets -- has hacked into the computers at every major American company, according to the nation's former spy director.

Mike McConnell, who served as director of national intelligence under President George W. Bush, made the comments during a speech at the University of Missouri on Thursday.

"The Chinese have penetrated every major corporation of any consequence in the United States and taken information," he said. "We've never, ever not found Chinese malware."

He said the malware lets Chinese spies extract information whenever they want. McConnell, who also led the NSA from 1992 until 1996, continues to investigate hacks as a high-ranking adviser to Booz Allen Hamilton (BAH).

He listed victims he has come across during his investigations: U.S. Congress, Department of Defense, State Department (which is currently dealing with Russian hackers) and major corporations.
The U.S. government has said it has caught Chinese spies stealing blueprints and business plans. Last year, federal prosecutors took the unprecedented step of filing formal criminal charges against five Chinese government spies for breaking into Alcoa (AA), U.S. Steel Corp. (X), Westinghouse and others. But McConnell's assertion is different. It would mean that no large company can escape the massive theft of American entrepreneurial ideas.

In his speech, McConnell also said that during the final years of the Bush administration, the Chinese government employed a jaw-dropping 100,000 hackers dedicated solely to breaking into computers. By comparison, he said the United States had that many spies -- total.

McConnell listed what the Chinese are stealing: "planning information for advanced concepts, windmills, automobiles, airplanes, space ships, manufacturing design, software."

"If they can take that, before we can take it to market - for free - and it's unchecked for 15, 20 years, I would say that has strategic consequences for the United States," he said.

Still, McConnell is most worried about the risk that today's cyberweapons developed by large countries could end up in the hands of terrorists, with potential attacks on financial markets and the energy grid. Several hacking experts who consult companies on cybersecurity backed up the idea that Chinese hacking is widespread. But they doubt every, single major U.S. company has been broken into by Chinese government operatives.

For example, since 2012, consulting firm EY has found evidence that China hacked into several well-known companies, including a major U.S. medical research facility that conducts clinical trials and a large heavy equipment manufacturer.

But EY consultant Chip Tsantes said the Chinese haven't burglarized every firm.
"I can't say that's true for every single one," he said. "If that was true, the Chinese would have the formula for Coke, and they don't."

Others doubted McConnell's assertions, noting that placing the blame after a hack is extremely difficult. And besides, there are many hacking cases that involve Eastern European mafias, or Russian or North Korean spies instead. The recent Sony Pictures hack and attack on JPMorgan are only recent examples. "I think his comment is reckless and misguided," said John Pirc, a former CIA cybersecurity researcher who launched his own cybersecurity software provider, Bricata. He said he's consulted at large companies after breaches and couldn't point the finger at China.

McConnell did not respond to calls for comment on Friday. However, in the past he has made similar assertions -- although not as all-encompassing. In 2012, he co-wrote an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal with ex-Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and ex-Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn. In it, they talk about China's rampant "cyber thievery."

**View Admiral McConnell's speech at Mizzou:**
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RPT9pAVUsY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RPT9pAVUsY)

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**For Rhoades, it's a job well done at UH**

By Jerome Solomon

Mack Rhoades' critics are smiling.

They shouldn't be.

**The University of Houston's vice president for intercollegiate athletics, a new millennium title for athletic director, was hired last week for the same position at Missouri.**
It will not be easy for UH to hire an AD better than Rhoades. If the school manages to do so, Rhoades will deserve residual credit.

The job he is leaving behind is better than the job he took when he came to UH in 2009.

The question "Is it better now than when you arrived?" is too simple a measuring stick for a university position as all-encompassing as athletic director.

If the answer is no, end of discussion. But if the answer is yes, well, that is an excellent starting point.

When it comes to Rhoades, an affirmative answer to the question says plenty about the work he did for six years in charge of Cougar athletics.

**Had head before heart**

Forget the budget overruns. If the only thing Rhoades accomplished during his tenure was getting the funding for the building of TDECU Stadium, his tenure would be considered a success.

At UH, simply maintaining is a challenge, particularly in the welfare-state landscape of 21st century college sports, where the haves and have-nots are as divided as ever, but fans of the ain't-gots still expect to get their fair (or unfair, depending on your point of view) share.

It was almost impossible for Rhoades to live up to unrealistic expectations set by some: deliver UH to the never-been-promised land of a Power 5 conference.

Had he pulled that off, he would have left a legacy as a miracle worker. His failure to do so doesn't affect his final grade whatsoever.

Sure, Rhoades could he have been more of a charmer, kissed a few more babies, displayed a more delicate bedside manner with the ailing patient that was the UH athletic department.

Instead, like an outsider, he was businesslike. Head before heart.

Rhoades stood up for UH, but he didn't make excuses. He told the truth, well, as much as an AD can these days.

Honesty isn't the best-way-to-get-along policy at UH.

Many Cougars would rather hear about Ann Richards' might, DeLoss Dodds' spite and every other major school in the country's fright.

For mirror-dodgers, UH's second-tier status in athletics has a three-pronged explanation:

The former governor used her power to keep UH out of the Big 12.
The former University of Texas athletic director used his school's financial pull to punish UH for delivering conclusive proof during its Southwest Conference days that it belonged among the big boys.

The college sports world fears UH is the sleeping giant that must never be awakened.

Rhoades isn't the "woe is us" sort. He was far more concerned about the future than the past - his and the school's - which proved to be beneficial for both.

Some $160 million in facilities upgrades for UH. A significant job upgrade for Rhoades.

Road less traveled

There is no need to play games about why Rhoades left.

Missouri is a better job. Period.

"I remember there was a moment in time when I said, 'I want to be at a place someday that is the best, that is a national leader in our industry,'" Rhodes told the Columbia Missourian. "And the University of Missouri and this athletics program is just that."

Mizzou might not be all that, but UH certainly isn't.

At least Rhoades is taking a step up on his way out. Two of UH's last four "permanent" ADs, Rudy Davalos (1986-92) and Chet Gladchuk (1997-2001), left for New Mexico and Navy, respectively.

The one between them, Bill Carr, saw a fork in the road and took it. That isn't a joke.

After guiding what then-school president Glenn Goerke described as a "bare-bones program" from 1993-97, that was Carr's explanation for his exit.

Dave Maggard, an established NCAA bigwig and a "good get" for the program, left semi-retirement to run UH from 2002-09. Maggard told the powers that be before he even took the job that he was just passing through, from here to eternity or retirement, whichever came first.

Last I knew, he was relaxing and raising a wolf in Northern California.

When Maggard took over the debt-riddled program, UH needed direction and correction.

The football team was coming off the first winless season in the program's history, and if the men's basketball team had gone winless, few would have noticed.

Credit Maggard with putting the university's athletic department on the right course.
But from World War II-era urinal troughs at Robertson Stadium to the intermittent hot water in locker room showers at Hofheinz Pavilion, little had changed with UH facilities in decades.

Successor will benefit

Rhoades came in as a young gun, a sharp administrator, a fundraiser, with a lot to prove.

It is arguable that under his leadership, UH has made the most significant financial commitment to athletics in the school's history.

While he made mistakes along the way, Rhoades has lifted UH.

The Tony Levine hire as football coach proved to be a head-scratcher in reality as it did on paper, and James Dickey didn't pan out as men's basketball coach.

But Rhoades quickly had impressive rebound hires in Tom Herman and Kelvin Sampson.

UH's next athletic director will thanks Rhoades for a more solid ground on which to stand than an incoming UH AD has in some time.

That deserves applause.

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Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, “Quirks and Quarks” Radio Program

Friday March 13, 2015

Plants Can Tell Who Is Bugging Them

*Arabidopsis* is a well-studied model plant in the cabbage family. From previous studies, it was known that the plant reacts chemically as a defence against herbivorous insects that are attacking it.

But scientists, including Dr. Heidi Appel from the Division of Plant Sciences at the University of Missouri, wanted to find out exactly how sensitive *Arabidopsis* was to different species of insect. In an experiment, they subjected the plant to two different species of caterpillar, and two different species of aphid.

Analysis of genes expressed by the plant during the attacks showed that *Arabidopsis* responded differently to the two types of insect. The different type of
attack - the chewing of the caterpillar versus the sucking of the aphid - provided signature clues to the plant as to who was attacking.


COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MizzouThon turns dance into dough for neonatal intensive care unit

Saturday, March 14, 2015 | 8:01 p.m. CDT; updated 11:04 p.m. CDT, Saturday, March 14, 2015
BY LOREN ELLIOTT

COLUMBIA — Each year, the MizzouThon dance marathon raises money to support programs at University Hospital.

This year, MizzouThon signed a $1 million pledge in the hopes of funding the renovation of the hospital's neonatal intensive care — the largest one in mid-Missouri.

The proceeds of MizzouThon aid children with a number of medical conditions. The event was held Saturday at the MU Student Recreation Complex.

MizzouThon breaks yet another record

The annual dance marathon MizzouThon raised $201,322.68 for MU Children’s NICU, as part of a new pledge to raise $1,000,000 within the next five years.

The seventh annual MizzouThon had another successful record-breaking year as dancers rallied to continue raising funds for the MU Children’s Hospital’s Neonatal Intensive Care Unit throughout the 13.1 hours in the MU Student Recreational Complex.

More than 900 dancers registered to participate in the dance marathon this year. Each aimed to raise at least $100 in donations prior to the event so they could participate.
MizzouThon had 14 Miracle Families and their 20 Miracle Kids take part this year, with the dancers each divided into teams supporting and dancing on behalf of the 20 Miracle Kids.

For the grand total of funds donated this year, MizzouThon raked in — drum roll please — $201,322.68, beating last year’s previous record of $176,290.55.

The money was raised through a variety of fundraising efforts including canning, donor pages, donating/cutting hair, writing letters and other creative ways to get donations.

A group of freshmen from Schurz Hall, part of Team Wyatt, shared that their fundraising efforts included a lot of canning and even a bake sale.

This year’s money raised marks the first batch of donations as part of the $1,000,000 pledge MizzouThon has planned for the next five years going toward renovating the NICU at MU Children’s Hospital.

“It was just a really good place to have our money going; it seemed like almost all our families have been in that NICU at some point. It’s just a good place to have a large impact,” said Erin Ehlers, MizzonThon vice president of logistics. “It’s just really rewarding to see all these families, and actually make a real difference. It’s definitely worth it, and once you start getting involved it’s addicting; you wanna keep going. I can’t imagine my life without it.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Hydrogen leak prompts MU Animal Research Center evacuation

Friday, March 13, 2015 | 1:20 p.m. CDT; updated 5:32 p.m. CDT, Friday, March 13, 2015
BY JACOB STEIMER

COLUMBIA — A hydrogen gas leak led to the temporary evacuation of the MU Animal Research Center on Friday morning.

According to a Columbia Fire Department news release, an employee failed to connect an empty hydrogen tank to a full one, causing the full one to leak. Unable to stop the leaking four-foot cylinder, the employee alerted others in the building and someone pulled a fire alarm to evacuate the building.
Firefighters arrived at the scene at 9:30 a.m. In about 10 minutes, the crew located and shut off the leaking tank. The crew was outfitted with air-monitoring equipment, full protective clothing and self-contained breathing apparatuses, according to the release. No one was injured in the incident.

“Fortunately the concentration of hydrogen gas was not enough to pose a fire or explosion hazard, and crews were able to make entry and secure the tank,” Fire Battalion Chief John Metz said in the release.

After the tank was shut off, firefighters used fans to push any remaining gas out of the building. Crews remained on the scene ventilating for about one hour.

Hydrogen leak causes evacuation

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Saturday, March 14, 2015 at 12:00 am

A leaking hydrogen tank caused a brief evacuation Friday morning at the University of Missouri’s Animal Science Research Center.

Columbia firefighters and the Boone Hospital Center ambulance service responded to 920 E. Campus Drive at 9:30 a.m. to find the building being evacuated. A news release from fire department Battalion Chief John Metz said an employee was connecting an empty hydrogen tank with a full, 4-foot tank when the full tank started to leak.

Kevin Fritsche, a professor at the research center, said the Environmental Health and Safety office recommended evacuation because of the risk of fire and explosion. Employees followed emergency protocols, Fritsche said, and faculty and staff left the building for about 10 minutes.

“Everything kind of went the way it was supposed to,” he said.

Metz said the concentration of hydrogen “was not enough to pose a fire or explosion hazard” and crews stopped the leak. After the tank was shut off, firefighters used large fans to ventilate any remaining gas from the building, he said.
Two fire engines, a ladder truck, a rescue squad and a hazardous materials truck responded to the incident. Crews remained on the scene for about an hour ventilating the building. There were no injuries.

Hydrogen Leak at MU

Watch story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=61039588-1a0e-4e24-bb5d-8a13f3e483c5

Hydrogen Leak at MU

MU to bring new Doppler radar to Mid-Missouri

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The intensity of thunderstorms over Mid-Missouri can sometimes be underestimated due to a lack of radar coverage in the central part of the state.

If you've ever been through a severe thunderstorm in Mid-Missouri and watched the ABC 17 Stormtrack weather team when severe weather arrives, you know Doppler radar is a key tool in showing you when the storms will be on your doorstep.

Meteorologists in Mid-Missouri use real-time Doppler radar data from three National Weather Service offices across the state, including St. Louis, Springfield, and Kansas City.

Radar beams shoot at varying angles to provide slices through the atmosphere to see different layers of a thunderstorm.

The problem is, the farther away your town is from the radar site, the harder it is for radar beams to slice through the lower and mid-levels of a storm, often where rotation, large hail, damaging winds, and even tornadoes are detected.

Several Mid-Missouri towns are at least 100 miles away from a radar site, creating a lack of good coverage issue.

Last summer, a confirmed tornado went undetected in Gasconade county near Owensville, solidifying the need for better radar coverage.

**A grant awarded to the University of Missouri could help solve that problem, by giving the school a new dual-polarization Doppler radar.**

It's part of a large, $20 million dollar project funded through the National Science Foundation.

The radar is a small part of the grant that the school intends to use to study rainfall over Mid-Missouri, and how the changing climate affects plants.

However, atmospheric science professor Dr. Neil Fox said having the radar in Columbia will be a real benefit to the community, by handing over real-time radar data to the National Weather Service.
"One area we want to look at is how much benefit areas like this that are kind of in between radars can benefit by having these small, but high-quality radars. We can look closer to the surface. With severe weather we might be able to pick up on tornadoes that the weather service can't," said Fox.

Fox said the goal is to have the radar up and running by late spring, and it will be located on the University's South Farm just south of Columbia.

The radar's range will be slightly shorter than a National Weather Service radar, up to 100 miles, with the best data between 50-70 miles from the radar site.

"Hopefully it will not only be a great research tool, but a great public safety tool.

Faculty Pay: Up and Uneven

March 16, 2015

By Scott Jaschik

NO MU MENTION

Median base salaries of full-time faculty members at four-year colleges and universities increased by 2 percent in 2014, down from 2.1 percent the year before, according to a report being released today by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources. The survey found slightly larger gains for those at public institutions (2.1 percent) than at private institutions (2.0 percent).

With the Consumer Price Index at 1.6 percent for the year, that means real spending power increases (but small ones) for full-time faculty members at four-year colleges. The median average salary for non-tenure-track teaching faculty is 87.8 percent of that received by tenured/tenure-track faculty. And the ratio is better for non-tenure-track faculty members at public institutions (90.5 percent) than at private institutions (86
percent). An important caveat is that only those non-tenure track faculty members who work full-time at an institution are counted, and many part-timers are likely paid much less (even if adding up their various commitments at various colleges).

The CUPA-HR study is one of two annual reviews on the state of faculty salaries. A larger study by the American Association of University Professors, which also includes data from community colleges, will be released in April. While that study is not yet available in full, the AAUP provided some summary data for comparison to the CUPA-HR figures. The AAUP expects its study will show an overall salary increase of 2.2 percent for full-time professors, with larger gains at private institutions (2.4 percent) than at publics (2.25 percent).

**Disciplinary Gaps**

The AAUP study features data on individual institutions, by rank. The CUPA-HR study focuses on disciplines and does not have institution-by-institution breakdowns.

As has been the case in recent years, the gaps are large. The highest-paid disciplines, for public and private institutions alike, are law, business and engineering. The lowest-paid disciplines vary by sector and rank, but tend to come in the arts and humanities. For example, across sectors, a full professor of business would have an average salary of $126,659, while a full professor of history would have an average of $88,596. The average for a new assistant professor of computer science was $83,430 while the average for a new assistant professor of English was $58,118.

The large salary gaps for new professors may understate the financial impact of these differences. Generally, those in the higher-paying disciplines are also in fields where time to degree for Ph.D.s is considerably shorter than those in the low-paying fields. So those being paid the least have taken the longest to be able to apply for full-time jobs, and on average have more debt.

The following table shows the figures for disciplines and ranks.

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**LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES, GENERAL STUDIES & HUMANITIES**

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March 16, 2015

**An AAUP Target Disputed an Investigation’s Findings. So It Tried a Pre-emptive Attack.**

By Peter Schmidt

**NO MU MENTION**

The University of Texas’ M.D. Anderson Cancer Center has taken the unconventional step of lashing out at the American Association of University Professors over a pending investigative report on the medical facility, pre-emptively releasing the document and denouncing it as inaccurate and unfair.

The cancer center’s executive leadership on Friday sent the AAUP a letter calling the association’s draft report on its investigation’s findings a "biased editorial by misinformed individuals seeking to paint M.D. Anderson in the most negative light, possibly in hopes of recruiting additional membership to their labor union."

In an email marking the latest of several attempts by M.D. Anderson to strike back at the AAUP, Jim Newman, a cancer-center spokesman, sent news organizations copies of both the center’s response to the draft report and the report itself, which the AAUP had stamped "confidential" and "not for release."

"M.D. Anderson does not typically release drafts of reports," Mr. Newman’s email said. "However, given the surprising focus of this document and the significant errors throughout, we feel that we need to be
fully transparent about what the AAUP considers an honest and fair assessment of a public institution operating under both state and federal law."

Gregory F. Scholtz, director of the AAUP’s Department of Academic Freedom, Tenure, and Governance, on Friday said it characterizes such draft reports as confidential "mainly to protect the institution" until responses can be incorporated into the document and inform possible revisions.

"If they are concerned with inaccuracies in the report, I would assume they would not want them circulated widely," Mr. Scholtz said. "If they are truly inaccuracies, we will correct them."

A Refusal to Submit

The AAUP’s draft report focuses on the cases of two faculty members whose contracts the center refused to renew, and a third whom it reassigned from the faculty to an administrative position. The report concludes that the center has disregarded AAUP principles dealing with tenure, due process, and shared governance.

The cancer center’s response to the report argues that it ignores steps the center took to afford the professors due process and to give faculty members a say in whether they are reappointed. The response also argues that the report contains "glaring" factual errors and potentially libels one administrator.

M.D. Anderson’s pre-emptive attack on the AAUP’s preliminary findings fits into a broader pattern of refusal by the cancer center to submit to the association’s scrutiny and to follow the usual protocol attached to such investigations.

Last summer M.D. Anderson responded to the AAUP’s plans to investigate it by sending the association a long list of questions doubting its authority in such matters. The center subsequently rejected the AAUP’s assurances of a fair investigation.

In October the University of Texas system’s Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution backing M.D. Anderson’s resistance to the professors’ association and endorsing the cancer center’s AAUP-challenged policy of granting tenure to its faculty members only temporarily, for the duration of seven-year contracts.

As reported in the Houston Chronicle and in a medical-industry publication, The Cancer Letter, the cancer center’s faculty members last month directly appealed to the regents and other university-system officials to push the center’s administration to take steps to improve faculty morale.

In November more than 150 faculty members at the center unanimously passed a resolution saying they were concerned about both the continued departure of colleagues and "a climate of fear and the likelihood of retaliation against faculty" who disagree with the center’s executive leadership.
Big bills to view public documents discourage public access

March 14, 2015 10:11 am  •  By MICHAEL FELBERBAUM

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The public's right to see government records is coming at an ever-increasing price, as authorities set fees and hourly charges that often prevent information from flowing.

Though some states have taken steps to limit the fees, many have not:

— In Kansas, Gov. Sam Brownback's office told The Wichita Eagle that it would have to pay $1,235 to obtain records of emails between his office and a former chief of staff who is now a prominent statehouse lobbyist.

— Mississippi law allows the state to charge hourly for research, redaction and labor, including $15 an hour simply to have a state employee watch a reporter or private citizen review documents.

— The Associated Press dropped a records request after Oregon State Police demanded $4,000 for 25 hours of staff time to prepare, review and redact materials related to the investigation of the director of a boxing and martial arts regulatory commission.

Whether roadblocks are created by authorities to discourage those seeking information, or simply a byproduct of bureaucracy and tighter budgets, greater costs to fulfill freedom of information requests ultimately can interfere with the public's right to know. The costs are a growing threat to expanding openness at all levels of government, a cornerstone of Sunshine Week. The weeklong open government initiative is celebrating its 10th anniversary beginning March 15.
"It's incredibly easy for an agency that doesn't want certain records to be exposed to impose fees in the hopes that the requester is dissuaded," said Adam Marshall, a fellow with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, which sponsors Sunshine Week with the American Society of News Editors. "If the people don't know what's going on, either because they don't have direct access to information or because the media isn't able to provide them with access to information about what their government is doing, it's impossible for the people to exercise any sense of informed self-governance."

Fees can be charged for searching for records, making copies, paying a lawyer to redact certain parts of the information or hiring technical experts to analyze the data.

In most cases, the fees imposed are at the agency's discretion; those agencies sometimes waive the costs or requesters can appeal them to an administrative board. But in other cases, Marshall said news organizations and private citizens are faced with the "ridiculous choice" of weighing the costs and benefits of being a responsible public steward.

In Florida, the Broward Sheriff's Office told Jason Parsley, executive editor of the South Florida Gay News, last year that it would cost $399,000 and take four years to provide every email for a one-year period that contained certain derogatory words for gays. The reason, according to officials: The email system could not perform a keyword search of all accounts at once.

Parsley says he has talked to computer experts who disagree and say a modern email system could handle the request easily, but he doesn't have the money or the time to take the matter to court.

"It would be their word against ours," he said. "Even if we could pay that amount, it would be four years. What good would that do me at that point, anyway?"

If the goal was to keep him from learning that deputies used such terms, authorities won, Parsley said.

Broward County Sheriff's Lt. Eric Caldwell said the department was not trying to be evasive. He said each employee's email is stored on a tape and kept at a remote archive facility. It has to be retrieved physically and then converted into a Microsoft Outlook file, which can then be searched.

"If we have it, we have to provide it," he said. "The reason this cost so much is that this person had a very vague request."

Virginia law allows reasonable charges not to exceed the actual cost of accessing, duplicating, supplying, or searching for the requested records. But to get electronic copies of Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe's daily calendar for nearly 10 months, officials told the AP that it would need to pay about $500 upfront. That's because McAuliffe's counsel said staff would have had to search, review and possibly redact certain calendar entries. Meanwhile, in California, daily calendar entries for Gov. Jerry Brown are routinely provided at no cost to the AP.
Another example: Iowa's newly created Public Information Board ruled in December that the state Department of Corrections could charge the Marshall Project, a nonprofit that reports on the criminal justice system, $2,020 for access to its federally mandated reports on sexual violence against inmates. Iowa officials said it would take an employee 108 hours at $15 per hour to review, redact and copy 2,672 records, plus a 15-cents-per-page charge for copies. Some larger states charge nothing or just a nominal fee for access to those reports.

"I think there's a genuine effort to be responsive, but there is a higher cost to fulfill these requests," said Dan Bevarly, acting executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition, a nonprofit based at the University of Missouri-Columbia that works to protect the public's right to open government. "There are other times where there's a deliberate effort to circumvent the system."

Lawmakers in several states have proposed or passed laws seeking to address those fees.

Michigan lawmakers recently approved a law mandating that agencies cannot charge more than 10 cents a page for documents. Further, people can file a lawsuit if they believe they are being overcharged and can try to get the amount reduced. If a court agrees, it must assess $1,000 in punitive damages.

In February, Maryland lawmakers introduced a bill that would establish a compliance board to handle complaints and cap the fees agencies can charge for public documents.

Yet other states are considering actions that could restrict access or deter those making requests.

Following complaints from Tennessee's school boards association, a proposal in the state Legislature would allow agencies to charge for anything more than one hour of time fulfilling records requests. Current law allows them to charge for copies, but not for the time they spend collecting and redacting documents. A legislative analysis of a similar proposal that failed in 2011 estimated that local governments would collect about $1.6 million in fees under the change.

"If someone can't afford the fees, they can't see the records," said Deborah Fisher, executive director of the Tennessee Coalition for Open Government. "There is nothing yet to safeguard against abuse by government officials who may want to block access by inflating fees."

An Indiana proposal would allow a searching fee for record requests that take longer than two hours to fulfill. After that time, an agency could charge up to $20 an hour and require payment up front. The search time would not include time spent redacting confidential information, but opponents said the fee will discourage more in-depth records requests and give officials another tool to fight transparency.

Most agencies in Washington state provide electronic records free by email, and state law caps charges for copies at 15 cents a page. But earlier this year, the Legislature considered a bill that would allow agencies to charge for digital public records, raising concerns among good-government advocates. The bill passed one committee but failed to get a vote in another, meaning it is likely dead for the year.
Agencies can be allowed to levy charges, says Toby Nixon, president of the Washington Coalition for Open Government, "but they should not be making a profit off of it."

Some government officials say they are unable to waive fees because their budgets are tight. Complicating matters further is a larger number of records being generated and the inability of agencies to maintain and process them, leading to more time and resources dedicated to researching requests.

In most instances, the price to fulfill requests comes down to what's being sought and the costs associated with responding to them, said Chuck Thompson, executive director of the International Municipal Lawyers Association, a nonprofit group representing local government attorneys across North America.

"There's probably a fairly low percentage of governments that are attempting to provide barriers to the release of information," Thompson said. "It's really important that the public have the ability to find out what their government's doing, but they can't bring their government to their knees."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

FROM READERS: Lambs in Speakers Circle raise money for Relay for Life
Friday, March 13, 2015 | 7:54 p.m. CDT; updated 8:53 p.m. CDT, Friday, March 13, 2015
BY SIANNA MADSEN

Sianna Madsen is a sixth-grade student from Hatton-McCredie Elementary School in Callaway County. She spent the day in the Columbia Missourian newsroom in a job shadowing assignment for school. During the day, she reported and wrote the story below.

COLUMBIA — In Speaker's Circle at MU on Friday, customers paid $1 to pet a couple of lambs.

You may be asking yourself, "Why are they doing this?"

Little Sisters of the Gold Rose, a non-Greek community service organization, was raising money for Relay for Life, an organization that helps people with cancer remember those who have died and honors cancer
survivors. People participate in fundraising for Relay for Life in more than 5,200 communities in 20 different countries.

Other organizations often bring puppies to pet and play in Speakers Circle, but LSGR decided to bring lambs instead.

The family of Katryna Rankin, who joined the organization in fall 2012, owns the two lambs. Rankin said she went to her parents' farm in Midway on Friday morning to pick up two of the lambs.

A girl and boy, Beyonce and Lewis, were the lambs being petted in Speaker's Circle. Lewis' breed is a Southdown, while Beyonce is a naturally colored Hampshire. Lewis is 2 months old, and Beyonce is 1 month old.

They are the same size now, although Beyonce will grow to be 3 to 3½-feet tall, and Lewis will always be smaller. These are just two of 24 of the Rankins' lambs born this year.

The fundraiser was from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. At 12:30 p.m., LSGR estimated they had 75 customers. Many of the customers took selfies and created the hashtag #lambselfie.

One of these customers was Lexie Walker, a freshman at MU from St. Joseph, Missouri. She said this was the first time she has ever held a lamb.

When asked what the wool felt like, Walker said, "It was really soft, like nothing I've ever felt before."

Sorghum makes a push for a place on the farm
March 15, 2015 7:30 am • By Tim Barker

For four decades, sorghum has been a regular fixture in the crop rotation at Beetsma Farms in Chillicothe, Mo.

But not necessarily by choice.
The family’s farm comprises some 4,000 acres around the Grand River Bottoms, where clay-heavy soil can be less than hospitable for the crops typically favored in the Midwest.

“It’s a real tough soil to farm,” said Ron Beetsma, who runs the operation with two sons. “Corn doesn’t do any good on it.”

Last year, they planted 1,300 acres of sorghum. This year, they’re planning 1,600 acres of the grain used for animal feed, ethanol and, increasingly, the gluten-free foods popular with some U.S. consumers.

The Beetsmas aren’t alone.

Sorghum is one of only three major crops projected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to see an increase — 5.1 percent — in acreage this year as demand and prices for corn and soybeans continue to be dampened by recent bumper harvests.

Still, with only 7.5 million acres across the nation, sorghum is a relatively insignificant crop when compared to corn at 89 million acres and soybeans at 83.5 million acres. Missouri farmers plant less than 50,000 acres of sorghum, compared with some 8 million acres of corn and soybeans, according to the University of Missouri Extension.

“It’s kind of a forgotten crop,” said Michael Aide, chairman of the Department of Agriculture at Southeast Missouri State University.

But as the USDA’s projections show, that could be changing — though no one is proclaiming this to be the dawning of a golden age of sorghum.

The crop has long been popular in Texas and Kansas — they account for two-thirds of the nation’s planted acres — where arid and warm climates create ideal growing conditions.

But with corn prices falling to the point where some farmers will have trouble making money off their harvests, the idea of turning some acres to sorghum could be appealing — particularly, when China is factored into the equation.

Until recently, China was a virtual nonplayer in the world of sorghum, importing just 4,000 metric tons during the 2010-2011 harvest year, according to the USDA. But during the past 12 months, that number had risen to 7 million metric tons — with most of that coming from the United States, the world’s leading sorghum producer.

That’s created a demand felt across the nation, including in Chillicothe, where Beetsma said they’ve had no trouble finding sorghum buyers.

“Every bit of it has been sold and shipped to China,” he said. “We’ve seen prices up to a $1 a bushel more than corn.”
Experts attribute some of China’s surging sorghum demand to its own internal politics, with domestic corn prices artificially inflated to boost farm incomes. The country also created a sharp drop in corn imports after it began rejecting, in 2013, grain shipments containing an unapproved biotech trait found in a new Syngenta seed. Before ultimately approving the seed, China rejected around 1 million tons of U.S. corn.

What’s unclear, though, is just how long this demand from China will continue.

Florentino Lopez is executive director of the United Sorghum Checkoff Program, an industry-funded organization created seven years ago to raise awareness of the crop and its uses. Among other things, the group has pushed sorghum’s potential in consumer goods, including flour, bread, alcoholic beverages, syrup, pet food, brooms and building materials.

“The number of products containing sorghum — you used to be able to count on two hands,” Lopez said. “Now we add that many products every six months.”

And he’s optimistic about the grain’s future in China, where demand for livestock feed is expected to grow.

“There’s still a very big need for coarse grains in the coming years,” he said. “Someone’s going to need to provide that.”

But are U.S. farmers ready to embrace sorghum?

The crop, it seems, isn’t necessarily something that’s easy to get into for farmers not currently growing it.

Beetsma of Chillicothe likes it because it costs considerably less to grow when compared to corn. Seeds are cheaper and it needs less fertilizer.

Yet there are problems with it, he said. It can be tricky to harvest. It can be tough finding grain elevators willing to take it — a problem Beetsma sidesteps by using his own trucks to reach Kansas City.

And then there’s the fact that sorghum can be unpleasant to handle.

“It’s horribly itchy,” Beetsma said. “You’ve got to stay out of it, or your eyes will swell shut.”

That’s among the reasons for the skepticism of Emerson Nafziger, a crop sciences professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

It’s not uncommon, he said, for talk of sorghum to surface from time to time, particularly during periods of dry weather. But whatever the advantages sorghum might offer, Nafziger argues that corn is a stronger bet for farmers in this region, where yields are among the best in the nation.

Further proof, he said, comes from this: “The guys that get out of grain sorghum very rarely get back in.”
Pinkel touched by MAC honor

March 13, 2015 8:29 pm  •  By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. •: Missouri coach Gary Pinkel has a score to settle with Ben Roethlisberger. He'll get his chance May 27 in Cleveland, Ohio. That's when Pinkel and the Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback will be inducted into the Mid-American Conference Hall of Fame.

Pinkel was a standout tight end at Kent State then became Toledo's winningest football coach, during which he recruited the fellow Ohio native to be his quarterback.

Instead, Roethlisberger chose MAC rival Miami-Ohio.

"Hopefully he’s at that deal so I can have a discussion with him and get it taken care of," Pinkel joked Friday.

In the meantime, things have worked out OK for both. They'll be part of the five-man class to be enshrined into the MAC Hall of Fame. It's the third Hall of Fame honor for Pinkel, who was inducted into Kent State's Hall in 1997 and Toledo's in 2009.

Pinkel is the all-time wins leader at Toledo, where he was 73-37-3 as head coach from 1991-2000. Pinkel was the league’s all-conference tight end in 1973.

"That’s never on my goal list to be inducted into a Hall of Fame. But it meant a lot to me," he said. "Anytime you get an honor like this there’s a lot of people that had a lot to do with me getting it. I’m honored and flattered and appreciative that they chose me. … All my players and coaches who were on that staff were every bit a part of getting an award like that."

The list of football coaches previously enshrined in the MAC Hall of Fame include several legends: Bo Schembechler, John Pont, Ara Parseghian. Does Pinkel now belong in their company?

"No, no, no. Don’t even go there," he said. "I’m just a simple ball coach, OK, trying to make the program better. Don’t even go there."

**STORY CONTINUES…**
Obama and Walker: Both Wrong

March 16, 2015

By Matthew T. Hora and Ross J. Benbow and Amanda K. Oleson

NO MU MENTION

While touring a factory in northern Wisconsin that makes millions of aluminum cans on a daily basis, we asked the plant manager whether he thought regional colleges and universities were meeting his company's needs. He looked surprised by the question and answered, "You can't teach [in a classroom] the way we make cans here." If he had employees with basic skill sets in the field, he said, his company could train new hires to use their machinery and learn their procedures.

Similarly, the human resources director of a large plastics manufacturer told us, "As long as [employees] have the basic knowledge and certain abilities, we can typically teach them the skills that they need on the job -- that's the bottom line."

Such responses beg the question: What are these fundamental, even nonnegotiable skill sets that employers seek in their employees? This is a question that our research group is investigating within the biotechnology and advanced manufacturing industries in Wisconsin. As part of a three-year study, we have interviewed over 150 C.E.O.s, plant managers and human resource directors in companies large and small, as well as educators and administrators at two- and four-year colleges and universities across the state, asking them about the skills and aptitudes required to succeed.

The Dominant Narrative of the Skills Gap
Throughout Wisconsin, we have found that the answer to this question is more complicated and nuanced than the dominant narrative of the skills gap suggests. That narrative is rather simple: employers need certain skills, usually said to be occupation-specific technical aptitudes. The nation’s high schools, colleges and universities, which should be preparing students for entry into the workforce, are failing to provide these skills. Because of the lack of technically skilled workers, the argument goes, many companies reportedly cannot take on new accounts or hire new workers.

The oft-reported notion that employers are unable to find appropriately skilled workers has become intertwined with the sentiment that the liberal education model and the broader College for All movement have produced too many students with poor career prospects and massive student debts. Stories abound of Starbucks baristas and parking lot attendants with expensive baccalaureate degrees in the humanities, while 70 percent of the new jobs created through 2020 in states like Wisconsin will require less than a four-year degree.

How big of a problem is this? Instead of being part of the normal ebb and flow of the labor market, some suggest that, when coupled with demographic shifts that include mass retirements of the baby boomer generation, a perfect storm may be brewing that spells disaster for certain sectors of the economy in Wisconsin and the nation -- even the White House is rushing to figure out how to solve the nation’s skills gap.

**The Skills Gap and Public Policy**
The solution to this state of affairs has been to continue pushing the educational sector to align its aims more closely with the supposed needs of employers.

In Wisconsin, the ascendancy of this viewpoint has manifested itself most directly in Governor Scott Walker’s approach to higher education policy. While the administration has recommended $300 million in cuts to the University of Wisconsin System, a network of two- and four-year public colleges and universities across the state, it has proposed language to the system’s charter about meeting workforce needs and directed over $35 million to develop new training programs in the state’s technical college system -- all with the explicit goal of recalibrating public education to meet the skills-related needs of the state’s employers.
This emphasis on tailoring education to fit industry needs has also taken root at the national level. In the 2015 State of the Union, President Obama underlined his intention to connect “community colleges with local employers to train workers to fill high-paying jobs like coding, nursing and robotics.”

As part of this effort, the president has also articulated a national goal of finding “faster pathways” for students to get “the best skills possible at the cheapest cost,” while in the past he famously poked fun at art history degrees.

At the state and national level, the policy response to the skills gap idea has been to focus almost exclusively on training students in the so-called hard skills, or the technical knowledge and ability to perform tasks like welding or computer-aided design programming in two-year technical colleges. This focus is also marked by an attendant de-emphasis on general education and the liberal arts across the entire postsecondary spectrum, but especially in the nation’s four-year colleges and universities.

Even if we grant the first (mostly unexamined) assumption of the skills gap narrative -- that institutions of higher education should be geared toward training students with the kinds of skills that industry leaders demand in the short term -- we are still faced with two important questions. First, do employers want new hires with solely technical skills? Second, do our current education policy choices actually reflect the desires of industry? The answer to both questions -- based on our extensive work in the field -- is no.

**Employers Want More**

While our research indicates that business leaders certainly need employees who have basic knowledge and technical expertise appropriate to their job type and industry, the evidence clearly indicates that they place a high premium on other qualities as well. These skill sets, often denigrated as soft skills, are not viewed as optional competencies but are indispensable complements to technical expertise.

Our data reveal that the skill that is in most demand among employers in Wisconsin is a strong work ethic. Employers spoke of work ethic not only in basic terms such as showing up to work on time but also in terms of being persistent and sticking with a problem until it is solved. Both employers and educators alike underscored the challenges that one person termed “the work ethic problem,” as it implicates not only formal education but also parenting, social norms and company-specific traditions and
expectations.

Interestingly, a strong work ethic implicates another attribute that is rarely discussed in the skills gap debate--the desire to continually learn throughout one’s working life, or what some call lifelong learning. This aptitude is particularly important given the rapidly evolving nature of technology and the subsequent changes in the workplace. “A diesel technician 10 years ago would work on the same pump every day for years and become experts in it,” one employer told us. “Now we're flowing employees to different product, so... we're really looking for people that can handle change and can adapt.”

Businesses are also searching for employees who can effectively work well in teams. For instance, the C.E.O. of a biotechnology firm spoke of the importance of collaboration in their team-based contract work. “We have an example here... a tremendous scientist, but virtually impossible to work with in a team,” he said. “That's just not conducive to the work we do.” An integral part of working in teams is also being an effective communicator, both in writing and in everyday conversation.

Employers also perceived critical thinking, or the ability to problem solve and think on one’s feet, as an important quality in new hires. An executive at a manufacturing company explained, “To be able to think analytically and problem solve... is a critical skill.”

A growing body of evidence supports these findings. A 2011 survey of manufacturing executives revealed that the most serious skills deficiencies were in the areas of problem solving, basic technical training, fundamental employability skills such as work ethic and technology skills. Along similar lines, the National Research Council, the industry-supported Partnership for 21st Century Skills and the Department of Labor are beginning to conceptualize skills in ways that extend beyond the traditional focus on hard skills alone.

Thus, the issues facing our workforce are much more complicated than a shortage of technically skilled employees that can be addressed through more fast-track programming in our nation’s two-year technical colleges. Indeed, what employers are seeking is not simply a cadre of workers who are technically proficient, but engineers who can work easily with customers, chemists who can write clear, succinct prose and
CNC operators who can collaborate with coworkers.

While contemporary policy and rhetoric suppose an either/or dichotomy between technical training and liberal or general education, it is evident that employers want to see skills and aptitudes that are associated with both models of education. “To meld the creative side with the practical side,” as one manufacturer told us, should be the ideal. Instead, he and others found few job applicants who represented this ideal -- which is what we argue is the true skills gap.

**Integrating Education and Training**
Beyond a reconceptualization of which skills and attributes are needed to fuel the 21st-century economy, what is missing in the national debate is a clear plan of action for the nation’s business and postsecondary leaders.

In Wisconsin we have found numerous examples of educators and corporate trainers who have created education and training programs that focus on the entire skills spectrum. The key ingredients in these programs can be distilled to the following three components.

1. **Appreciate the role of liberal and general education in preparing students for the workforce.**
   The thinking on essential workplace skills needs to shift from the traditional focus on technical training to a more comprehensive view that acknowledges liberal and general education’s role in cultivating these varied skill sets. This is not necessarily an argument for more art history majors or that cultivating varied skill sets is impossible in shorter-term programs, but that the modern workplace demands adaptability, broad-mindedness and creativity -- competencies that are well developed in programs based on a liberal or general education model. This is true for all postsecondary programs, from one-year certificates to baccalaureate degrees.

2. **Support educators in using active learning techniques in all postsecondary classrooms.**
   A striking aspect of the skills gap debate is the lack of attention paid to issues of curriculum and instruction, especially approaches specifically designed to integrate technical, content-based instruction with other skill sets such as critical thinking and collaboration. These techniques, broadly known as active learning, are grounded in
research from the learning sciences and include techniques such as problem-based learning, Socratic lecturing and peer instruction. Fortuitously, active learning is being actively promoted in colleges and universities across the country, particularly in the STEM disciplines.

But one thing is clear -- asking educators to teach the skill sets that employers need requires substantial resources, since few postsecondary teachers are trained in these instructional techniques. Yet the looming budget cuts to higher education in states such as Wisconsin, Louisiana and Arizona will likely translate into fewer resources to support professional development, and will ultimately mean that one of the principal tools for providing employers with the skilled workforce they so desire -- education -- is being rapidly undermined across the nation.

Other promising approaches include internships and apprenticeships, where the blending of academic training with real world experience frequently results in students who are highly sought after by employers. And as several of our study participants from industry have reminded us, the responsibility for cultivating these valued skill sets lies not only in the hands of our nation’s educational system, but also in corporate training programs that should also strive to integrate education in basic concepts with more hands-on training.

3. Create opportunities for partnerships between educators and employers. While it was not uncommon to hear our study participants say lines of communication between local colleges and industry “do not exist,” we found that education-industry relationships are critical for both sharing of information about job opportunities and as a platform from which collaborative initiatives that leverage the respective strengths of each partner can emerge. Whether the result is an online corporate training program designed by local technical college educators or advisory councils where local business leaders have a voice in shaping the curriculum -- promising collaborations in Wisconsin usually depend on policy mandates or visionary leadership to bridge the gap between education and industry.

What Is the Purpose of Higher Education? Ultimately, the skills gap debate raises questions about fundamental issues facing society, many of which are overlooked when the discussion devolves to a focus on what employers need or do not need from graduates. What is the purpose of higher
education? Is the current effort to frame this purpose of higher education as primarily vocational in nature beneficial to our economy, our democracy and the long-term success of our population? These questions need to play a more central role in policy making and debates about education-industry relations. As the University of Wisconsin at Madison military historian and native Wisconsinite Lieutenant Colonel John Hall recently wrote, “I understand and respect the notion that the purpose of an education is to prepare students for a ‘good job,’” but “this is not the only purpose of an education.”