Police search MU Student Center, Memorial Union after bomb threat forces evacuation

By Caitlin Campbell and Ryan Gauthier

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 7:52 pm

University of Missouri officials evacuated the MU Student Center and Memorial Union for about two hours Tuesday night because of a reported bomb threat.

The MU Police Department and university administrators issued an MU Alert at 7:23 p.m. stating they were evacuating the student center after receiving the threat. Officials evacuated the Memorial Union at about 7:50 p.m., according to an alert.

A K9 unit with the Missouri Capitol Police was dispatched from Jefferson City to help police search for the alleged bomb. Police reopened the student center at about 9:30 p.m. Tuesday after searching for more than an hour. University officials cleared Memorial Union at about 9:44 p.m., but the building will remain closed until normal hours Wednesday.

MU police escorted about 200 people from the student center shortly after 7:15 p.m., according to people who were in the building at the time.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the threat was made via an anonymous phone call to staff at the student center.

"The threat was called in directly to the student center," Basi said. "That information was immediately given to the MUPD, who responded right away."

The threat was made specifically to the "student union," Basi said, which is why university officials also opted to evacuate the Memorial Union as a precautionary measure. University officials did not evacuate any other campus buildings.

Basi said the university has received bomb threats in the past, but he could not remember any targeted at the MU Student Center.

MU junior Sarah Ruwe said an announcement went out over the building's intercom, and then officers walked through the student center and started gathering people and telling them to leave.
"They didn't tell us what was going on," Ruwe said.

Ruwe said the center usually hosts a large number of students who are working on homework during the evenings.

Officers in neon vests blocked entrances to both campus buildings at about 8 p.m., and police cars filled the area. Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers directed traffic away from the buildings, and only buses were able to drive on Rollins and Hitt streets near the student center.

A group of about 30 students and university employees sat on the grass across the street from the student center waiting while police searched the building.

Jimmy Kraus, assistant manager of campus dining services at the student center, said the evacuation was initially confusing because nobody knew about the bomb threat.

"They didn't tell anybody anything that was going on until they got us outside," Kraus said. "They were just trying to keep everyone calm."

Neither MU police nor Columbia police has a bomb-sniffing dog, so the university has had an agreement with the Missouri Capitol Police for about eight months for any special events, Basi said. The MU Police Department previously had a bomb dog, but the handler and K9 left, he said.

MU issues all clear after report of bomb threat

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The University of Missouri has issued an all clear after an earlier reported bomb threat prompted the evacuation of two buildings.

A statement posted on the university's website Tuesday night said campus police and administrators were aware of a reported threat in the Student Center, which was evacuated. The statement said the Memorial Union building was also evacuated as a precaution.
The Columbia Daily Tribune reports police reopened the Student Center around 9:30 p.m. after searching it for more than an hour.

An all clear was announced online just before 9:45 p.m. The university says the union building won't reopen until Wednesday.

MU spokesman Christian Basi tells the newspaper that the threat was made through an anonymous phone call to staff at the Student Center.

Bomb threat forces evacuations of MU buildings


COLUMBIA -- Police found nothing suspicious after a Tuesday night bomb threat forced officials to evacuate two MU buildings.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said someone called in a bomb threat on Tuesday evening referencing a “student union.” The university immediately evacuated Memorial Union and the MU Student Center. Police blocked Rollins Street in front of the Student Center and Hitt Street in front of Memorial Union and a Capitol Police bomb dog was brought in.

After police found nothing at the Student Center, that building resumed normal operations around 9:15. About half an hour later, students were allowed to go inside Memorial Union to retrieve their belongings. Basi said Memorial Union would remain closed for the rest of the night.

The university’s alert system sent regular updates via Twitter, but no text alert was ever sent. Basi said this was because the threat had been specific to two buildings rather than the campus as a whole.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU Student Center evacuated after bomb threat, Memorial Student Union emptied as precaution

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 | 11:53 p.m. CDT; updated 12:54 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, April 22, 2015

BY JACOB BOGAGE, JACK SUNTRUP

COLUMBIA — Police swept into the MU Student Center, 901 E. Rollins St., and Memorial Student Union, 518 Hitt St., minutes after 7 p.m. Tuesday to evacuate students and investigate a bomb threat.

By 9:25 p.m., authorities gave the all clear, and students were allowed back into the MU Student Center, ending 2 1/2 hours of tense waiting behind a loose perimeter around the building.

Police continued searching Memorial Student Union until 9:45 p.m. Memorial Student Union remained closed through the rest of Tuesday and will reopen Wednesday, operating at normal hours, according to MU spokesman Christian Basi. The building was scheduled to close for the evening at midnight.

The MU Student Center reopened Tuesday night and resumed normal hours.

MU Student Center staff received a bomb threat earlier Tuesday afternoon referencing a "student union" as the target, Basi said.

Because the MU Student Center and Memorial Student Union are both student unions, the latter was evacuated as a precaution.

Late into the evening, the timeline of the call and resulting search was still unclear, according to university and law enforcement officials. They declined to release information about the content of the threatening call.

"The threat was called in directly to the student center, and the information was given to MUPD, who responded right away," Basi said.
A K-9 unit of the Missouri Capitol Police from Jefferson City searched both buildings and didn't find any evidence of a bomb.

The Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Columbia Police Department also responded.

Basi said MU police does not have a K-9 unit. The dog's handler left the department eight months ago, and since then, MU has coordinated with Missouri Capitol Police to supply a dog and handler for explosive searches.

The Columbia Police Department has a K-9 unit, but it is not equipped for bomb searches.

MU Police Department Capt. Brian Weimer said standard procedure for bomb threats is to consult with building administration to determine if a partial or full evacuation is necessary. If a threat is deemed credible, police work with technicians in other agencies to sweep for an explosive device.

Police closed portions of Rollins and Hitt streets during the searches and ordered students away from both student unions. Dustin Colter, a security service provider for MU police, said authorities tried to maintain a perimeter of 1,000 feet from threatened buildings, though many students stayed nearby to wait out the threat.

Students did not receive text alerts from MU Alert because the bomb threat was "localized," and the situation was stable, Basi said.

However, parents of MU students received email alerts about 8:15 p.m. that said MU police had been made aware of a bomb threat to the MU Student Center. The email also stated the MU Student Center and Memorial Student Union were being evacuated.

Columbia TransitBus routes were diverted but were not canceled during the searches. The Maneater, the MU student newspaper, was forced out of its basement office in the student center during publication of its weekly paper.

Junior Benjamin Seah was working on a class project when police officers entered the MU Student Center and ordered evacuations.

"I was in the building and the cops rolled up, and I didn't know what to expect," he said. "They said over the intercom for everyone to evacuate."
Police evacuated students to the south side of Rollins Street in front of the MU Student Recreation Complex.

Tuesday night was the first time the MU Student Center, which opened in 2005, has been threatened by a bomb, Basi said.

"All clear" given for MU student unions after bomb scare

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **The student unions on the MU campus were evacuated after a bomb scare was phoned in Tuesday evening.**

MU Police used K-9 units from the Capitol Police Department to search the MU Student Center and Memorial Union.

The search found no bombs and the "all clear" was given for both buildings between 9:30 and 10:00.

The Student Center reopened Tuesday night and the Memorial Union was set to open Wednesday morning.

The threat was called in a little after 7:00 p.m. and the caller indicated a bomb was going to go off in the student union coffee shop.

The MU Student Center and Memorial Union were both evacuated at that time.

As of 9:30, the K-9 units were heading to the Memorial Union to look for bombs.

The incident was the fourth scare on the M-U campus in the last seven days and had officials scrambling to respond.

"Out of an abundance of caution, MU police decided to evacuate the Student Center and Memorial Union," said Mary Jo Banken, MU spokeswoman.

She added the Alertus Beacons, a mass notification system, sounded in both buildings shortly after the threat was called in.
ABC 17 News received calls from viewers wondering why no text or email alert was sent to students or faculty.

Banken said a limited text message went out but campus-wide text messages and emails were not necessary because the threat was localized to two buildings.

**MU Alert announces possible gun shots, not possible bomb threat**

COLUMBIA - MU Police responded to a bomb threat Monday night at the Student Center and Memorial Union.

KOMU 8 News received initial reports of a bomb threat around 7:15 p.m.

MU Alert, the university emergency announcement service, confirmed the possible threat on twitter at 7:26 p.m.

Mary Jo Banken of the MU News Bureau told KOMU 8 News that MU Alert only calls or texts students when the entire campus is under threat.

But a few hours later, MU Alert sent out an email, text and tweet about a reported shooting downtown.

KOMU 8 News spoke with Banken at 8:15 Monday night about a lack of notification regarding a possible bomb threat at MU's Student Center and Memorial Union. She said when the entire campus is not in danger, they don't want to alarm students.

Around 10:10 p.m., MU Alert sent a text, email and tweet about reported shots fired in downtown Columbia. At 10:30 p.m., MU Alert tweeted the situation was stabilized:

Students have criticized the university's emergency announcement system several times within the last week. MU did not report a fatal shooting in Hitt Street Garage last Wednesday night until
after the situation was over and safe. Some people were upset again after receiving phone calls around 3 a.m. Sunday morning about an on-campus robbery.

KOMU 8 News will keep you updated on this story and ask the university why they chose to report false shots fired off campus, but not a false bomb threat on campus.

MU Student Center and Memorial Union evacuated due to reported bomb threat

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28522&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri has evacuated the Student Center and Memorial Union due to reports of a bomb threat.

Mary Jo Banken of the MU News Bureau told KOMU 8 News that MUPD received a bomb threat to the "student union coffee shop."

Banken said MUPD did not initially know if the threat was located at the coffee shop in the student center or in Memorial Union. In response, Banken said the university evacuated both out of extreme caution.

MU has re-opened the Student Center after the Jefferson City Capitol Police K-9 Unit cleared the area. Memorial Union is clear, but will remain closed and reopen on Wednesday for normal business hours.

Despite student reports, Banken said MU has not evacuated Ellis Library.

Banken said there was no text alert or call from MU Alert because the threat was isolated.

MU Alert only calls or texts students when the entire campus is at threat, according to Banken.

Banken also said MU Alert did not want to alarm students.
A bomb threat called in to the MU Student Center resulted in the evacuation of the Student Center and Memorial Union and search by MUPD late Tuesday night.

The call was made directly to the Student Center, and the threat was passed on directly to MUPD, who responded immediately, MU spokesman Christian Basi said. MUPD is currently investigating the threat and will have more information Wednesday, MUPD spokesman Brian Weimer said.
“(The call) wasn’t generalized to campus, if that makes sense — it wasn’t like ‘oh, I have a bomb threat for MU’s campus,’” Basi said. “They said 'student union.' We have two student union buildings on campus. As a precaution, they evacuated both buildings that are considered student unions.”

The Student Center was cleared and re-opened around 9:26 p.m. Memorial Union was cleared around 9:51 p.m., according to MU Alert. The Student Center opened for regular hours while students were allowed to grab their belongings from Memorial Union before it closed for the evening.

The last bomb threat for MU was "many, many years ago,” Basi said.

“All clear. Memorial Union has been cleared but will remain closed until 4/22 when it will reopen at normal time,” according to the MU Alert Twitter.

MU Alert tweeted that at around 7:26 p.m. the Student Center was being evacuated and also that Memorial Union was being evacuated around 7:50 p.m., but “only as a precaution.” The MU Alert website also said the campus was operating under elevated conditions while the buildings were searched.

“Student Center is being evacuated due to bomb threat. Memorial Union is being evacuated out of caution. No bomb threat in Memorial Union,” according to the MU Alert Twitter.

The account also tweeted out that there were reports of Ellis Library being evacuated, which turned out to be false.

“We are seeing reports that Ellis Library is being evacuated but there are NO confirmations at this time,” according to the MU Alert Twitter.

Students in the buildings were told to evacuate via a beacon system, Basi said.

“Those beacons were set off, but just for those buildings,” he said. “We have the capability to set them off building by building so we did that to help evacuate.”

Some centers in the basement of the Student Center were not alerted.

Though the Columbia Police Department was not called in, Missouri State Highway Patrol helped MUPD with the situation. K-9 units from the Missouri Capitol Police were called in to assist with the bomb search.

“They were the closest agency that had a K-9 unit that could help us in this particular situation,” Basi said.

Some students expressed anger on social media platforms that a text or email was not sent out over MU Alert. This is not the first time students have been dissatisfied over social media with MU Alert, with several other situations occurring this week.
“We have a situation where we have a localized threat,” Basi said. “It is a situation where we know where the location of the threat is. We have made sure everyone within the vicinity of that threat is safe. So then we’re posting information to make sure the campus is aware that this is going on but the police, as you know, formed a perimeter and would not let anyone in that area.”

Text messages would have been unnecessary, Basi said.

“They (MUPD) did not feel that it was necessary, in this situation, to send a text message to thousands of individuals that would have no reason to be on campus or here in the neighborhood,” he said. “They were making a decision about the circumstance and felt that they were able to make sure everyone in the vicinity was safe and that was what was most important.”

According to protocol, MU Alert is supposed to send out information regarding active threats on campus via phone calls, text messages or emails.

Tuesday night MU Alert tweeted that “No text was sent because threat was isolated. Bldgs evacuated. MUPD there to provide safety. Because localized & stable, no text.”

MUPD works with building coordinators in the case of a bomb threat to determine the extent of the threat and utilize systems in the building available to evacuate, if necessary, Weimer said.

If anyone has any information, they can call MUPD at 573-882-7201.

An MU Alert was sent out around 10:11 p.m. for CPD investigating shots fired, with alert saying the call was “resolved.”

MU student arrested, tied to anti-Semitic graffiti

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 5:17 pm

Police have arrested a University of Missouri freshman for his "involvement" in the appearance of anti-Semitic graffiti in a residence hall stairwell.
MU police on Tuesday arrested Bradley M. Becker, 18, on suspicion of second-degree property damage, MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said in a news release. Police recommended a hate crime charge against Becker, which could mean a harsher sentence if Becker is convicted.

Weimer said in the release that police arrested Becker "for his involvement with the anti-Semitic remarks" found April 8 and April 10 in a stairwell at Mark Twain residence hall, where Becker lives. Police took Becker to the Boone County jail, where he was in custody Tuesday afternoon on a $4,500 bond.

Becker is listed in the university's directory as a freshman health sciences student.

Weimer said police wouldn't release more details, citing an ongoing investigation.

Police said after the graffiti was discovered that the writing was done in ash. A notice posted at the residence hall said the graffiti consisted of words and symbols that were threatening to religious minorities, but didn't specify what was written. Police also declined to talk specifics about the vandalism.

An MU Jewish student group said the writing contained swastikas and the words "Heil" and "You've been warned."

Freshman arrested for anti-Semitic graffiti at Mizzou dorm

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) – A University of Missouri freshman has been arrested for his suspected involvement with anti-Semitic graffiti discovered inside a dormitory’s stairwell.

The school’s police department announced Tuesday that the 18-year-old was arrested on suspicion of second-degree property damage.
Capt. Brian Weimer said police wouldn’t release more details, citing an ongoing investigation.

Police also declined to talk specifics about the vandalism, but a Jewish student group at the university said the graffiti included swastikas and the words “Heil” and “You’ve been warned.”

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU student arrested in connection with anti-Semitic graffiti

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 | 6:29 p.m. CDT; updated 8:03 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, April 21, 2015

BY KATIE KULL

COLUMBIA — An MU student was arrested Tuesday afternoon on suspicion of posting anti-Semitic images and phrases found in a Mark Twain Hall stairwell on April 9 and April 10.

Bradley Michael Becker, 18, who lives in the residence hall, was charged with second-degree property damage, according to an MU Police Department news release.

Becker's charge has been upgraded to a class D felony in accordance with Revised Missouri Statute Section 557.035, which pertains to crimes motivated by the religion of the victim.

Swastikas and other disturbing symbols — a triangle with an eye and the word "Heil" — were first discovered in a Mark Twain Hall stairwell April 9 and removed, according. Another swastika, accompanied by the words "You've been warned," was found the following day.

MU police conducted an investigation and met with Mark Twain residents to talk about hate crimes in the wake of the incident.

After the arrest, MU police took Becker to the Boone County Jail, where his bond was set at $4,500.
MU student arrested for anti-Semitic remarks in residence hall

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=28512&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - University of Missouri Police arrested an MU student Tuesday for his involvement with the anti-Semitic remarks found in a stairwell of Mark Twain Residence Hall.

MUPD said officers arrested 18-year-old Bradley Becker for second-degree property damage, which is a class D felony.

Graffiti containing swastikas and threatening language was found on the ground floor of a stairwell in Mark Twain on April 8 and April 10.

Becker was in the Boone County Jail Tuesday afternoon on a $4,500 bond.

the maneater

Freshman arrested in connection to anti-Semitic vandalism

The MU Police Department arrested freshman Bradley Becker at 2:22 p.m. April 21 in connection with vandalism on a wall in Mark Twain residence hall, according to an MUPD news release.

The vandalism was of anti-Semitic remarks, including images of a swastika, a triangle with an eye on top and the word “heil.” The images were smeared on a wall in the building’s northwest
stairwell with what appeared to be charcoal. The vandalism was found April 8 and again April 10.

Becker is a resident of Mark Twain.

Becker was arrested for second-degree property damage, a class D felony due to sentencing provisions under Revised Missouri Statute 557.035 Hate Crimes.

Becker will be taken to Boone County Jail with a $4,500 bond. He is not currently on the inmate list.

As the investigation is still ongoing, no more information is available at the time.

Second man arrested in weekend assault on MU campus

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 3:18 pm

The University of Missouri Police Department on Tuesday arrested a second man accused of being part of a group that allegedly assaulted two women early Saturday on the MU campus.

MUPD Capt. Brian Weimer said in a news release that police arrested Gire Ngezahayo, 17, at 11:26 a.m. Thursday for alleged third-degree assault for his part in the weekend incident. Police released Ngezahayo on a summons.

The MUPD reported in a Clery release Saturday morning that two female students were walking near Memorial Union when they were groped by several men. The men ran when they saw a police car.

Another woman, also a student, said she and some friends were assaulted by a similar group of men about 11:30 p.m. Friday on Rollins Street between the Student Recreation Complex and the MU Student Center, police reported.
The MUPD on Monday arrested Luke K. Kuol, 18, on a third-degree assault charge and released him on a summons. Police list Kuol's address as 701 Ridgeway Place, and Ngezahayo's address as 704 Ridgeway Place.

Kuol is a Hickman High School junior. Ngezahayo isn't an MU student, Weimer said in the release. Columbia Public Schools spokeswoman Michelle Baumstark said Ngezahayo isn't a CPS student.

Second suspect arrested in MU campus assaults

COLUMBIA, MO. -- **University Police say a second suspect has been arrested following an investigation into multiple sexual assaults on the University of Missouri campus.**

17-year-old Gire Ngezahayo was arrested Tuesday morning for third degree assault for his involvement in two sexual assaults that took place on Rollins Street and near Memorial Union over the weekend.

Police say the incidents involved up to six men.

The first reported incident happened near Memorial Union at around 12:30am Saturday.

According to police, two women were approached by males then grabbed, kissed and groped.

MU Police sent out a clery release that brought another victim forward.

According to police, a female victim said she had also been approached and sexually offended by the group at 11:30pm Friday night on Rollins Street.

The University Police Department says the investigation is ongoing.
MU police arrest second high school student in groping incident


COLUMBIA, Mo. - **Two Columbia high school students are under arrest for groping two women near Memorial Union on the MU campus early Saturday morning.**

Just before 1:00 Monday afternoon, police arrested 18-year-old Luke Kezekiya Kuol, a Hickman High School student, for his alleged role in the incident. On Tuesday afternoon, MU police arrested a second suspect, 17-year-old Gire Ngezahayo.

Police received a call about 1:20 a.m. Saturday about a sex offense that had occurred about an hour earlier.

The two victims told police they were walking on campus when multiple men approached them, grabbed them and tried to kiss them. The victims said other men joined in and groped them before running away.

Police think Luol was involved but are not saying why and are not releasing more details. MUPD is continuing its investigation.

Female Mizzou students said they are glad two suspects have been caught, but won't feel completely safe until the remaining four suspects have been arrested.

"I come through here all the time and that could have probably been me at some point too," said Ashley Misuraca, a student at Mizzou.

She and other female students on campus said they wish there was a quicker way to catch all six suspects and won't feel completely safe until they are caught.

ABC 17 News confirmed the first suspect, Kuol, is a Hickman student, but the second suspect is not. Columbia Public Schools could not comment on whether or not the student is suspended because it was against policy.
17-year-old arrested in connection with weekend incidents at MU

BY AUSTIN HUGUELET

COLUMBIA — MU police arrested a 17-year-old Tuesday in connection with a reported sexual assault that occurred near Memorial Student Union at MU early Saturday.

Gire Ngezhayo was charged with third-degree assault, according to an MU Police Department news release.

A group of six men groped and attempted to kiss the two women about 12:30 a.m. near Memorial Union before fleeing the scene when they saw a police car, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Another female MU student told MU police that she and a group of her friends were assaulted by a similar group about 11:30 p.m. Friday on Rollins Street between the MU Student Recreation Complex and the MU Student Center.

Ngezhayo is the second person to be arrested on suspicion of participating in the incident near the student union. MU police arrested 18-year-old Luke K. Kuol, a Hickman High School student, on suspicion of third-degree assault Monday.

MU police's investigation of the incidents is ongoing as the department tries to identify individuals involved.

Anyone with information regarding the incidents can call MU police Detective Sam Easley at 884-3721 or CrimeStoppers at 875-8477.
Team discovers new type of embryonic stem cell

While trying to grow placenta cells, researchers made a surprising discovery: a previously unknown form of human embryonic stem cell.

“These new cells, which we are calling bone morphogenetic protein (BMP)-primed stem cells, are much more robust and easily manipulated than standard embryonic stem cells,” says R. Michael Roberts, a professor at the University of Missouri.

He says the cells represent a transition between embryonic stem cells and their ultimate fate, for example as placenta, brain, or skin cells.

“We can use these new stem cells for future research to better understand how embryos are organized and what causes diseases like pre-eclampsia and other prenatal problems,” adds Roberts.

Embryonic stem cells are pluripotent, meaning they can develop into a number of different types of cells. For their study, Roberts and colleagues were attempting to grow placenta cells from embryonic stem cells by adding a substance called BMP-4 for a shorter period of time than had been done previously. They also added two other drugs that temporarily inhibited key biochemical pathways associated with the pluripotent state of the stem cells.

Instead of forming placenta cells, the stem cells grew into what was a previously unobserved state, referred to by the scientists as “BMP primed” stem cells.

They found these cells to be much easier to work with in a laboratory setting than traditional stem cells because they are easier to grow and are more uniform, meaning that all the cells in the culture are quite similar to each other in the way they express their genetic information.

“Previously, the common thought was that embryonic stem cells transitioned straight from stem cells to their end products,” Roberts says. “These new stem cells made us realize that embryonic
stem cells exist in a number of different transitional states, which likely resemble those encountered in the early stages of embryos.

“This should open the door for future stem cell research that is much more efficient. We now have new stem cells that are easier to manipulate since they are already at the key transitional precipice before changing into placenta cells, skin cells or any other kind of cell that makes up the human body.”

The study is published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Stigma against boasting might limit MU faculty success

In his op-ed to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in March, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Hank Foley said MU must “unleash the power of the willing,” when discussing the faculty culture on campus.

His statement suggested that MU’s “power of the willing” is currently latent.

Harry Tyrer, chairman of the Faculty Council’s Faculty Affairs committee, said there is a “culture of modesty,” which hinders the “power of the willing” among MU faculty. Officials have said the university’s ranking in the Association of American Universities has suffered because faculty tend to shy from boasting about their accomplishments, making it difficult to recognize each other’s work and subsequently nominate it for awards.

“We need to move from a culture that has been, at best, ambivalent to faculty starting new ventures to one that is more supportive and that values such activities,” Foley wrote.

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin echoed Foley’s sentiment during a March 18 press conference, calling on faculty to do a better job of nominating each other for awards. He is currently working with faculty to advocate for a uniform process through which they can more easily nominate each other for awards.

“We need mechanisms in our office to be able to help our faculty to do the task of just mechanically nominating somebody,” Loftin said. “We have great colleagues here; we aren’t telling their story well.”

Faculty recognition is significant in part because of its connection to MU’s ranking within the AAU. Michael O’Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science, told The Maneater in April that
MU is at the “bottom of the barrel” in nearly every AAU indicator, including the number of faculty awards.

In 2010, MU faculty received 78 awards from national and international organizations, according to the College of Arts and Science Mosaic Magazine. The average for the rest of the AAU for 2010 was approximately 210 awards.

Tyrer said more needs to be done to recognize faculty and researchers whose efforts are worthy of awards.

He said though the nomination process is difficult, it is not an excuse for the abysmal nomination records. There are faculty in Tyrer’s own Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering who feel they aren’t receiving the recognition they deserve for their hard work, he said.

Tyrer said the complaints he fields from disgruntled faculty members often come in the form of requests for raises. These faculty believe they’ve done excellent research and aren't being adequately compensated, outside of the money they receive from the external organizations that issue the awards.

Awards and fellowships do not always go hand-in-hand with raises, but Tyrer said he believes they should. He said there have been faculty who have become fellows in their societies — what he called the highest honor a society can bestow upon general membership — and haven’t seen an increase in pay from the university, much to their chagrin.

Tyrer said he blames this perceived injustice on bureaucracy, which he said puts department chairpersons in a situation in which they “don’t understand the value of their faculty being chosen as fellows of their societies.”

Tyrer said there aren’t many braggarts among MU faculty and that they would like there to be a more subtle way for them to request nomination and recognition for research.

“We don’t want to run around the halls and say, ‘Hey, I just got an award from my society!’” he said.

Department of Chemistry chairman Jerry Atwood said he believes the stigma against boasting is unwarranted and damaging to MU. He said faculty have to be more vocal about their accomplishments if the university is going to improve its standing within the AAU.

Faculty at top-ranked AAU schools like Harvard University have won many awards and understand the nomination process, Atwood said. He said MU faculty have to get out of the rut of thinking they’re not as worthy of nomination as faculty at other AAU institutions.

“A lot of the faculty at MU are as great as the faculty at Harvard, but there’s a general culture here of not wanting to boast and (instead) be modest,” he said. “We need to get away from that idea and get into the mindset where a faculty member will go up to another faculty member and say, ‘I think I should be put up for a certain award, would you do it?’ If that’s not regarded as
boasting, then that would just be something we would do for the betterment of ourselves and for the university.”

Sarah Bush, associate teaching professor of biological sciences, said when a community of faculty wins a lot of awards, it transforms faculty culture and makes it easy for faculty to nominate and commend each other.

“It creates a positive feedback loop,” Bush said. “Once an institution starts getting more awards, then it’s in people’s minds. They think more about which colleagues in their department might qualify for awards.”

Atwood has won several awards for his work in chemistry, and was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in December 2014. He said he’s invariably been nominated by somebody outside of MU.

This trend needs to change if MU faculty are going to win more awards and keep up with their counterparts at other AAU universities, Atwood said.

“We need to promote people on campus on the national and international stage,” he said. “We need to get away from the idea that this is somehow bragging or boasting, but rather it’s something that would be good for the person and good for the institution.”

However, not every department is plagued by these issues. Department of Political Science chairman Cooper Drury doesn’t think boasting is even necessary in his department. He said collegiality has made his department immune to issues of internal recognition.

“We are very supportive of each other’s success,” he said. “When any faculty member accomplishes something big, everyone is very pleased with it. It’s a supportive faculty where we’re happy to see our colleagues succeed.”

He did agree, however, that faculty need to do a better job of nominating each other for awards on average. While his department does very well by his account, Drury said he’s seen other departments struggle.

Some MU faculty and administrators place too much emphasis on award nomination and AAU ranking, Tyrer said. He said he recognizes the importance of AAU indicators like faculty awards, but doesn’t believe it outweighs the importance of putting quality teachers in the classroom.

If the emphasis is placed on teaching, awards will follow, he said.

“We want to win awards because of the things we do,” Tyrer said. “We don’t want to just do the things that are necessary to win awards.”
In January of this year, President Barack Obama proposed a rollback of a total of 529 college savings plan tax benefits.

In February of this year, Missouri Treasurer Clint Zweifel opposed the rollback and proposed a solution to the rising costs of higher education, a solution for which UM System President Tim Wolfe publicly voiced his support.

"President Wolfe has made the year 2015 a year to explore a new theme, which is to focus attention on moving the University of Missouri and the state of Missouri itself from good to great,” UM System Chief Communications Officer John Fougere said. “The state of Missouri currently watches upwards of 40 percent of our high school students that achieve GPA’s of 3.0 or higher neglect to attend colleges in Missouri, and what a waste that is for our state.”

In an effort to promote success and to broaden higher education opportunities for Missouri high school students, Zweifel has created what he calls the “Missouri Promise.”

If Missouri students achieve a 3.0 GPA in high school, perform continuous service to their communities and continue to maintain a 3.0 in their college curriculum, the state of Missouri will pay full or reduced tuition and fees for applicable students to attend Missouri colleges.

“Missouri Promise is about creating a culture of expectations, one that includes an element of responsibility for both parents and students,” Zweifel said in an original opinion piece published in the St. Louis Dispatch “It empowers students early on to work hard, get good grades and demonstrate good citizenship.”

Zweifel went further to explain that “when we encourage meaningful investment in families, we also make a promise to Missouri employers that we will have a ready supply of high-quality human capital available to compete in the global workforce.”

Funding for Missouri’s higher education system is 46 percent less than neighboring states, Zweifel said. Furthermore, Missouri ranks in the bottom fifth nationally in funding given to higher education.

“Eighty percent of the country is working harder to send their students to college than we are in Missouri,” Zweifel said. “Needless to say, there is a lot of room for improvement.”
The college enrollment rate of high school graduates directly from Missouri high schools is 61.4 percent, according to research done by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.

Nationally, Missouri’s 61.4 percent places the state 31st out of all 50 states, ranking 1.1 percent below the United States average of 62.5 percent.

In the same vein, according to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, Missouri’s most recent rate of unemployment is 5.5 percent, equal to the national rate reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Data.

According to a study released by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, nearly 60 percent of American jobs now require at least a bachelor’s degree.

Careers in education, computer and mathematical science, architecture, arts, design, sports, media, healthcare, legal, social services, and community and social services occupations, etc, show less than 10 percent of those working in these fields have a high school degree or less.

The top three career options for those lacking higher education are farming, fishing and forestry, with 91 percent of those lacking a bachelor’s degree finding work in this area, building and grounds cleanup and maintenance occupations with 75 percent and construction and extractions occupations with 72 percent.

"As a state, we must recognize that the jobs of the future require higher education," Commissioner of Higher Education David Russell said in a statement for the Missouri Department of Higher Education. "And we must commit to providing the resources needed so all students are equipped to succeed in a knowledge-based economy."

Funding for the Missouri Promise program is presently planned to be taken from a tax hike in tobacco products, a measure that failed in the polls back in 2012. The state of Missouri holds the lowest tobacco tax in the nation, and, with the implementation of a 17-cent per pack tobacco tax being placed on the ballot once more in 2016, Wolfe said that upwards of $300 million can be raised for education.

“It should be a foregone conclusion for every Missourian that if you want to go to college, you can,” Zweifel said. “In order for that to happen, we must send a message to families that for anyone willing to work hard and seize opportunity, we will invest in your success.”
‘American Sniper’ screening prompts outrage, controversy at UCLA

Student uproar over the decision at UCLA to screen “American Sniper” prompted campus officials to add a post-film discussion to the program as a compromise.

The decision was made after dozens of students plastered the Campus Events Commission’s Facebook page “with concerns that the film promotes Islamophobia and glorifies war,” The Daily Bruin reports, adding:

“CEC didn’t initially plan on having a discussion after the movie, but after receiving backlash for the event, [events commissioner Greg] Kalfayan added a roundtable discussion after the screening for students to express their opinions.”

Communication studies professor Keith Fink moderated the post-film discussion, held Tuesday. The screening attracted an estimated 450 students, according to its events page.

“Despite the added discussion, some students said they feel the movie perpetuates Islamophobia and that showing the movie is offensive to several communities on campus,” the Bruin reports.

One of the comments posted on the Facebook events page was by student Haley Kingbury, who argued: “So many people do NOT want this movie shown. Why not cancel it and respect those individuals who have genuine reasons for their objection? The people who will be upset by the cancellation will move on. Those who are excessively enraged by the cancellation are the reason it needs to be cancelled.”

And as Truth Revolt reported, some comments were more extreme, including those from a UCLA activist and former student, who called “for violent death of US troops, commenting, ‘how about eat the troops? i mean hopefully their flesh gets roasted by some i.e.d. if they’re out occupying,’ and ‘I’d rather a thousand US troops die horribly than one victim of their wars.’”

“American Sniper” continues to prompt controversy at other campus screenings across the country as well.

A protest of the movie is expected tonight during its debut at Northern Illinois University, where a Muslim Student Association leader has declared “I consider veterans and our military to be the real terrorists.”

Earlier the month, a group of students stormed a showing of the blockbuster on the Eastern Michigan University campus, disrupting the movie with signs and questions to the audience.

The University of Michigan actually canceled its screening of the film due to Muslim student protests, but eventually rescheduled it after a national uproar.
“American Sniper” also drew heavy fire at the University of Missouri for offending Muslim members of the community. One of its leaders had stated: “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.”

And the Muslim Student Association also had a hand this month in getting the film’s screening at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute postponed.

“American Sniper” – the highest grossing film of 2014 – tells the story of the emotional journey our service men and women who go to war face, and it isn’t pretty, and it leaves them at best scarred and at worst dead.

In particular it follows U.S. Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, who served four combat tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom and was awarded two Silver Stars, five Bronze Stars with Valor, two Navy and Marine Corp Achievement Medals, and one Navy and Marine Corps commendation, according to his official Facebook page.

But the protestors see him differently, and it’s unclear if many of the Muslim students who complain about the movie have even seen it.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

$350,000 donation from AT&T to benefit Mizzou K-12 Online students

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 | 6:15 p.m. CDT

BY PAIGE ANTOLIK

COLUMBIA — Next winter, a donation from AT&T will begin helping students with poor Internet service access online courses through MU.

The company has donated $350,000 to fund an app that will give students in MU's online education program for K-12 students a mobile alternative to the Internet.

Both iPhone and Android apps will connect students to Canvas, the learning program used by Mizzou K-12 Online.
Based in the College of Education, MU K-12 Online is for students who cannot attend high school in a traditional classroom setting.

Director Zachary March said the app will be designed for students taking courses in rural Missouri or international countries without available Internet service.

"Students can download assignments to their mobile devices (to be completed) offline and then re-sync to Canvas to submit them when they get Internet access again," he said.

March said he thinks this app could help many thousands of students, citing an example of one student who uses Mizzou K-12 Online in Ghana where there is limited Internet access.

He hopes the apps will be ready by January 2016, with the iOS launching first since most students have iPhones.

"We are so thankful to AT&T for this contribution," March said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Holocaust survivor shares hard story at MU about life in hiding
Tuesday, April 21, 2015 | 10:00 p.m. CDT
BY TIMOSHANAE WELLMAKER

COLUMBIA — Eleven people were crowded in a bunker under a barn in Poland. Jerry Koenig was covered in dirt and surrounded by lice and insects, just like the rest of the group. They remained as quiet as possible while hoping they would get to eat that day.

This was part of a story Koenig, a Holocaust survivor, came to MU to share Tuesday. The event was organized by Mizzou Hillel and MU’s Jewish Student Organization to remember the Holocaust.

Koenig, 85, stood in front of more than 100 students in Jesse Wrench Auditorium. His head peeked just over the podium as he stood next to a large map of Poland, a photo
with his family and a poster listing a timeline of events starting Sept. 1, 1939, and ending April 19, 1943.

"The story I'm going to tell you is an ugly one. It deals with murder, and it deals with a family's attempt at survival," he said. "One good thing about it is that it had a good outcome."

When Koenig was 9 years old, Nazi Germany took over Poland and forced his family to move to a ghetto in Prusków, Poland. This move meant that his father, mother and younger brother had to move away from the rest of the family and their farm, which they held dear.

They were relocated to a ghetto in Warsaw, Poland.

"The situation in the little ghetto that we were in was bad, but it certainly became much worse in a very short time," Koenig said. "All of a sudden we found ourselves completely isolated from the rest of the world."

This was even smaller than the crowded space they lived in before, he said. A large wall surrounded them, making it extremely difficult for anyone to break free.

Eventually, the family managed to escape by paying a smuggler. They then lived on a small farm with the Zylberman family, with whom their father was friends prior to the war, before the Germans sent more Jews to yet another camp, Treblinka.

"The concentration camp was not a place you wanted to be or spend your vacation," Koenig said. "It was a penal institution."

Six camps had been built in Poland. To avoid the camps, the family sought more help. Once they found a farmer willing to hide them, they jumped on the offer.

The Gorals, a Polish Catholic family, took 11 people in and hid them in a hole dug out under their barn. The hole — estimated by Koenig to be about 24 feet long, 6 feet wide and 4 feet deep — held them for 22 months.

At one point, one of the young women hiding in the hole gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

"The little girl had to die," Koenig said.
The crying might have alerted others to their existence, and it was only increased by the multiple insects that plucked at her skin. Koenig said they had no other choice but to rid the bunker of the baby or everyone’s life was at risk, including the Goral family.

Finally, Mr. Goral poked his head into the hole to tell them that they could finally leave the hole. The war was over.

Years later, Koenig’s wife requested that they go back to see the place that she was so curious about. She wanted to go to Prusków.

"I wasn’t a willing participant," he said, "but when your wife says you’re going, you pack your bags and you go."

Koenig and his wife visited Poland in 1988. The brick wall that once stood in front of his family’s house was no longer there.

"It was very difficult. It was like a trip to the cemetery," he said. "You look at the house you were raised, knowing all the people who you used to know aren’t there anymore. It’s difficult."

Koenig said he and his younger brother, Mike, are the only two people from the bunker who are still alive.

MU Hillel Director Jeanne Snodgrass heard Koenig’s story before he came to campus Tuesday. She said she thought it was important to allow others to hear about his experience.

"I think it’s really important, and it’s a hard story," Snodgrass said. "I think this history and stories are really important and especially since so few people can still tell the story from their own experiences."

Resign, Please

April 22, 2015
When a new president takes the helm of a university, it’s common for there to be turnover among the leadership ranks. But by asking top administrators at Texas A&M University's flagship campus to submit letters of resignation before a new president even begins his term, the A&M system’s chancellor is taking transition turnover to a new level of formality and breadth.

In a letter, Chancellor John Sharp requested that vice presidents and advisers to the president of Texas A&M's College Station flagship submit their letters of resignation to incoming President Michael Young, the former president of the University of Washington. Sharp says he wants to institute the practice systemwide, making it standard operating procedure that the upper ranks at each of the A&M universities and the system office offer to resign when a new president or chancellor comes in.

Even without the resignation letters, Young has the right to dismiss administrators as he sees fit. At most universities, vice presidents and other executives are at-will employees and serve at the behest of the school’s leader.

“You don’t get to keep the job even though you may not be compatible with the desires of the new president,” Sharp said. “No one expects the new president to choose them just because they’ve been working there before. These are very high-level positions. These are not positions that are lifetime jobs.”

The letter, he says, formalizes an already existing practice of new presidents culling their leadership team. Sharp said about 15 vice presidents and advisers have been asked to submit letters.

“It’s easier on the president. It causes a lot less conflict,” he explained. “This makes sure that everyone understands the rules of the game.”

While leadership changes when a new president assumes office are common -- often universities will delay filling open administrative positions until a new president arrives,
for example -- Sharp’s preemptive request for resignation letters of the full cabinet-level staff appears to be rare in today’s higher education landscape.

The request could put employees on edge during a time when a smooth transition is necessary for the incoming president’s success, according to Daniel J. Hurley, associate vice president for government relations and state policy at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

“Senior administrators understand they are at will. To formalize the process by submitting a letter of resignation is awkward,” he said. “To come in and ask an entire cadre of senior administrators to submit their resignation, and maybe it will be accepted and maybe it won’t, is terribly unsettling for the institution at large and certainly for the affected individuals.”

Robert Smith, vice president of CBT University Consulting and a former provost of Texas Tech University, said that preemptively requesting resignation letters is common in government and business and even college-level sports programs, but not in university administration.

“We live in a different world in academia. What happens in academia is largely based on trust,” he said, calling Sharp’s request for resignation letters unfortunate and tantamount to treating administrators in a lockstep manner. “Frankly, in that environment this kind of approach, I believe, will be perceived as being offensive.”

Sharp said the letters will make it easier for the president to build an administrative team.

“Instead of that president having to call you in and say ‘You’re fired,’ the president will simply say ‘I’ve accepted your resignation,’” Sharp said, adding that in previous transitions provosts at A&M have submitted letters of resignation out of deference to a new president.

“You may have trouble recruiting world-class presidents who don’t get to pick their own staff,” he continued. “This is to make sure the president of the university gets to pick the team that judges his or her success.”

Once Young assesses his team, he may well refuse most of the letters, Sharp said.
In the letter, Sharp asks all executive and senior vice presidents and special advisers and assistants to the president to submit their resignation letters, with open-ended dates, to Young on May 1, 2015, the day Young takes office. In their letters, administrators can ask to join the faculty or separate from the university if their resignation is accepted. Sharp cited an existing system policy that allows the chancellor to dismiss or reassign vice presidents, deans, deputy directors and associate directors. He has requested that Young determine whether to accept the letters no later than May 1, 2016.

Sharp said Young did not request the letters of resignation.

Typically in university governance, a system head hires and fires the campus presidents, but otherwise stays out of personnel decisions -- at least officially -- on the campuses, leaving those choices up to the presidents. Sharp's mandate could be seen as involving the chancellor in campus employment decisions, raising questions about how independently the presidents will be able to operate. Sharp says he won't have a role in saying which administrators stay or go, decisions he says lie with the president. Jan Greenwood, an executive search consultant who specializes in higher education and is president of Greenwood/Asher & Associates, said that giving new presidents latitude to fire and hire vice presidents is essential to those presidents realizing their vision for an institution.

“The basic rule of leadership and management is that if the person who is hired for the position cannot build their own team, they can’t be held accountable for the results that the team gets,” she said. “When you’re talking about a top administrator, you have a rather intense level of accountability that comes into play.”

Greenwood said that while most new presidents ask for resignations after watching an administrative team at work for a few months, she has known of cases when resignation letters were requested of administrators from the outset of a president’s tenure. Search consultant Jamie Ferrare, managing principal of AGB Search, said the practice was more widespread a few decades ago but is less common today.

“It’s a little surprising, a little different, but it gives the new president a great deal of flexibility,” he said. “It sends a message that we’re going to do things a different way right now, and we hope you’re on board with that.”
While giving the president flexibility, the request, if made a policy at A&M universities, could hinder the retention and recruitment of administrators, according to John Moore, a consultant who works with university leaders and is a former president of Indiana State University.

“I would not advise my clients to adopt such a practice. It breeds a level of insecurity and uncertainty and could result in premature entering into the job market for those administrators, contributing to a lack of continuity and momentum at the institution,” Moore said. “Everybody knows they serve at the pleasure of their boss. That’s very different than submitting a formal letter of resignation. What are you supposed to do, just sit around and hope that you aren’t let go? No, you’re going to get in the market and start looking.”

On the other hand, requiring resignation letters makes transparent an already existing reality: that the jobs of top administrators depend on the assessment of an institution’s president.

“People taking these high-level positions need to know they’re accountable and these positions are not tenured,” said James McCormick, former chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education and a presidential search consultant.

Meanwhile, as new presidents look to build their leadership teams, McCormick says they also need to be cognizant of the mood among their staff.

“They need to be thinking about the morale of those key individuals,” he said. “Do they feel, in the end, that there’s some fairness in the process?”
Agricultural officials search for Missouri century farms

Tuesday, April 21, 2015 | 4:34 p.m. CDT

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SPRINGFIELD, Missouri — Agriculture officials want to recognize more Missouri farms that have been in the same family for at least 100 years.

More than 8,000 century farms have been honored since Missouri began the program in 1976 as part of the nation's bicentennial celebration.

The MU Extension says farms that have been in the same family since Dec. 31, 1915, can receive the distinction. Applications must be postmarked by May 15.

To qualify, the line of ownership from the original settler or buyer may be through children, grandchildren, siblings, or nephews or nieces, through marriage or adoption.

Farms must be at least 40 acres of the original land acquisition and contribute financially to overall farm income.

Sponsors include the Extension, the university's College of Agriculture and the Missouri Farm Bureau.