COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

With home in their hearts, mid-Missouri college students raise money, supplies for Nepal

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 | 8:34 p.m. CDT; updated 10:32 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, April 28, 2015
BY ALLEN FENNEWALD

COLUMBIA — Sabitri Dhital barely made it outside before the hotel collapsed. She ran with her husband and their toddler-age grandson past screaming people and toppling buildings in search of an open area, avoiding corpses as they went.

Their vacation was over. The worst earthquake to hit Nepal in 80 years had begun.

In the mountainous region of Helambu, it was difficult to find safety.

"The earthquake was so severe that it not only collapsed the buildings, but it collapsed the hills and mountains as well," her son, Saroj Dhital, an MU graduate student, said. "She said she almost got trapped in one or two landslides, and she saw a lot of bodies when they were running away."

Sabitri Dhital got separated from her family and was nearly crushed by another landslide when a police officer pushed her into a river to avoid tumbling stones. Luckily, she floated to safety and met back up with her husband and grandson before walking about 37 miles to the nearest town barefoot.

But she was OK.

Sabitri Dhital was able to call her son Sunday to tell him the family was safe, but she couldn't say much else. She didn't know whether the family's 30-year-old home in Katmandu was still intact. Many homes there are made of red brick, mud or wood and have been devastated by the earthquake.

Saroj Dhital, a 27-year-old pursuing a doctorate in economics, said his family should be able to rebuild. His father is a co-owner of a travel agency and is fairly wealthy. But Saroj Dhital knows that others are not as fortunate and that many are without homes and necessities.
International disaster relief is underway in Missouri. At MU, Dhital and other Nepali students have revived the University of Missouri Nepalese Student Association to raise money for Nepalis in need. He thinks they have raised about $4,000 as individuals before the group organized, and he hopes to collect much more.

Dhital said the group will run a booth to collect donations outside the MU Student Center on Wednesday. The group is also planning a candlelight memorial for sometime this week.

Raghav Poudyal, a fifth-year Ph.D. student studying biochemistry, has personally raised more than $1,400 to send back home to Nepal. He said that is enough to feed about 2,300 people.

"Our brothers and sisters back home have been forced to live outside on the streets and basic needs such as water, food and medicine are becoming increasingly scarce," Poudyal said in an email. "We want to help the people that are on the scene and are doing their best to provide relief to the victims."

"We want people of Nepal to know that even though we are far away from them, we are in this crisis together," he wrote. "The earthquake may have broken homes but not the hearts. Every dime that we can collect through the University of Missouri Nepalese Student Association would buy someone’s food, medicine and water."

Tenzing Dhakhwa, 23, a senior at Westminster College in Fulton, had raised $3,220 dollars in just two days through his GoFundMe account as of 7:15 p.m. Tuesday. Dhakhwa and 16 other Nepali students at Westminster began their disaster relief efforts as soon as they found out about the earthquake this past weekend.

Their group, Making Lives Better, raised an additional $200 on campus this week and is attempting to collect clothing, toiletries and camping equipment to send to Nepal. Dhakhwa said the group has received clothing and blankets and hopes to collect tents, sleeping bags and medical equipment as well.

Dhakhwa left Katmandu in 2011 to study business administration in the U.S., but he has become a philanthropist for the area. Before the earthquake, he and others in the Nepali student group had raised $2,610 to send home to promote education. Now, the funds will probably be diverted to the disaster relief effort.
Umesh Pradhan, one of Dhakhwa's friends in Nepal, started a medical camp in the aftermath of the earthquake and has been communicating with Dhakhwa about the camp's needs through his brother in America.

"As I was speaking to my friends in Nepal, they needed clothes and blankets and medical supplies also, like bags and masks or resuscitation kits and suturing sets. Small things like hand sanitizer and toothpaste," Dhakhwa said. "We are trying to contact our school's wellness center, and we might be using the money to buy medical supplies and ship it to Nepal."

Some local churches have joined international efforts. Missouri United Methodist Church has partnered with the United Methodist Committee on Relief. Sacred Heart Catholic Church is accepting donations at the church, which will be sent to the Diocese of Jefferson City for distribution.

Saroj Dhital encourages people to donate anything they can spare. He said $1 could purchase four loaves of bread for a hungry family.

"Help us raise money," Saroj said. "Any tiny amount would help. We would like to locate specific areas that have not been (aided), because what we give to the Red Cross will be out of our control what we are spending on. (Helambu) has not come up once in the news. There are a lot of remote areas where aid has yet to reach. That is the scary part."

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**Nepalese students at MU, Westminster spend anxious weekend waiting for word from home**

Westminster students start fundraising effort.

By **ROGER MCKINNEY**

Monday, April 27, 2015 at 2:00 pm
Nepalese students at the University of Missouri and Westminster College endured an anxiety-filled weekend as they watched the aftermath of a major disaster in their homeland from afar.

On Monday many of those students said their families back home were living in tents after an earthquake Saturday killed more than 4,000 people.

Some students said their families in Kathmandu, the country’s capital, were surviving on very little food and water. Rain is complicating rescue and relief efforts.

Nila Manandhar is a fourth-year medical student at MU and a member of the Nepalese Student Association. She said when she woke up Saturday morning, she saw posts on social media websites about the earthquake in her homeland. Manandhar began calling and texting her family members. After a few hours, she received a one-word text from an uncle that her family was fine.

“They’re all safe,” Manandhar said. “The main problem is ... finding food and water.”

Manandhar said most of her family members and others in Kathmandu were staying outside in tents, fearing their homes could collapse as a result of the strong aftershocks.

“It’s been raining very heavily,” she said. “There’s no power and almost no water. There’s very little to eat right now.”

Manandhar said there was little medical infrastructure in Nepal before the earthquake, and because of the lack of adequate medical care, many of the injured have died.

Saroj Dhital, a graduate student in economics at MU and a member of the Nepalese student group, said his parents were visiting a remote rural area when the earthquake struck.

“The entire village was buried” where his parents were visiting, Dhital said. His family members escaped unharmed and made their way back to Kathmandu.

Dhital said the more remote areas of the country were the worst hit. “My mom said she saw a lot of dead bodies walking on the way back,” he said.

He said Nepal’s economy always has been weak but was showing signs of growth before the earthquake.

“I’m pretty sure it’s going to take years to recover — half a decade or a decade,” Dhital said. “Our political system is not very good. Things are not looking very good for Nepal right now.”
Dhital and some of the other Nepalese students said those wanting to help should send money, not supplies, and donate to established, trusted charities, including Red Cross, Oxfam and the World Food Programme.

Nepalese students at Westminster College who are part of a group called Making Lives Better have started an online fundraiser, the Nepal Earthquake Relief Fund, on a crowd-funding website at www.gofundme.com/swr25w. The effort had raised $2,320 Monday morning, with a goal of $5,000.

Mahima Poudel, a Nepalese student studying political science and international economic development at Westminster, said she was unable to talk to her parents until Sunday night, but they are safe.

“They’re just in a state of shock and fear and confusion in general,” Poudel said. “Everyone is in a state of panic.”

Poudel said her parents sleep in their car. An aunt’s house collapsed, but she also wasn’t injured. Poudel said the government is responding with all its meager resources.

“The sense of community is very strong at the moment” among the Nepalese people, Poudel said.

She said there’s not enough clean drinking water or food. There are reports of people suffering from hypothermia from sleeping on the cold ground. She said she fears the emergence of water-borne diseases.

Poudel said many historic Buddhist sites that are thousands of years old have been destroyed.

“We have lost almost all of our historic monuments,” she said.

But Poudel said she has been overwhelmed by the support she has received.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
April 29, 2015

With Fraternities Under Scrutiny, Greek Lobbyists Take to Capitol Hill

By Beth McMurtrie
NO MENTION

Student fraternity and sorority leaders will fan out across Capitol Hill on Wednesday with a challenging mission: to repair the image of campus Greek life.

That image has taken a beating in recent months, thanks to a slew of incidents at campus chapters — including racist chants and the sharing of photos of naked, incapacitated women — that have stirred widespread debate about the role of fraternities. But these students, who have been preparing to meet members of Congress, say the current conversation on frats doesn’t present a fair picture. "As a whole we do so much good, but that rarely gets represented," said Brooke Knudtson, a junior at the University of Texas at Dallas and a former student-government president.

She and about a hundred other undergraduates are participating in a nearly 20-year-old event that aims to expose student leaders to Washington politics. It is normally a low-key affair, with students lobbying for such measures as a change in tax law that would allow charitable donations to improve Greek housing. But this year’s trip has been overshadowed not only by dozens of recent complaints against fraternities for hazing and sexual misconduct, but also by internal discussions over the role that campus administrators should play in sexual-assault investigations.

Two news organizations, Bloomberg and The Huffington Post, reported last month that national Greek leaders were considering asking Congress to require colleges to defer action in sexual-assault cases until local law-enforcement agencies had completed their criminal investigations.

The Huffington Post article included an audio clip from a conference call in which Buddy Cote, chairman of the North American Interfraternity Conference, said that "in order to protect the due-process rights of our Greek students in these campus judicial proceedings we believe the cases really should be deferred until the completion of the criminal investigation and any subsequent trial once reported by the student or the institution itself."
Those remarks angered victims' advocates and alarmed campus student-affairs administrators.

"It’s important to make a distinction that universities are not trying to run courts of law," said Kevin Kruger, president of Naspa — Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. "They’re trying to determine violations of codes of conduct and determine appropriate remedies. It’s often not practical or feasible to wait until a sexual-assault investigation is completed in court before you being a campus investigation."

But members of the Fraternal Government Relations Coalition, which runs the annual Washington event, said on Tuesday that deferred action was never the coalition's official position. Nor do they plan to lobby lawmakers this week to take any particular approach, they said.

Following the news reports, the North American Interfraternity Conference and the National Panhellenic Conference outlined their legislative agenda on sexual violence, which they said would "make campuses safer by providing a clear path for pursuing those who commit such crimes against students." The groups said they support interim measures by colleges, including adjustments in class schedules and temporary suspensions. But "deeper" investigations, they argued in a joint statement, should be postponed while the police are investigating.

National Greek leaders said on Tuesday that they did not expect colleges to delay their investigations until the police or the courts have completed their work. The leaders' goal, rather, is to ensure that the process is fair to both the accuser and the accused. "We’ve certainly learned that everyone is trying to grapple toward the best solution," said Jean M. Mraske, chairman of the National Panhellenic Conference.

'Intense Scrutiny'

Laura Bennett, president of the Association for Student Conduct Administration, said federal law already allows institutions to defer action while an active criminal investigation proceeds, but "that’s usually less than a week."
She said she appreciates the attention national fraternity and sorority groups are giving to supporting victims of sexual assault, but she added that there remain points on which Greek leaders and student-affairs leaders probably disagree. For example, in their talking points the Greek organizations said students accused of sexual assault should have the right to be represented by a lawyer during campus investigations. And those organizations have suggested that they prefer a higher standard of proof in sexual-assault investigations than a "preponderance of evidence" — the standard, outlined in the Department of Education's guidelines, that is commonplace on campuses today.

Both student-affairs and Greek leaders said recent conversations had helped bridge some of the gaps between the organizations. "I think a lot of Greek chapters are poised to do a lot of great work with education and support," said Ms. Bennett.

That’s the message student leaders want to convey this week as well. "Our organizations are under intense scrutiny, maybe now more than ever, but we’re also in a strong position to take action," said Taylor Tordsen, a fraternity leader from the University of South Dakota and a former student-government president. He and other students said they want to tell lawmakers about the many education and support programs Greek organizations are involved in, on both the campus and national level, to combat sexual violence and support victims.

They and national leaders say they also want to explain why they don’t think suspending chapters or Greek activities as a whole on a campus is a fair reaction to a specific incident. While Greek leaders want to remain supportive of victims, said Madison Thompson, a senior at Clemson University, "oftentimes you have a system that takes the blame for the individual." Last year Clemson suspended all fraternity activities two days after a fraternity member was found dead in a lake near the campus, and it later suspended the chapter involved for five years.

Mr. Kruger, of Naspa, said he hopes that the Greek organizations and student-affairs groups will "come to a common understanding about the best strategy to reduce
sexual assault," rather than having a Greek response and a campus response. "We’re all trying to make Greek life the best it could be."

MU shantytown stands as a model for social activism

Campus movement led to divestment of holdings in S. Africa.

By CHRIS ROBINSON

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Nearly 30 years ago, a group of University of Missouri student activists occupied Francis Quadrangle for more than a year, influenced university policy and helped contribute to the demise of a racist and oppressive government regime in South Africa. On Tuesday the MU Peace Studies Program, Friends of Peace Studies and Mizzou Alumni Association will hold a panel and audience discussion titled Divestment from South Africa and the ’86-’87 MU Shantytown Occupation: Legacy of a Successful Protest. By revisiting this successful protest movement, the event hopes to garner insight that can be applied to current social movements that are addressing today’s challenges.

The international campaign against South Africa began in 1962 when the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution calling for nations to voluntarily impose economic and diplomatic sanctions against the country because of its practice of “apartheid,” a nationalized system of segregation and racial discrimination. Many Western governments, including the United States and Great Britain, opposed the resolution. As a result, the initiative quickly lost steam. However, during the mid-1970s the campaign was relaunched in the U.S. private sector. Concerned individuals urged businesses to pull out of South Africa, and students called upon their colleges and universities to divest their endowments of any stock in companies with ties to the country and its apartheid regime.
In 1978, Missouri Student Association President Doug Liljegren wrote a letter to the Board of Curators saying MU held shares in 54 companies with dealings in South Africa. A rally was held one month later requesting that curators purge MU’s portfolio of these investments. Initially, the university responded that, as a public institution, it would do nothing to interfere with the profits of U.S. corporations. Eventually in 1985, after further protests at MU and other campuses across the country, a task force formed by UM System President C. Peter Magrath recommended the university sell some of its holdings in companies with ties to South Africa. A group of MU students found partial divestment unacceptable — and decided to protest.

“We needed a bold visual representation that would call attention to the oppression of black South Africans and disrupt the university’s business-as-usual,” former student activist Kathryn Benson said. They found their symbol in the construction of a “shantytown” in Francis Quadrangle. Shantytowns were communities of makeshift shacks built with scraps of plastic, metal, wood and other materials in which many black South Africans were forced to live under apartheid. And so, on Oct. 10, 1986, MU student activists built a shantytown on the Quad and demanded that the university fully divest of all its holdings in South Africa.

Over the next year, an ongoing conflict ensued between anti-apartheid activists and the university as student and faculty members continued to make the case for divestment. At one point, 41 student protesters were arrested for occupying the shanties, resulting in jail time for some students and two lawsuits against the university police, which the protesters eventually won. On numerous occasions, university police — and, one time, the College Republicans — dismantled the shanties, but they were immediately rebuilt by the protesters.

On the day of the arrests, shanties were torn down by police and rebuilt by protesters three times over three hours. Also, at one point, a group of eight students occupied the office of President Magrath for 28 hours, demanding, unsuccessfully, that he sign the petition to divest. Public demonstrations and debate over divestment continued until Dec. 18, 1987, when the UM curators voted to fully divest all funds in South Africa. Anti-apartheid activists permanently dismantled the shanties. You can read about these events in the archives of the State Historical Society of Missouri in the papers of MU anti-apartheid activist Carla Weitzel.

The panel for the event Tuesday will comprise four MU alumni who were among the student leaders of the protest. This panel will include Kathryn Benson, now an attorney at Batek and Benson LLC of Columbia; Barbara Brents, now a professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas; Craig Eckert,
now a professor at Eastern Illinois University; and Al DiChiara, now a professor at the University of Hartford. Also on the panel will be MU student Kelsey Wingo of the Mizzou Energy Action Coalition, who will discuss current efforts to move the university endowment away from fossil fuel holdings.

This event is part of series presented by MU Peace Studies and Friends of Peace Studies called the Activist Legacy Project. The ALP elicits personal and historical perspectives from peace and justice advocates with the goal of applying insight to current social activism; it seeks to join the past with the present in preparation for a better future. For more information, please send inquiries to friendsofpeacestudies@gmail.com.

Chris Robinson is co-president of Friends of Peace Studies.

Former Apartheid protesters speak at MU

by Dan Ebner

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=ee446c10-3481-468a-8c8a-baea54548b1a

COLUMBIA, MO -- Four University of Missouri alums, who were pivotal in getting Mizzou to divest in South Africa during Apartheid, spoke Tuesday evening on campus.

At the time, Mizzou had holdings in companies who sold products to South Africa. The four former students speaking at MU were among roughly 100 students who built a Shanty Town on the campus’ Quad as a protest.

KRCG 13 talked to Craig Eckert, one of those protesters, who explained what he and other students did.

“A bunch of graduate students, primarily in the sociality department at Mizzou, were instrumental in getting together, working with other groups and getting the University to divest its holdings in South Africa,” Eckert said.

Eckert discussed how their actions worked to force a change at the University.
“While it was a fairly long process, it eventually won out. It showed a small group of committed people can really make a difference in promoting social change,” Eckert told KRCG 13.

He went on and explained why they did what he did.

“One of the most important things was the building of shanty towns, which was supposed to symbolize the oppressive conditions for most blacks in South Africa. [We wanted] to try to use that as a lynch-pin to get students to think about American companies pension funds being held in American companies that were ultimately exploiting the people of South Africa,” Eckert said.

More than 40 Mizzou students were arrested for building that shanty town on campus. The charges were dropped for all but one of those students.

South Africa abandoned its apartheid policy three years later.

TEAM FINDS CRACKS IN THE ‘ICE BRIDGE’ THEORY

April 28, 2015

New research challenges the “ice bridge” theory of how the first humans settled North America.

The most widely accepted theory is that sometime before 14,000 years ago, humans migrated from Siberia to Alaska by means of a “land bridge” that spanned the Bering Strait.

However, in the 1990s, a small but vocal group of researchers proposed that North America was first settled by Upper Paleolithic people from Europe, who moved from east to west through Greenland via a glacial “ice bridge.”

One piece of evidence that advocates of the ice bridge theory rely on comes from the Chesapeake Bay. In the early 1970s, the crew of a scallop-trawling vessel, Cinmar,
operating off the coast of Virginia when it hit a snag and pulled up an ancient stone blade, along with pieces of a mastodon skeleton.

Since radiocarbon dating isn’t available on inanimate objects, scholars correlated the date of the blade with the mastodon, which they could date at more than 22,000 years old.

“For more than two decades, proponents of the ice bridge theory have pointed to similarities between North American stone blades such as the one allegedly dredged from the Chesapeake and blades left by Solutrean foragers in western Europe,” says Michael J. O’Brien, a professor of anthropology at the University of Missouri.

“We know, however, that Solutrean culture began around 22,000 to 17,000 years ago, which is later than North American dates pointed to by ice bridge theorists as proof that Solutrean people populated North America. That includes the date from the Cinmar mastodon.”

University of Missouri scholars, including O’Brien’s postdoctoral student, Metin Eren, and graduate student Matthew Boulanger, point to the lack of first-hand accounts from the crew of the Cinmar who recovered the blade and mastodon remains. Proponents of the Solutrean hypothesis first wrote all published accounts.

According to a telephone interview of the ship’s captain, he “took particular note of the water depth” and “plotted the area on his navigation charts.”

“While the interview indicates that the Cinmar captain took detailed notes, researchers never indicated that they actually observed the charts,” O’Brien says. “In fact, captains keep ‘hang logs’ in which they record readings when they hit obstructions on the ocean floor. We reviewed countless snag reports from the Bay and the time frame when the snag should’ve occurred and didn’t find anything to corroborate the story.

“One of the most famous snags of all time—when the crew pulled up a mastodon—and it’s just not reported.”

While researching the history of the stone tool, its recovery, and whereabouts for more than 40 years, the team also found inconsistencies with the origins and the ownership of the ship itself.

The research team found that discrepancies in photographs of the Cinmar, the size of the ship, and where it was assembled all point to contradictions in key pieces of the ice bridge theory.
“Until inaccuracies are cleared up, there really is no reason to accept the find as evidence of anything connected with the early peopling of North America,” O’Brien says.

The study appears in the *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports.*

**U.S. Panel 'Clarifies' Mammogram Advice**

**BY MAGGIE FOX AND JUDY SILVERMAN**

A committee that’s been attacked for its controversial mammogram recommendations for half a decade clarified that advice Monday, saying they have been misunderstood.

The panel says women in their 40s can get mammograms every year if they want to, but said it really needs to be up to a woman to decide if she wants to risk the anxiety of getting a false positive result — one showing a breast lump that turns out not to be cancer, after all.

So the recommendations remain the same — women over 50 should get a mammogram every other year. Women 40 to 49 should decide what they want, based on their health history, and it's not clear if women over 75 should bother with mammograms.

"The science shows that some women in their 40s will benefit from mammography, most will not, while others will be harmed," the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) says in its updated mammography recommendations.
"The most common harm is a false-positive test result, which often leads to additional tests and procedures."

"Of the potential harms, the most serious is unneeded diagnosis and treatment for a type of breast cancer that would not have become a threat to a woman's health during her lifetime. The most common harm is a false-positive test result, which often leads to additional tests and procedures. While some women do not mind the anxiety that accompanies a false-positive mammogram, other women consider this a harm."

The group notes that women over 40 who have a mother, sister, or daughter with breast cancer may benefit more than average by getting early screening.

The recommendations are important because the 2010 Affordable Care Act requires health insurers to pay for screening procedures that the group recommends strongly. But mammograms have become an exception, because many doctors and groups like the American Cancer Society tell women to get annual mammograms starting at age 40.

**Dr. Michael LeFevre, immediate past chair of the Task Force and a family medicine expert at the University of Missouri, says the group wants to clarify its advice.**

"After the 2009 breast cancer screening recommendation was published, it immediately became clear that our recommendation for women in their 40s was interpreted by many as a recommendation against mammography for anyone in their 40s," LeFevre said in a statement.

"In fact, we intended it to be a recommendation in favor of empowering women with the knowledge to help them make an informed choice."

But the clarification has not made critics happy. The American College of Radiology, which represents the experts who interpret mammograms, says it's not helping matters.

"Adoption of draft United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) breast cancer screening recommendations would result in thousands of additional and unnecessary breast cancer deaths each year," the group said in a statement.

"Thousands more women would experience more extensive and expensive treatments than if their cancers were found early by a regular mammogram."
In reality, most insurance companies do cover mammograms recommended by a doctor, however.

"It immediately became clear that our recommendation for women in their 40s was interpreted by many as a recommendation against mammography for anyone in their 40s."

Several studies have suggested that routine mammograms don't necessarily save women's lives, even if they detect breast cancer earlier.

And at least one study has showed that many women suffer intense anguish after they get called for a follow-up mammogram when a radiologist has spotted something suspicious.

Breast cancer is a leading killer of U.S. women. Every year, it's diagnosed in 200,000 women and a few men, and kills around 40,000.

The USPSTF also looked at 3-D mammography and said there isn't enough evidence yet to say whether it should be recommended. And it said while it's known that women with dense breasts have a higher risk of breast cancer, it's not clear if doing more frequent mammograms would help them.

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

**Business Loop CID selects Carrie Gartner as executive director**

*Tuesday, April 28, 2015 | 5:40 p.m. CDT*

*BY ALYSSA SALELA, CAROLYN HEGE*

COLUMBIA — Carrie Gartner will start Friday as executive director of the Business Loop Community Improvement District, or the Business Loop CID.

The Columbia City Council approved the creation of the district at its April 20 meeting, and its board offered Gartner the position two days later.

Gartner isn't an outsider to Business Loop 70. For the past few years, she has been working to help get the district approved, she said.

Gartner helped Jack Miller, owner of communications firm True Media, when he began working through the CID approval process two or three years ago.
Her 15 years of working with the Downtown Community Improvement District meant she knew how to help Miller through the CID approval process, she said.

In the initial stages, she helped Miller figure out how to raise funds and get petitions signed for the creation of the district. The petition for the Business Loop CID was filed with the city clerk in December 2014, according to an agenda item from the April 6 City Council meeting.

**For the past year, Gartner has been working as director of communications and public relations for MU Health Care. She said her job involved working with MU Health Care's website and social media.**

**Her annual salary at MU Health Care was $110,000. Her new job will pay $70,000 per year plus benefits like health insurance and retirement.**

Miller said that based on historical sales numbers along the Business Loop, the CID would take in about $250,000 to $300,000 per year for 20 years through a special property tax and a half-cent sales tax, according to previous Missourian reporting. The board still needs approval from Business Loop property owners to begin levying the taxes.

"With this new job, I am going to be doing the work and then communicating about it, so it will be twice as hard," Gartner said. "I am not just sending out press releases; I now have to make the project happen, but that is the rewarding part."

Her first task as executive director will be to ensure all necessary actions are taken to officially establish the CID, according to a district news release. Her next step will be to begin reaching out to business owners, neighborhood associations, local government and the community to better understand how the district needs to improve.

Once the CID is fully established and engaged with the community, Gartner said the district will work to enhance the environment and economic vitality of the area.

"It comes as no surprise to people when I say that the Business Loop isn't walkable, and it isn't attractive," Gartner said. "People are talking about 'How do we do sidewalks and crosswalks? How do we make it safer for pedestrians and bikers? In terms of economic vitality, how do we encourage more businesses to locate there?'"
She said the project will not be completed quickly, though it is currently unclear how long it will take.

"There are a lot of significant infrastructure changes that need to be made," Gartner said.

Gartner will work with the CID’s board of directors, who will oversee the district. The seven-member board was appointed by the council April 20.

"Right now, the primary goal we have is to work on the sales tax increase scheduled hopefully for August," Tom May, the board’s chair, said.

Gartner said she is excited to get to work.
"There is nothing more exciting than a group of people coming together to make their part of the city better," she said. "I have the skills to help them with that."

Columbia housing market bucks national trend, local realtors say

Posted: Apr 28, 2015 3:17 PM by Amanda LaBrot, KOMU 8 Reporter

Updated: Apr 28, 2015 7:55 PM

Watch the story: [http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=f9a43013-a177-4bdc-b7a4-7d16bcbf44c2](http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=f9a43013-a177-4bdc-b7a4-7d16bcbf44c2)

COLUMBIA - New Gallup polls say Americans are less optimistic about the housing market and are less likely to buy a house in "the foreseeable future," but local realtors say that's not the case in Columbia.
The first poll said Americans are less optimistic about the market than they were in both 2013 and 2014, with 69 percent saying it's a good time to buy a house.

Jim Meyer, a member of the Columbia Board of Realtors, said that doesn't seem to be the case in Columbia.

"I would say that's kind of surprising," Meyer said. "That's not been our experience in Columbia. We are returning to a normal market for us."

Meyer had statistics for total number of single family homes sold and median home price over the last year. Number of homes sold increased 4 percent from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, and median home price increased 2 percent.

Aaron Hedlund, an MU economics professor, specializes in real estate, and said he was surprised by the national data. He said the recent national housing bubble created a "fundamental psychological shift" and said fewer people see a home as a good investment to make money in the future.

Meyer said he can understand the concerns, but said they don't apply to Columbia.

"Real estate market after the national bubble we've had in recent years, it takes a while for confidence to build back up, for people to take that plunge and make the investment that's typically the largest investment of their lives in their real estate," Meyer said. "But I think that's coming back. That's our experience."

Claire James, a Columbia RE/MAX Realtor, agreed.

"It's working out for our community and for everybody to start buying, and for homeowners to get a great value for their home when they sell as well because that inventory is just going so quickly," James said.

Both said spring is their busiest season, and this year is no different.

"We have a market where our inventory, as fast as it's coming, it's going as well," James said.

Meyer said, "This is the fast time of year, so we're very busy. 14 or 16 hour days are not uncommon this time of year helping multiple buyers and sellers in the same day."

 MU Libraries look to gather student support and feedback for fee
The fee will be voted on by students during the MSA presidential election in the fall.

By Waverly Colville
April 28, 2015

**MU Libraries are short on funding; that's no surprise.**

Since 2001, the library’s staff has fallen from 208 to 136 people, while the student population rose from 24,000 to 35,000.

It’s noticeable. Technology is outdated. Maintenance is deferred. Study space is uninspiring. The library can’t promote many of its programs because there’s not enough staff to fund them if the whole student body knew, Director of Advancement for MU Libraries Matt Gaunt said.

“It’s a shame,” Gaunt said. “Because we have some really great proven programs that we know have a great impact on students’ ability to do quality research and have success in the classroom.”

MU Libraries spends a considerably lower amount of money per student compared to other public university libraries. University of Florida spends $1,158 per student; University of Kansas spends $976. Currently, MU spends $607 per student.

“We are competing with schools who don’t have law or medical libraries, whereas we have both,” Missouri Students Association Budget chairman Bill Vega said. “In one word, we are doing poorly.”

**The libraries were left with no viable option but to ask the students to consider a self-imposed fee. A referendum will be voted on next November. MSA finalized the official wording of Act 54-40 during full senate April 22, which establishes the wording on the proposed library services fee referendum.**

To get the students’ opinions involved, Ellis Library and MSA hosted “A Night at Club Ellis,” an event that turned Ellis Auditorium into a club as a way to inform students about the proposed library fee April 23.
Guests entered the auditorium as a DJ played remixes of popular songs and colorful, flashing lights lit up the room to create a club-like atmosphere. Guests entered on a red carpet while members of MSA were dressed up like club workers, complete with glow sticks.

Gaunt gave an upbeat presentation about the potential library fee that will be voted on in the fall along with the MSA presidential elections.

“The greatest invention of mankind is the written word,” Gaunt said during his presentation. “Any other invention you could think of is because of the written word.”

Among the plans for the libraries are a 24-hour study space, updated study space with power outlets and more study rooms with technology for group studying.

“If you tell us you want it, we are going to look at the feasibility to get it,” Gaunt said.

Gaunt ended with urging students to take the core of their education seriously and to vote for the library so it doesn’t have to make cuts from its already small budget.

Vega hopes this event informed students and encouraged them to offer suggestions of what they want.

“This event is to draw awareness to the fee and receive direct student input from just everyday students who may not necessarily have the same access to the library fee information,” Vega said.

Director of Libraries James Cogswell, library administration and Gaunt worked with MSA, the Graduate Professional Council and the Student Fee Review Committee to determine the amount of the fee.

If approved, the fee will start at $5 per credit hour. It will grow by $2 each year for six years until it reaches a peak at $15 per credit hour.

At $5 per credit hour, the library fee would be the fifth highest activity fee, Vega said. At $15 per credit hour, it will be in the top two activity fees.

However, when compared to academic fees, at $15 per credit hour the library fee would be half of the cheapest academic supplement fee, which is College of Arts and Science
at $30 per credit hour. The library is currently the only academic unit that doesn't have a fee. The MU Student Center and the MU Student Recreation Center both have fees.

“The library is a much bigger piece of the university and has a wider breadth of ability and need for financing, so I would consider it more in the range of academic supplements,” Vega said.

If the fee had been applied to fall 2015 tuition and fees, it would add 1.6 percent. That increase, along with the .8 percent CPI increase, would amount to a 2.4 percent total increase in tuition and fees. That is less than half of the 5-year average increase in tuition and fees among all the major institutions in surrounding states, Gaunt said.

“It's a necessary investment in your degree,” he said. “You're already investing so much money in your degree, why would you not make an additional investment in one of the most important elements of the university? The library lags further behind. If we don't create a fee for the library, how will we fund the library?”

To accommodate noise from construction, the library will look to other universities with the same issue and spread out the work.

“We’ll work with architects and construction companies to figure out how we minimize the disturbance,” Gaunt said. “We will look at other libraries on how to keep quiet study space for our students and figure out a schedule for phasing the construction and providing the sound buffering that will be necessary.”

MSA Academic Affairs chairwoman Tori Schafer said she hopes that students make an informed decision about where their money goes.

“In the recent years, our library has been lacking in comparison to others, and if we want to keep Mizzou on top, this is a step that the students need to take,” Schafer said. “The students need to decide if this is something we want to invest in.”

Should the fee not pass, the university as a whole will decline, Gaunt said. It will become more difficult to attract quality faculty because they won’t have resources in their area of discipline. The library hours may be shortened, collections will suffer and spaces won’t be as functional.
“You’ll see a decline in the quality of study space, quality of materials and access to those materials, and it will get harder to hire librarians because we won’t be able to compete with other major libraries,” Gaunt said. “Across the board, the reputation of the university will take a hit.”

Even if the fee is not passed, Gaunt said the connections with the students was a valuable relation for the library to make.

“The close connection to our users and understanding what they need is a step in the right direction,” Gaunt said. “Without the fee, we’re handcuffed in being able to implement some of the great ideas students have. The staff is very grateful for the students who have given us time so far. We’re inspired by the quality of students we have. Thank you to the students that we’ve worked with so far because if it happens, it will be because of the students.”

Rolla = Cambridge in new college rankings that try to show how schools add value

By DALE SINGER

NO MENTION IN STORY

No one has ever mistaken Rolla, Mo., for Cambridge, Mass. But new college rankings places the schools in both towns on just about the same level.

The report from a unit of the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. is an attempt to determine how well colleges prepare students for high-paying careers.

It’s designed to go beyond the rankings published in places like U.S. News and Forbes by using a so-called “value added” approach that determines not just how well graduates will do in their careers but how much their college experience contributed to that success.
If the rankings are any indication, students who graduate from Missouri University of Science and Technology, the Rolla campus of the University of Missouri system, are getting added value on a par with students at Harvard or MIT.

The rankings consist of three key numbers, on a 1-100 scale, measuring three components of the career of a typical graduate: mid-career earnings, occupational earnings power and loan repayment rate.

Based on these categories, MIT was at the top of the pack, with scores of 100, 99 and 99. But Missouri S&T was practically on the same level, with scores of 98, 100 and 96. Harvard came in at 97, 84 and 88.

Other schools at the top of the list included Caltech; Colgate University in New York; Carleton College in Minnesota; and Rose-Hulman Institute in Indiana.

Among schools in the St. Louis area, Washington University had the highest scores, with 83, 83 and 72. Fontbonne University trailed the others with scores of 3, 29 and 16.

The authors of the report, titled “Beyond College Rankings: A Value-Added Approach to Assessing Two and FourYear Schools,” stressed that it is designed to provide information that other ratings do not take into account. Ideally, they said, prospective college students will be able to use the new information to help them decide where they might want to enroll.

“College is a major investment for individuals and the taxpayers who subsidize it,” Brookings Fellow Jonathan Rothwell said in a statement. “So, the public has a huge stake in promoting quality. No ratings system can capture everything about a college that matters, but these data can shed some light on how colleges compare in their contributions to student success and, hopefully, spark further research with even better data.”

He added, “These college-specific data can be used to learn about, evaluate, and improve college performance. Colleges serve very diverse populations. The advantage of measuring value-added is that it adjusts a school’s rankings based on the type of college and the characteristics of its student body.”

**Five factors**

In Rolla, the news of the good showing by Missouri S&T was welcome.

“The term value added really isn’t one that we use," said spokesman Andrew Careaga. "But it seems to resonate well. The idea that Missouri S&T education pays off — pays great dividends in the future — is one that resonates well with prospective students and their families.”

Careaga noted that campuses that stress so-called STEM disciplines — science, technology, engineering and math — seemed to do well in the Brookings rankings. But he said that S&T also has good programs in business and the humanities. Still, he added, the school’s history, back to its beginning as the Rolla School of Mines and Metalurgy, has focused on engineering.
"Our focus has been as a technological research university for years," Careaga said. "But the name Missouri S&T, with that emphasis on science and technology, was really designed to help us with our recruitment and to help prospective students identify and know the type of college that we are."

He said the school will be able to use the new rankings as part of its recruitment strategy, which also emphasizes opportunities like an average starting salary for graduates of $61,000 a year.

"Rankings provide a great third-party perspective on universities and the value that they bring," he said.

The Brookings report accompanying the data pointed to five factors that Brookings said “are strongly associated with more successful economic outcomes for alumni in terms of salary, occupational earnings power and loan repayment:

- **Curriculum value:** The amount earned by people in the workforce who hold degrees in a field of study offered by the college, averaged across all the degrees the college awards

- **Alumni skills:** The average labor market value, as determined by job openings, of skills listed on alumni resumes

- **STEM orientation:** The share of graduates prepared to work in STEM occupations

- **Completion rates:** The percentage of students finishing their award within at least twice the normal time (four years for a two-year college, eight years for a four-year college)

- **Student aid:** The average level of financial support given to students by the institution itself.

Brookings explained that a low score in the rankings does not necessarily mean that a student will do poorly after graduation. The scores are designed only to indicate how much a school contributed to a student’s performance beyond what the student would have been expected to do otherwise.

It said that such a system can help students and their parents determine whether the cost of attending any particular college is a good investment, by showing whether the money spent will result in improved performance expected after graduation.

That kind of data, Brookings said, can be more helpful than typical rankings of schools that don’t look at value-added expectations. Those other rankings, based only on the performance of graduates and not compared with how they would have done no matter what college they attended, fail to taken into account the actual school experience.

And, Brookings added, many colleges rank highly elsewhere mostly because they admit only students who are expected to do well in any situation, so the contribution that the school makes could play a minimal role in that success.

“Highly selective research universities admit only the most highly prepared students as measured by high school grades and admission test scores, while many two-year colleges have open admissions
policies, accepting students who struggled to finish high school and have very low test scores.” a fact sheet released by the institution stated.

“Because the most prepared students tend to earn higher salaries than the least prepared students, evaluations of college quality should consider student characteristics and adjust predicted outcomes and final ratings accordingly.”

The three measures that the study included – salary, earning power and loan repayment – were included for three main reasons, Brookings said:

They are important to individual and collective well-being
They can be measured with precision
They are available for a large number of colleges

“Of course,” Brookings added, “there are other economic outcomes that individuals and elected officials care about, such as the prospects for becoming a great leader, or accomplished artist, scientist, or entrepreneur. All of these are extremely difficult to measure, and it would be easy to mistakenly attribute rare individual accomplishments (like Academy Awards or Nobel prizes) to the institutions they happened to attend.”

And, the institution said, other measures beyond those it used are valid ways of gauging a college, but they are more difficult to quantify.

“Educators may be more interested in how well the students acquire knowledge,” it said. “Presently, however, there are no reliable post-alumni exams administered at a scale wide enough to assess individual colleges, and it would be very difficult to determine what alumni should be tested in or expected to know....

“Others may prefer to know how alumni contribute to social justice or their likelihood of living good lives. In principle, the method used here could be applied to such outcomes, if they could be measured, but a great many practical limitations make that unlikely.”

How can the new rankings be used, besides by future college students and their families? Brookings has two suggestions:

“College administrators and trustees could use these data to evaluate their institution’s broad strengths and weaknesses so as to target further investigation and inquiry in to how to best serve their students. In some cases, poor results may be due entirely to an institutional legacy or mission that is largely incommensurate with the graduation of many high-earning alumni. Other schools may find there is more they can do without sacrificing their core mission.

“Public officials could use these data to broadly observe which schools are failing to deliver and which are outperforming their peers. It would be a mistake to allocate public resources (or even private donations) based entirely on econometric results such as these, but these data can provide initial
guidance into which schools bear further scrutiny and may lead to targeted support of and new investments in failing schools so they can better serve the public. Likewise, high-performing colleges may offer important lessons as to what institutional-specific programs and initiatives can be replicated elsewhere.”

The data used to measure the value added by the schools came from government sources as well as private sources, including the websites Payscale and LinkedIn.