Loftin’s View from the Top

CBT: What would you say has been the most significant change you’ve made since becoming chancellor?

Loftin: I think it’s the leadership team that has assembled here over the past year or so. Typically, universities don’t change very rapidly, but I came here at a time when almost all of the senior leadership had elected to retire or go someplace else, so it was a rather unusual circumstance. It was actually one of the factors of why I came because I really had the opportunity to make things happen quickly. At the end of August, there’ll be exactly three people left of the 12 who were here when I got here.

I don’t want to criticize the past at all. The issue is that a lot of these people had been here a very long time, and in my mind it’s very difficult for you to be fresh about how you view an institution when you’ve been part of it in a leadership role for 20, 25 or 30 years. This is my third institution to lead in 11 years now, and this is the best team I’ve ever had.

CBT: What are some of the most important new ideas this team has brought forward?

Loftin: There are a couple of things we did last year that were very impactful. One is that we decided to make a real effort to renew our faculty. We have three kinds of faculty: core faculty, which are the tenure earning faculty; full-time non-tenure track faculty; and some who teach some part time. We normally have about 1,200 faculty who are tenured or are earning tenure right now. Usually among those who are tenured, about 11 or 12 retire each year. Recently, we put together a voluntary separation program. We said, “We want to offer you an opportunity to leave now and not three, four, five years from now.” This year 111 are retiring, and that’s about 10 percent of our tenure earning faculty. We can make some big, big advancements quickly by having new faculty join us who bring the latest ideas and experiences from around the world to us.

CBT: How many times a day do you check Twitter?

Loftin: Normally, it’s several dozen times a day for a very short period of time. and then I spend usually about 45 minutes a night looking over the day’s timeline. To understand how I use Twitter, it’s two purposes for me. One is that it’s a direct connector to the students. during my momentary checks, I always check notifications, and if someone directs a tweet at me with a question or comment, then I will try to reply to that while I’m walking between meetings or in the elevator. I forward many to my staff when there’s an issue I can’t resolve personally, which
is very common. It’s a matter of my trying to be responsive to a student, and I may get 50 of those a day.

But I also follow hundreds of students here, and I try to pick them from every class and every major. at night before I go to sleep, I’ll sit there and look at the timeline. It gives me a pulse of the university and a sense of where people are happy and sad. That’s what I act on in terms of leadership. I can actually get a sense of the campus feel on a given day. Not many leaders have that. You don’t get that opportunity typically to ask that question and get really unvarnished answers. It’s pretty raw.

That’s what I saw during Ferguson. What really struck me was the grand jury results. I was on Twitter when the decision was released. I could feel the anguish that hundreds of our students were feeling. It was palpable. and that’s when I did that first forum.

CBT: Since the incident in Ferguson last year, you’ve held three public forums. What has come from those forums?

Loftin: The decision came out during Thanksgiving weekend, so when the students got back, we had our first forum. What surprised me was that Ferguson was not the issue. It started off about Ferguson, but it really got out dozens of voices of anxiety and anguish about their own treatment here on campus. That really was quite startling to me. It was pretty impactful.

So we started a process of listening and trying to work through a series of actions that we think will help over time to make these things better. The challenge is that the expectations of a 19-year-old and the reality of making something happen are not quite the same. I think it continues to be a sore spot for many students; they don’t see actions that are immediate. But you don’t change hearts that way. This will take a sustained effort over generations of students here.

We made a website for it, transparency.missouri.edu, to direct students to see what’s happening right now. The deputy chancellor has announced his retirement, and one of his duties was to oversee the Office of Diversity. I’m taking advantage of that to rethink how we structure ourselves in terms of inclusion, equity and diversity. We’re asking our faculty to look at themselves and see if they might subconsciously do things that might be hurtful.

We are also stepping up some of the education and training efforts for the current incoming freshmen. during Summer Welcome, we have a cadre of students and parents coming through every day, and we’re using that as opportunity to help those students look differently at their responsibility to make this an inclusive campus.

CBT: You have a Ph.D. in physics. How do you see your background in science benefitting your role now?

Loftin: I don’t do much physics anymore in a direct way, but physics is very analytical, and I approach my decision-making that way. That discipline I learned long ago gives me a mechanism to really evaluate lots of data and make better informed decisions.
Secondly, I was a very active researcher for a long time. I was very successful in terms of achieving grants and publications, so I know what it takes. That’s something Mizzou has had a declining track record in for a while. One of the reasons I was asked to consider this job was the fact that I did bring a fairly active research history with me and also had worked at another AAU school. It’s important for Mizzou to have a renewal of its emphasis on discovery and creativity.

CBT: What are your goals for the expansion of the MU Life Sciences Incubator?

Loftin: The incubator is maxed out right now in the wet labs, but we also added a new piece to the incubator to focus on digital ventures as a way to support some of the software that’s going on here in terms of commercialization. Bill [Turpin] is doing his best to expand the reach of the incubator beyond the traditional life sciences to some of the software environments that can be highly successful very quickly with low overhead capital investments, compared to a big life science project involving the reactor or something like that. and Hank [Foley] is trying to raise the money to really expand the incubator and add a whole other wing to support more traditional life science programming.

CBT: There has been a lot more attention paid to entrepreneurship in general across the country and also here at Mizzou. Why the change?

Loftin: We have a lot of extraordinarily talented people here who want to be entrepreneurs. We have more than one college and school now with an entrepreneurship program. We have many different parts of the university embracing this and trying to equip their students to be entrepreneurially successful while they’re still in school. You have so much creative energy when you’re 18, 19, 20 years old. Why wait until you’re 30?

The second thing is that [students and faculty] look around and see this as an opportunity to do something that’s very American. Small businesses are what we do here in this country. Large companies get all of the headlines, but they don’t employ the most people. The future of your financial success can be predicated on your ability to have an idea and to form a small business and take it forward. If we equip you to do that, not just with your technical skills but with your business skills as well, and partner you with people who may complement you, think about the opportunity. Where else will you find the natural juxtaposition of an engineer, a life scientist and a business student? Their coming together to form a business may be the perfect combination of skillsets. That just happens at a university. I believe this is our future.

Another component of that is we are a state university. Traditionally, we had two major sources of funding: the State of Missouri and student tuition. about 20 years ago, the university got fairly busy trying to raise private money through gifts. Meanwhile, every state began to slash higher education budgets, and tuition shot up. No matter how much the state might want to help us, it will never restore its original support for this university. But even private funding isn’t going to be the answer long term for us.

This university also collects between $7 million and $9 million per year in licensing fees. We are usually among the top 20 or 25 in the country among all public and privates in our licensing revenue. A license is $7,500 per year for a seed that we developed here. It takes lots of $7,500-
per-year licenses to get to $7 million. That’s a very limiting factor. Where we really want to go is not protecting the intellectual property but taking this IP to externals who have capital and saying, “Let’s form a joint venture.” The investor will retain a chunk of equity, as will the university and the inventor. If that particular business is successful, it’s going to become public and could be sold. That transaction alone could be tens or hundreds of millions of dollars.

We formed a company years ago in our vet school. It’s not a product company; it’s a service company doing laboratory testing. That was sold about three years ago, and the transaction meant $40 million for the university alone. That one transaction overwhelmed three or four years of license revenue. That’s our future.

We’ve also liberalized our IP policies under [Foley’s] leadership. Now we’re trying to sell this idea as a new way of doing business with Mizzou.

CBT: Obviously, the research that’s happening here has a much wider effect on the world. What are some big success stories that Columbians should know that they might not know already?

Loftin: Our reactor here produces the majority of the world’s radioisotopes for cancer treatment. We’re still thinking about putting some type of treatment facility right next to the reactor so we could begin experimenting with the sorts of isotopes that only a reactor can create. We need to find the researchers who want to actually experiment medically with these things. We need to relocate patients very close to the reactor so you spend no more than a few minutes moving the radioisotopes from the reactor to the treatment area itself. We’re looking at ways to make that happen.

We need to find some investments from NIH, for example, or from DOE. We don’t have the funding internally to be able to put together a hospital-like facility. So we’re looking for a partner, quite frankly.

CBT: One of your goals is to create a 25-year vision for the university. What does that vision look like?

Loftin: We’re almost done with it right now. We went through the process late last year and early this year of establishing a steering committee that represents each of the stakeholder groups of our institution. We’re going to craft a very succinct vision from the feedback we’ve received from our stakeholders. It’s simply a vision looking forward asking, “What will Mizzou look like when it turns 200?”

Once we get this in place, it becomes one of those things you’re going to head toward, and your plans become deliberate steps from here to there. Our planning cycle is just a few years in length. If you don’t look ahead further, your plans won’t necessarily take you where you want to go because you don’t know where you’re going.

CBT: Tell us about your first bowtie.
Loftin: I used to dress with slacks and a buttoned shirt, no tie. That was kind of the culture of my department in physics. One day, there was a written memo in everybody’s mailbox, and it said the president directed the male faculty henceforth to wear a tie. I was furious about it. I thought: “I’m going to show him. I’m going to wear a bowtie.” I didn’t even own one. I happened to have a colleague in chemistry named Jean whose husband wore bowties. So I said, “Jean, can I borrow a bowtie from Carl?” The next morning she gave me my first bowtie. It was the ugliest bowtie I’ve ever had, and I still wear it.

I have more than 400 bowties right now, and many of them are gifts. I have about 40 or 50 gold-and-black bowties, and there are about 30 or 40 I like to wear occasionally. But the ones I wear the most tend to be gifts from people who are memorable to me, and when I wear the bowtie, I remember them.

Business school dean leaving MU for South Carolina

By Megan Favignano

Tuesday, July 28, 2015 at 1:17 pm

Joan Gabel, dean of the University of Missouri’s Trulaske College of Business, has accepted a position with the University of South Carolina starting on Aug. 24.

After five years with MU, Gabel will serve as executive vice president for academic affairs and provost for the University of South Carolina.

“Since joining the … College of Business and the University of Missouri five years ago, I have been blessed to collaborate with such a dynamic team of dedicated and passionate educators, scholars and professionals,” Gabel said in a statement. “They work tirelessly every day to serve our amazing students and expand the knowledge base.”

Gabel said she was proud of everything she accomplished during her tenure at the business school and thanked all involved in the school’s success.

"My family and I have so enjoyed our time in Columbia, and I look forward to seeing what’s next for this great institution," she said.
Gabel helped secure public and private support for MU’s Applied Learning Center project, which will be part of MU’s College of Business. The project received a $10 million allocation from the state’s Higher Education Capital Fund, which matches funds for university building projects. MU had to raise private funds for the 50/50 match, and Gov. Jay Nixon allocated the $10 million in state matching funds in May.

Gabel led rebranding efforts for the business school with the “We’ll Show You” campaign, which was launched in celebration of the College of Business' centennial. The Trulaske College of Business also updated its BS, BA and MBA curricula during her tenure.

Mumps Outbreak at Mizzou and U of I

6 University of Missouri Students Confirmed with Mumps
Health officials monitoring undisclosed number of people after Mizzou mumps outbreak

By Koran Addo
July 29, 2015

The Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services is monitoring an undisclosed number of people following the current mumps outbreak where six University of Missouri-Columbia have tested positive for the disease.

In addition to the six confirmed cases, health officials have identified another probable case and four other potential mumps cases.

Health officials launched an investigation July 20 after they were alerted to a potential cluster of people possibly sick with mumps.

Spokeswoman Andrea Waner said the department is monitoring people who have come in close and direct contact with the six confirmed cases.

Waner did not say how many people were being monitored.

“Right now, it's really about awareness and communication,” she said, adding that most mumps cases don't lead to serious complications.

Meanwhile, Mizzou has sent out a number of alerts to parents, students, prospective students and anyone who has been on campus since late June.

All current and prospective students are urged to keep updated on their university-required immunizations.

Mumps is a viral illness that can cause fever, body aches, headaches, fatigue, swelling of the salivary glands or pain with chewing and swallowing. Among men, mumps can lead to swelling of the testicles. Among women, mumps can lead to swelling of the ovaries, which may cause abdominal pain or swelling of the breasts.

The illness typically spreads when an uninfected person inhales respiratory droplets when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes.

About a third of the people who contract the mumps virus do not develop any symptoms.

Visit www.cdc.gov/mumps for more information.
Missouri's cruel treatment of undocumented students

By Karissa Anderson
July 29, 2015

The state of Missouri has created a cruel and confusing situation for some recent Missouri high school graduates who are undocumented and have been approved under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Complicit in the creation of this situation is the Missouri House of Representatives, the Missouri Senate, the governor, the Department of Higher Education, and many of us who claim to value educational opportunity as a path to participation in American democracy but have forgotten our families are not indigenous to this soil either.

Last winter, I attended the State of the State address where I heard Gov. Jay Nixon praise the value of cows and cars in the Missouri economy. I’ve testified before legislative panels and committees more than once. In discussing priorities for educational opportunity, I’ve heard Missouri legislators talk about veterans, homeschoolers and early childhood education. Yet I’ve seen them cringe when I mention undocumented students.

This year, the Missouri Legislature passed numerous punitive bills. In each case, language was carefully crafted to eliminate educational options for students who have been approved under Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. Two of those bills (SB224 and HB3) combine to effectively price undocumented students out of higher education. SB224 states that undocumented students will not qualify for the A+ scholarship program.

In HB3 (the higher education budget bill) language was inserted in the preamble that states that Missouri public colleges and universities must charge undocumented (including DACA) students the highest possible rate of tuition — whether that’s out-of-state or international. The bill further asserts that they’re not eligible for any institutional scholarships and threatens the universities’ budget allocation if they don’t comply. Some say it’s unconstitutional to attempt to legislate via the state budget. I am not a legal scholar, but I have seen first-hand how punitive legislation affects real people.

It’s the end of July. Some students have no idea that this punitive legislation affects them. International rates can be three times higher than in-state rates at some Missouri institutions. Some institutions have notified their students but many have not. Some responded to a phone survey I conducted by indicating that they have no intention to notify students.
With this kind of inaction, students won’t know what has happened until they receive a large bill in the mail that they can’t pay. This is wrong. This is not how we should operate. This is not how we should treat young people who want nothing more than to have the same access that their classmates and peers have. These students are our neighbors, our children’s friends. They work just as hard as anyone else.

On July 11, Gov, Nixon traveled to Kansas City to attend the conference of National Council of La Raza, the largest civil rights group for Latinos. While at this conference, he announced his veto of SB224, claiming that it is immoral and bad for the state to penalize students who have worked hard and followed the rules. He received a standing ovation. People from all over the country attend NCLR and may not have been as in tune with the extent of Missouri’s punitive policies, but I know what this really means.

Although the governor vetoed this bill, the veto session begins in September, well after school has started. If his veto is overridden, students will experience a spike in their tuition that they may not anticipate and probably cannot sustain. This, again, is wrong. While the governor was receiving a standing ovation, many of us worried that students’ dreams will be crushed in the aftermath of bad politics.

Last week, The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis hosted a meeting in order to assist St. Louis-area DACA students who had planned to attend Missouri public colleges with navigating their higher education options. I stood before 20 brilliant students and their families, in a room packed with over 60 people. Mothers shared their dreams of wanting better for their children. Students shared their anxiety about the politics of being undocumented, or what life is like in a family with mixed immigration status.

Students who had dreams of studying engineering at UMSL or nursing at Mizzou are left with few options to become productive members of Missouri’s economy. Most of the students will go to college in neighboring states, where they’ll receive in-state tuition rates and scholarships, and an environment that shows them that they are valued, needed, and worthy — because they are.

Karissa Anderson is manager of advocacy and policy research for the Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis.
Missouri university research maps cat DNA to help human patients


COLUMBIA, MO (KCTV) - A groundbreaking project is happening at the University of Missouri-Columbia campus.

The veterinary school is mapping the DNA of cats and it could lead to solutions for humans who inherit life-threatening diseases.

Leslie Bayer is fighting a serious heart condition she and many of her family members inherited. Prepping healthy meals is just one way she fights the condition.

“Our condition leads to sudden death. And it’s an electrical issue that leads to sudden death,” Bayer said.

Her doctors installed a defibrillator in her chest after her sister Vicki McCombs died suddenly from the same disease 10 years ago.

“Two years after getting my defibrillator I had an event, cardiac arrest, and the defibrillator saved my life,” Bayer said.

The veterinarian lab at the University of Missouri could help patients like Bayer long before tragedy raises red flags. They’re doing so in their 99 Lives Cat Genome Sequencing Initiative.

“Overall the main genes that make our body function are all the same. So the genes that make our heart function are the same in cats as in humans,” said Dr. Leslie Lyons, a professor with the school.

It makes it easy to find felines fighting genetic diseases common in humans.
“The most amazing part is how much cats can help humans and how much humans can help cats. If we know it’s the same gene, same disease, then all the information can flow back and forth freely,” Lyons said.

Cats live similar lives to humans – laying around the house, eating things they shouldn’t and breathing in the same allergens. Researchers say studying the environment is just as important.

“We are a product of both our environment and our genetics,” Lyons said.

Already scientists have found genetic mutations affecting eye sight and in one case cats are being tested for inherited blindness.

Scientists aren’t far from marking kidney failure and heart disease, which could lead to longer lives for humans and their feline companions.

“A genetic test would be incredibly awesome and life-saving for our family if we could have our children tested,” Bayer said.

Watch your language: Mizzou wants inclusive workplace terminology

As someone who has been disabled almost all her life, Amber Cheek knows how a seemingly kind word or helpful gesture from well-intentioned people can be subtly demeaning.

As the director of accessibility at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Cheek also knows that education and understanding can go a long way toward knowing the right words to say and bridging what she sees is often an information and generation gap.
“It’s not about having an encyclopedia in your head,” Cheek says. “It’s about being able to approach diversity in an inclusive way.”

She has tried to get that attitude across by using a new document that spells out what language might be seen as inappropriate or even offensive to some members of minority groups, even though it may be accepted or at least tolerated by others. The goal, Cheek said, is having people be “respectfully curious.”

“There is a lot of uncertainty among people about whether they should speak up when someone uses a term that isn’t the most current one that they identify with,” she said.

“But the goal isn’t to create an environment where people are always correcting each other, or where people feel stifled. The goal is to increase understanding of diversity. And the biggest struggle is that the language changes over time.”

The lesson hasn’t been received well by everyone. After a recent session on campus, and an online article about it, reactions ranged from understanding to complaints that people on the Mizzou campus shouldn’t be expected to become what one person called “the PC Gestapo.”

Another reaction came from Laura Kipnis, a professor at Northwestern University who was recently cleared in a Title IX investigation involving an essay she published about what she called “sexual paranoia” on campus. The situation escalated into complaints about what she had written and whether she should have written the essay at all.

In an email, after she had been given a copy of the Mizzou document on inclusive terminology, Kipnis responded:

“I hope Missouri faculty have the balls to push back against campus bureaucrats trying to tell them what is and isn’t offensive, and I very much hope my saying that offends someone.”

Cheek wants people to view the situation in a different way.

“A lot of people see discussions of inclusive language as people trying to be the bad language police,” she said. “But really, I think that will pass over time. I think that as our universities and as our workplaces become every more diverse, people will become more and more comfortable with diversity.

“It’s about being open-minded, being willing to have conversations with your co-workers and being able to approach diversity in an inclusive way. If you do that, even if you don’t know the perfect word right off the tip of your tongue when you first meet a person, it will be all right. You’ll have a conversation. You’ll learn what the person’s identity is, what they prefer, and from then on, a big part of it is just understanding that diversity is a part of the fabric of who we are. It's just a matter of taking that first step to being more inclusive. You don't have to know everything.”
The key to the situations she is trying to address, Cheek says, is to let differences dissolve in a more natural way rather than let them become barriers or rigid guidelines.

“I think that people are making a bigger deal of it than it is,” she said. “I think a little bit of knowledge goes a long way.

“And I think that when people learn to be more comfortable discussing differences, and getting to know the person rather than trying to know the perfect word to describe the person, things will really improve. That’s kind of the goal.”

**Personal experience**

Cheek brings a lifetime of experience to her job, which she began last year after earning a law degree from Mizzou in 2012. She describes her self as a congenital amputee, who lost a foot shortly after birth and has used a prosthesis ever since. Her world expanded when she left her home in Georgia — a place she calls “a very rural, Southern, Appalachian town where everyone looked the same and went to the same church” — and went away to a big state university campus.

“I had this amazing awakening,” Cheek said, “where I felt like I was part of a community, and I felt supported. I felt like I could advocate for myself. I learned so much.”

She used that knowledge to stand up for herself in an early job after college.

“I worked at a summer camp,” she recalled, “When a co-worker found out that I was an amputee, he said, ‘Wow, I would have assumed that someone like you couldn’t do this, because it involves so much walking around.’ He meant absolutely no harm in that, but I was very hurt.

“Because it was my first leadership position out of college, and I really wanted to be a leader. I didn’t want to be that girl with a disability and have that be the most important thing about me.”

Conversation, Cheek found, was the antidote.

“He learned that I was a really avid hiker,” she said, “and that walking around the college campus was not difficult for me at all. And his view of disability really expanded. He stopped making comments like that, and I can only assume that going forward, when he went into his jobs after college, he was more aware of people with disabilities because he worked with one and got to know someone.”

Trying to gain that kind of understanding, she said, can make all the difference. Often, Cheek added, a simple question can help decide whether offering help is really helpful, and not helping is respectful, not callous.

“Every blind person I have ever met has a story in which a very well-intentioned, good-hearted sighted person grabbed their hand at an intersection and took them across the street and left them
someplace they never meant to go, completely lost,” she said. “And a lot of wheelchair users say so as well.

“If they do need help, they’ll ask for it. People with disabilities want to be independent. They want to be on an equal footing with everyone else. If you have a co-worker that’s constantly asking to help you all the time, it’s good-intentioned, but oftentimes, it makes you feel like a little kid, and no one wants to feel like a little kid at work.”

**Keep up with changing language**

One good way to avoid that kind of trap, Cheek said, is to keep up with the current language. For example, in most cases, the term to use is disabled, not handicapped. And it's better to use Asian or Asian-American, not Oriental. It’s all part of Mizzou’s Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative.

But learning a list of the right thing to say isn’t always easy.

“One of the things we emphasize in our training is that everything comes down to personal preference,” she said. “There’s no perfect way to always use the right word, because two people who are in the exact same group could have very different preferences of language. I prefer the term disability. Someone else might prefer the term differently abled, and more power to them.”

Sexual preference can be a particularly difficult area to navigate, she said. To help, her presentation includes a whimsical graphic called the Gender Unicorn, outlining and defining the intricacies of gender identity.

“It is a good tool for understanding gender orientation and gender issues,” Cheek said. “It’s a very useful tool, and I think it’s a very simple thing that people can use in discussion.”

And discussion, she emphasized, is key to making a lot situations that may seem difficult become easier. It helps dissipate what she used to call the “force field” – an invisible barrier that made camaraderie almost impossible.

“Sometimes when people would find out I had a disability,” Cheek said, “there would be like a force field between me and them, and they’d feel like they couldn’t get to know me. I think that’s particularly problematic in the work place, because you need to be able to work with everyone, regardless of difference. I think it’s important to factor that into the workplace at Mizzou.

“A lot of people are so afraid of saying the wrong thing that they don’t actually talk to people at all. That’s not the way to go about it.”
Task force recommends universities offer alternatives to algebra

By Megan Favignano

Tuesday, July 28, 2015 at 2:00 pm

A state task force is recommending two- and four-year public colleges and universities offer entry-level math courses other than algebra to fulfill students’ general education requirements.

The University of Missouri requires undergraduate students to take college algebra. MU faculty will discuss the state task force’s recommendations and evaluate the university’s general education math requirement when school resumes this fall, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Jim Spain said.

Incoming MU students who test proficient in algebra can take a higher level math class instead of algebra. MU student Miranda Reese, a junior, took calculus instead.

“I would have found,” college algebra “redundant and not helpful to my degree,” Reese said.

Reese described math as vital. She was a psychology major when she took the placement test and started attending MU, but she since has changed majors to computer science.

The Missouri Department of Higher Education created the state task force, Math Pathways, in fall 2014 to look for ways to improve student success rates in math gateway courses and to increase the percentage of students completing degree programs. The task force published a report last month with its recommendations.

“College Algebra may be an appropriate gateway course for many academic programs, but it should not be the only mathematics pathway for students to earn a post-secondary certificate or degree,” the report said.

The report said students enrolled in non-STEM — science, technology, engineering and math — degree programs might benefit more from courses such as statistics or geometry rather than algebra.
Math Pathways is planning a September math summit in Columbia. The summit is designed to provide an opportunity for non-math faculty to express concerns or give insight on the task force’s recommendations.

Reviewing education requirements is imperative to student success, Spain said.

The review process is designed “to ensure that our requirements are still aligned with the education needs and outcomes we are trying to help our students achieve,” Spain said.

Ian Aberbach, director of undergraduate studies at MU, served on the Math Pathways task force, which comprised faculty members from throughout Missouri. Aberbach said he cannot speak for MU regarding the recommendations and that he did not want to comment on his opinion of the recommendations.

Spain said MU’s Committee on Undergraduate Education, which governs the university’s general education program, likely will ask Aberbach to discuss the task force recommendations when classes resume this fall.

That MU committee then would decide if it wanted to suggest a larger discussion among faculty on campus, Spain said, which would include dialogue about what options aside from algebra might be relevant for various academic programs and recommend changes to the MU Faculty Council. The faculty council then would decide whether the issue should advance to a faculty-wide vote.

Even though Reese was able to test out of algebra, she said the course is important.

“There is an element of math in every job,” Reese said.

MU Women's & Children's Hospital earns new recognition by world groups

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The MU Women's and Children's Hospital is now the fourth place in Missouri with a baby friendly designation by UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

The hospital has been working on it for more than two years. It has to follow 10 steps.
Employees have to help mothers with breastfeeding right after giving birth.

A mother is allowed to stay with her baby all day, and babies only get breast milk unless there's a medical reason.

Experts said the steps are healthier and help reduce the chance of sudden infant death syndrome.

Last year, almost 2,000 babies were born there.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Protestors picket Columbia Planned Parenthood clinic

SARAH FINE, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Stephen Smith knelt beside the sidewalk in front of the Columbia Health Center. His three daughters, Gracie, 9, Claire, 6, and Rachel, 4, crouched in the narrow strip of grass alongside their father as he led them in quiet prayer.

The Smiths were among about 50 anti-abortion protestors who braved Tuesday's midday sun — the National Weather Service warned the heat index could reach 117 degrees — to picket in front of Columbia's Planned Parenthood. The protest was part of a national event held by Women Betrayed, an anti-abortion organization that aims to eliminate public funding for Planned Parenthood. The location on Providence Road is officially called the Columbia Health Center.

About 30 Planned Parenthood supporters also demonstrated. The two groups didn't interact much, other than to try to drown out one another's speeches by setting off car alarms.

The rally came two days before the center will begin taking appointments for abortions. Columbia Health Center will be the only abortion provider in mid-Missouri. Because of the 72-hour waiting period, the first day that abortions can be administered will be Aug. 3. It also coincided with the Center for Medical Progress, an anti-abortion group, releasing a third video purporting to show Planned Parenthood officials discussing selling fetal tissue. The video
released Tuesday morning portrays a physician examining aborted fetal tissue and listing the prices of each part of tissue to a man acting as a buyer.

Selling fetal tissue for research purposes, with a patient's consent, is legal in the United States; however, it is illegal to profit from such sales.

Tuesday's rally consisted mostly of speeches, scattered chanting and prayer. Car horns blared almost constantly, both from Providence Road and from the clinic's parking lot. Anti-abortion protesters had little room to move around; move too far forward, and they would step into traffic, but move too far in the other direction and they were trespassing on private property and could be removed by security personnel.

Kathy Forck, an organizer for the rally, called the stretch of concrete they occupied "God's sidewalk."

U.S. Rep. Vicky Hartzler, a Republican from Harrisburg whose congressional district includes Columbia, released a statement that her aide read aloud at the protest.

"These sickening videos show the callous attitude Planned Parenthood has towards life," Hartzler's statement read.

Her statement asserted that Planned Parenthood receives about $500 million annually in federal funding. The organization doesn't disclose how it receives from the federal government grants.

The organization received $528.4 million from public funds in fiscal year 2014, according to its annual report, but it doesn't break down how much of that came from the federal government. Medicaid doesn't pay for abortions except in cases of rape or incest.

Forck asked protestors to call and write Gov. Jay Nixon and demand the governor rescind Columbia Health Center's license to perform abortions. She said women experiencing unplanned pregnancy should seek help from My Life Clinic. That clinic, located blocks away on
Providence Road, offers medical resources to pregnant women and parenting classes, but it will not refer people to abortion services, according to its website.

Jana Zuniga, who spoke at the rally, is a student at St. Mary's College. She said she joined the protest as a representative of Students for Life of America, and she claimed doctors mislead women into undergoing abortions.

"Women who find themselves in unplanned pregnancies need a message of hope that they're strong enough to carry a child to term," Zuniga said. "Women are convinced their lives are at risk ... by even the most educated doctors and by people at Planned Parenthood."

Planned Parenthood officials did not respond to requests for comment. Besides abortions, the organization also offers contraception and cancer screening.

Many abortion-rights supporters, most of them in pink Planned Parenthood T-shirts, arrived a half-hour before the protest began at noon.

Elizabeth Allemann, a family physician, joined the crowd supporting abortion rights along with her 15-year-old daughter, Heidi.

"I support Planned Parenthood because women's health matters to me," Allemann said. "You can't separate women's health care from women's reproductive health care. Every disease or condition is affected by and affects pregnancy."

Phil Wood, an MU psychology professor, said he supported the clinic because his family has turned to them for medical help in the past. He has been a clinic escort, someone who accompanies patients from their cars to the front door of the building at Columbia's Planned Parenthood office.

"When asked, I serve," Wood said.

Both camps could agree that the heat was nearly unbearable. Still, people turned out with umbrellas, sunglasses, bandanas and bottled water to beat the heat.
"Planned Parenthood takes heat for us every day," Allemann said. "I can take a little heat for them."

McCaskill calls for advocacy group to give Missouri capitol interns 'someone to talk to'

By JO MANNIES • JULY 29, 2015

NO MU MENTION

Amid all the talk about the misbehavior so obviously plaguing Jefferson City, U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill contends that the real issue is that little has changed.

She was an intern in the Missouri capitol 41 years ago. "I am bitterly disappointed that the climate has not changed significantly since 1974," the senator said, recalling her own experiences with off-color jokes and unsolicited sexual comments.

And McCaskill remembers the self-doubt of what she should do. "I wanted to be an intern, and I wanted to learn," she told reporters in a Tuesday conference call. "I was afraid if I told the university they’d decide they didn’t want to do the intern program anymore. So I just tried to handle it myself."

That backdrop is why McCaskill is suggesting that a special advocacy organization be set up to simply give interns a non-threatening source to talk to, and where they could get constructive information about how to file a formal complaint, and even hire a lawyer.

She says she got the idea after an evening chat with Alissa Hembree, the former college intern whose accusations of sexual harassment led to last week’s resignation of state Sen. Paul LeVota, D-Independence.

The LeVota case was the second such incident in less than three months. During the last week of the legislative session in May, Missouri House Speaker John Diehl, R-Town and Country, was forced to step down amid publicity over his sexually charged text messages with a college-age intern.

Hembree had approached McCaskill as a result of the senator’s work to address sexual assault on college campuses and in the military. Hembree also told McCaskill
that she was grateful for the senator’s public comments of support soon after the controversy broke over the allegations against LeVota.

“We’re going to put our heads together, she’s going to work with some of my staff, to see if we can come up with some way to form an organization that could help address some of the shortfalls that are obvious from these situations,” McCaskill said.

The aim would be to help “young women, or young men who feel that they’re being sexually harassed as part of their work as interns in this state, whether as interns in government or interns in any other position. That there would be some kind of organization that they could turn to.”

McCaskill emphasized that in Hembree's case, "I'm really proud of her" because of the intern's willingness to go public.

**Victims often fear consequences if go public**

Young people in such positions face a dilemma, McCaskill said, in that they’d like to resolve such matters – especially in the early stages -- without them turning into public scandals.

There’s real fear among such victims, she said. That “you will be marginalized in the workplace, that you’ll jeopardize your future in some way, in terms of someone blacklisting you. That you won’t be taken seriously.”

“There’s a long list of worries that go through a young woman’s mind,” the senator said.

She recalled her own self-doubt as a young woman legislator in the 1980s. “If I complain about these off-color jokes and inappropriate comments, then all of the sudden I worry I won’t be as effective as a legislator.”

As an intern and a legislator, McCaskill said, “I just tried to avoid situations that were making me uncomfortable. But there really wasn’t anybody I could talk to about it.”

As she talked to Hembree, McCaskill observed, “It was sad for me to hear this same refrain from this young woman, That she didn’t feel like there was anyone she could talk to.”

McCaskill emphasized that she supported the plans of legislative leaders to conduct training sessions to emphasize the correct behavior for legislators and interns.

But referring to lawmakers, she added dryly that it was sad that “they would need a class to know that this kind of conduct is not appropriate.”

**Governor renews call for ethics reform**
Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, also a Democrat, appears to be relaunching his longstanding bid for stricter state ethics laws governing public officials.

Among other things, Nixon said Tuesday that he wants to restore the state’s campaign donation limits, curb lobbyists’ gifts to public officials, and require a waiting period before legislators can become lobbyists.

Nixon contends that the loose climate contributed to the antics that forced Diehl and LeVota out of office.

Some legislative critics contend that Nixon’s proposals would do little to curb sexual misconduct.

But McCaskill, speaking in general, contended that the state’s weak ethics laws feed the inappropriate atmosphere in Jefferson City.

“In some ways, that’s what hasn’t changed,” she said. “The culture of free dinners, of committee hearings in restaurants with free liquor…The one thing that is not going to change is that there is an insular feel of the place. When you’re there, you don’t feel like you’re as accountable.”

The quest for balance between teacher prep and diversity for aspiring Missouri teachers

By DALE SINGER • 16 HOURS AGO

NO MU MENTION

Missouri needs to strike a balance between making sure that all teachers are prepared to enter the classroom and that minorities and women are treated fairly by tests that certify them to teach.

That balance was a main topic of discussion Tuesday at a joint meeting in Columbia between the state Board of Education, which represents interests of K-12 school districts, and the Coordinating Board for Higher Education, which governs public colleges and universities in the state.
Data reported to the state board in June showed that in many cases, women and minorities who took tests to gauge how well they knew their teaching content areas fell short of the qualifying score – the so-called cut score – required to move into the classroom.

The scores were gathered from a new teacher test that some educators had criticized because of a lack of preparation time for colleges and universities with teacher training programs.

Numbers showed scores in 55 different content areas. In the end, the state board voted to keep the cut scores where they are, but it also agreed to change the number of items and the amount of time allowed to take the tests in seven of the content areas.

Officials at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education said they had worked to make sure the tests meet two criteria: being rigorous enough to ensure that only qualified teachers can pass but, at the same time, being fair and free from bias so that women and minorities are not at a disadvantage.

Tuesday’s joint meeting followed up that discussion when the boards heard an annual report from the new Missouri Advisory Board for Educator Preparation (MABEP) as well as from DESE, the Department of Higher Education and others.

Alex Cuenca, an education professor at Saint Louis University who is on the advisory board for teacher preparation, noted several concerns with the process of getting teachers ready for their profession.

Among them, he said in a report prepared for the meeting, are questions about how student performance should be linked to teacher performance programs; whether methods of measuring student growth are valid; and whether new regulations for teacher preparation in Missouri will place a heavy financial burden on school and universities alike.

As far as the results of the new teacher preparation exams, Cuenca said MABEP members were “troubled by the disparity between white and black teacher candidates” in elementary schools, where there is a statewide surplus of candidates. Members also questioned the need to lower cut scores in so-called STEM areas – science, technology, engineering and math – where there is a shortage.

He said the panel was “critically aware of the political optics” involved with such issues.

Cuenca noted that since MABEP was created by the legislature last year, cooperation between DESE and teacher preparation programs has increased. He hoped that such programs at colleges and universities get even greater recognition in the future for the expertise they can provide, and that teacher preparation programs are seen as more than just places that people who want to work in the classroom get ready for the tests they need to take.
“In the current education information economy, assessments and data create frames that make it easy to believe that our colleges and schools of education are simply factories that produce teachers for schools,” Cuenca said.

“While teacher preparation is certainly part of the mission of education schools, we must also not forget that those who educate teachers are also leading thinkers, scholars and innovators in the field of education.”

With the problems facing Missouri schools, Cuenca added, those colleges and universities need to be used as resources to advance educational research and practice.

“We have nationally and internationally recognized education scholars in our midst,” he said, “Yet, when we have a big question about education, because we sometimes see teacher education as an object for accountability instead of a possible partner for innovation, we tend to ignore this expertise.”