6 University of Missouri students confirmed with mumps

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Lab results have confirmed that six University of Missouri students came down with the mumps, while a seventh suspected case came back negative.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports the Columbia/Boone County Department of health and Human Services expects lab results for four more suspected cases by the end of the week.

Test results confirmed five mumps cases last week. Health department spokeswoman Andrea Waner says those five and the newest confirmed case all are university students who have had two doses of the mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

The seventh case that tested negative also is a University of Missouri student.

Waner says most people recover fully within a few weeks and serious complications from mumps are rare.

Sixth Boone County mumps case confirmed, more cases pending

By Megan Favignano

Monday, July 27, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Lab results have confirmed a sixth Boone County mumps case, and tests on a possible seventh case came back negative, health officials said Monday.

The Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services expects lab results for four more suspected cases by the end of the week.
Test results confirmed five mumps cases last week. Including the newest confirmed case, health department spokeswoman Andrea Waner said all six confirmed cases are University of Missouri students.

The seventh case tested is also an MU student and was labeled a probable case, meaning the individual exhibited mumps-like symptoms and has a link to the confirmed cases, but lab results were negative.

The department, Waner said, views sending four more cases for testing as an indication that local health care providers are watching for symptoms. Doctors submit samples to the health department when they suspect a patient has mumps.

“It means our health care professionals are looking closely,” Waner said.

The mumps, measles and rubella (MMR) vaccine prevents most — but not all — mumps cases, according to the Centers for Disease Control website. However, if a vaccinated person contracts mumps, he or she will have a less severe case than an unvaccinated person.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said in a statement last week that MU is assisting the health department in notifying anyone who might have come in contact with individuals showing mumps symptoms. Symptoms include swollen, painful salivary glands, fever, headache, weakness and fatigue, loss of appetite and pain while chewing or swallowing.

After hearing of the mumps outbreak at MU, Columbia College and Stephens College also alerted students, faculty and staff, sending along information from the health department.

Those most at risk for contracting mumps are individuals who have not received any dose of the MMR vaccine and those who have received only one dose, according to the health department’s website.

The CDC recommends children receive the MMR vaccine twice. Two doses are 66-95 percent effective at preventing mumps and one dose is 49–92 percent effective, according to the CDC.

The seven MU students tested last week had received two doses of the vaccine, Waner said.

MU requires all students to receive the two-dose vaccine. However, students can apply for an exemption for several reasons, including being immune to mumps or for religious reasons, according to student health policies.

When a case is confirmed, health professionals treat the symptoms because there is no specific treatment for mumps.

Most people recover fully within a few weeks. Waner said serious complications from mumps are rare.
LETTER TO THE EDITOR: MU must maintain accredited status for library science program

MU must maintain accredited status for its graduate program in Library Science. This extremely worthy program provokes thought, molds future leaders of today’s libraries and archives, and stands as the only accredited graduate program in the state of Missouri in this field. Here at the Missouri Humanities Council, we are proud of all of our flagship university’s areas of study, but this one in particular is extremely vital to Columbia, our state and the humanities at large.

Graduates from this program continue to find meaningful work across our state. MU’s graduates work tirelessly to document, research and disseminate information for private universities, such as Rockhurst in Kansas City, for local libraries, like Washington Public Library in Washington, Missouri, and even for corporations, such as a recently hired research analyst and librarian for a multinational aerospace defense firm in St. Louis, BAE Systems. Beyond any doubt, MU’s graduate Library Science program is keeping pace with the frequent and pervasive changes in our society, and thus they warrant accreditation.

MHC ardently advocates on behalf of a strong humanities-centric education environment. This program is a pillar of that environment in Missouri. It must remain accredited.

William “Steve” Belko is the executive director of the Missouri Humanities Council.

Organizations raise awareness of ADA on 25th anniversary

By Bruno Vernaschi

Monday, July 27, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Even for people with disabilities, the Americans with Disabilities Act can be easy to overlook.
While Americans spend hours learning about the civil rights movement, the push for disability rights has a lower profile.

“Learning about disability history and the ADA completely changed my life and the way I viewed my disability,” said University of Missouri Disability Inclusion and Compliance Manager Amber Cheek. Cheek said that despite having had her right foot amputated in infancy, she didn’t know a lot about the history of disability rights until she went to college.

But major obstacles remain for disabled people, Cheek said, such as finding work.

Cheek was a speaker Sunday at Orr Street Studios, where Services for Independent Living celebrated the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Services for Independent Living partnered with 17 other organizations, including Columbia Public Schools, the University of Missouri Disability Center and the Great Plains ADA Center, to “just celebrate where we’ve come and also to get ideas of where we still need to go to continue to keep the ADA going,” event Chairwoman Heather Stewart said.


“This is really about the awareness,” Stewart said. “We’re letting people know that we’re there and letting them know of all the different agencies that help individuals with disabilities. Even though we serve the same population, we do different aspects of it, so we do all work as a team for those individuals to be able to be independent, to do the things that they want to do, to have the inclusivity that is what the ADA is about.”

President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law on July 26, 1990. The law mandates public accommodations for people with disabilities and prohibits discrimination against them.

“One of the great challenges that we’ve always faced as a country is finding ways to include and get the most out of all of our citizens,” Webber said. “And I think the ADA has been a giant step forward in the last 25 years on that. The access, the opportunity, the equality that it mandates and provides for is not a set, solitary thing — it’s something that we continue to progress and work toward. And the fact that there are so many groups here today that are committed to strive for that access, continue to strive for that opportunity, is a tremendous sign.”
Everyone’s first love works out perfectly, right?

Of course it doesn’t.

The same may be said of the decision that students make in selecting a college. More than a third of the 3.6 million students who entered college in the fall of 2008 transferred to other colleges or universities over the six years that followed, according to a National Student Clearinghouse Research Center report.

I was a transfer myself. After attending Belmont University in Tennessee, I had a change of heart about my career and found that Belmont wasn’t the school for me. I transferred to Saint Louis University where I have found happiness over the past two and a half years.

This process was not easy. I believe that I speak for millions of other transfer students when I say that it was a whole lot more difficult than it ought to be.

Students transferring between universities face a wide range of issues and frustrations. For example, I remember taking the exact same Intro to Economics course during back-to-back semesters. Only two classes from my first semester actually fulfilled specific graduation requirements at SLU.

I was fortunate enough to overcome those setbacks. Many students aren’t so lucky. Students transferring from community colleges, for instance, often face far larger hurdles.

Last year the City University of New York released a study revealing that more than 10 percent of community college students lost nearly all of their course credits during the transfer process. Forcing them to start over drastically reduced success rates and ratcheted up the cost of their education.

According to David Monaghan, a sociology Ph.D. candidate and coauthor of the study, the problem does not lie in what community colleges are doing to prepare students but rather in the transfer process itself.
“If there’s a need for policy change that’s indicated by the study, it’s not somehow penalizing community colleges or looking at them as doing something particularly wrong academically,” Monaghan says. “It’s looking at this choke point of transfer and seeing what can be done to make that more doable.”

So how do we cut the costs created when students transfer between universities?

One solution could be a shift from awarding credit based on the amount of time a student spends in a class to awarding credit for students demonstrating what they actually know. This is known as Competency Based Education (CBE). While the traditional college consists of 15-week courses, students under a CBE program are able to receive credit in whatever amount of time it takes them to learn the materials. CBE programs are popping up in Big Ten schools such as the University of Michigan and Purdue. Last year the Missouri Community College Association, in conjunction with the Missouri Department of Higher Education, became part of a CBE initiative along with 13 other institutions across the nation.

Universities are hesitant to accept credits that could put struggling students in high-level courses. Repetition is a necessity if a student hasn’t learned the proper material, but CBE could help maintain quality control by proving whether or not they are prepared.

By allowing students to demonstrate what they know, CBE can drastically diminish the number of students trapped in needlessly duplicative courses and can award credit fairly for courses taken outside of an institution.

Transfer students aren’t going away, and CBE programs could be the next step. While they will require a fundamental change in our view of education, take it from a transfer student who has been through the hassle of repeating coursework when I say the improvement in efficiency and affordability will be worth it.
Some immigrant students face doubt over Missouri college aid

NO MIZZOU MENTION

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — With the fall semester set to begin in weeks for many Missouri colleges and universities, students whose parents brought them illegally to the U.S. still face uncertainty regarding financial aid for the upcoming school year.

At issue are two pieces of legislation passed by the state's Republican-led Legislature this session: one blocking the A+ Scholarship from going to those immigrants and another that also sought to require schools to charge those students their international rate of tuition.

State officials, lawmakers and others disagree on whether the changes are in effect for the upcoming school year. That uncertainty, state officials and a group aimed at helping students pay for college say, could mean surprises and higher-than-expected tuition bills for some immigrants.

Missouri's Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon earlier this month vetoed the bill that would require students be permanent residents or legal citizens to receive the state's A+ Scholarship, which provides two years of free tuition at community colleges for students who complete community service and attain a certain grade-point average, among other requirements. A memo from Department of Higher Education Commissioner David Russell sent this past week confirmed that means the scholarships still are available to those immigrant students.

But in practice, the status of the scholarship is not certain.

Lawmakers might try to override Nixon's veto with a two-thirds majority vote during an upcoming Sept. 16 session.

An override could mean some immigrant students, likely already enrolled by the time of a possible September veto, pay more than they planned for in tuition, said Karissa Anderson, the manager of advocacy and policy research at the Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis.
That's because colleges are reimbursed the students' tuition by the state, Department of Higher Education Deputy Commissioner Leroy Wade said, and schools have until early January to request reimbursement.

Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick — a Shell Knob Republican who handled the bill in the House, said it's unclear whether any students would have had enough time to qualify for the scholarship anyway since a Department of Higher Education rule change clarifying certain immigrant students' eligibility for the program went into effect in March.

Further complicating matters is disputed language in a budget bill passed this year that also was aimed at blocking state-funded scholarships from going to students with an unlawful immigration status and requiring that public colleges and universities charge those students their international tuition rate.

Russell's memo notes that the policy, included in what's called the title of a bill outlining the budget for the department but not in the core of the legislation, is not legally binding in terms of offering the A+ Scholarship. The memo did not offer guidance on the applicability of the tuition rate requirement, leaving that up to colleges.

"The language is pretty explicit," said Fitzpatrick, who is vice chair of a House budget committee. "If the department chooses to ignore it, then I'm sure we'll take that into consideration when we write the budget next year."

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports that certain immigrant students attending the University of Missouri-St. Louis, for example, no longer qualify for the resident and metropolitan rate of tuition. For students this fall, that would mean paying about $10,200 for 12 credit hours instead of about $4,000.

Chancellor Thomas George has said the university will use private funds from the school's endowment for the next two years to make up the difference in tuition for current students, the newspaper reports.

Anderson said the Scholarship Foundation now is also advising immigrant students without lawful status that out-of-state public colleges, such as universities in Illinois, or private colleges might be a cheaper option.