Eight interim officials directing University of Missouri as year ends

By MEGAN FAVIGNANO

Sunday, December 27, 2015 at 12:00 am Comments (3)

The University of Missouri has experienced a wave of turnover in executive offices, both systemwide and on the flagship Columbia campus, since the resignation last month of former UM System President Tim Wolfe.

Now eight administrators hold interim titles as the university moves on from a fall semester that former leaders could not weather.

Wolfe’s resignation came after weeks of protests by students who claimed administrators did not adequately address racism on the Columbia campus. MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned the same day as Wolfe and said he would move into a new role as director of research facility development. Loftin’s resignation came after some faculty and nine deans signed letters outlining concerns with his leadership.

Curators named longtime MU administrator Mike Middleton, who retired in August, as interim system president and Hank Foley, who held administrative titles at the MU campus and UM System level, as interim chancellor.

“We may be new in these jobs, but all of us are 'well-seasoned,'” Foley said in an email. “No one is new in terms of experience. The advantage is that in a time such as this, we can respond together and make change happen faster than if only one of us were new. A new team means new ideas for a new era.”

- Middleton has more than 30 years of experience at MU as a student, faculty member and most recently as deputy chancellor. According to his contract, he will make $477,544 annually — the same salary Wolfe made as president. Before starting as interim chancellor last month, Foley was MU’s
senior vice chancellor for research and graduate studies and executive vice president for academic
affairs, research and economic development for the UM System. As interim chancellor, Foley’s
salary is $459,000 annually, MU spokesman Christian Basi said. In Foley’s prior role, he made
$374,850. Hal Williamson started as interim vice chancellor for health affairs this month — a familiar
position for him. Williamson was the vice chancellor for health affairs earlier this year before he
took a voluntary buyout. Loftin, at the time, said he planned to eliminate Williamson’s position. After
receiving a consultant’s recommendation, the university later said it would reinstate the position.
Williamson is making $600,000 annually. Before retiring in June, his salary was $386,863. He will
oversee MU’s schools of health profession, medicine and nursing as well as MU Health Care’s five
hospitals and more than 50 clinics. His oversight of MU’s three schools will be shared with Provost
Garnett Stokes.

- Chuck Henson, an associate dean with the MU School of Law, is now the university’s interim vice
  chancellor for inclusion, diversity and equity — a position the university Board of Curators created on
each of the system’s four campuses last month. On the same day Wolfe resigned, curators
announced a list of initiatives that aim to address the racial climate of each campus. Henson is
receiving $179,058 in his interim position. Previously, he made $154,059 annually. MU selected
Mark McIntosh as interim vice chancellor for research, graduate studies and economic development —
taking on part of the work Foley was doing before vaulting into the interim chancellorship. McIntosh
has been the director of graduate studies for 14 years in MU’s molecular biology and immunology
department. In his interim role, McIntosh is making $292,710 annually, compared to the $266,100
he made previously. Robert Schwartz previously was the UM System’s chief of staff and interim
dean of the MU College of Engineering, and he assisted with MU’s strategic planning. UM System
spokesman John Fougere said Schwartz’s previous annual salary was $215,000 and will increase
to $250,000 while he works in this interim position.

- Also at the system level, Kelley Stuck will serve as interim vice president for human resources. She is
replacing Betsy Rodriguez, who said in October she planned to resign. Rodriguez, who worked for
the university for seven years, accepted a job as vice president of human resources at Barnes
Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. Stuck has been associate vice president for human resources for the
UM System for five years, making an annual salary of $206,796. In her interim position, Stuck will
receive $238,000 annually.

- On the Columbia campus, Foley named Jennifer Hollingshead interim vice chancellor of marketing
  and communications. Hollingshead, who most recently worked as marketing manager for MU Health
Care, replaces Ellen de Graffenreid, who left the university last month. At the time, MU
spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said personnel privacy rules prohibited her from commenting on de Graffenreid’s exit. Hollingshead, who previously made $116,000 annually, is receiving a $195,000 salary in this interim role.

Graduate Professional Council President Hallie Thompson said it will be important for interim leaders to ensure the right policies are in place for those who replace them. Thompson said these interim leaders might be in their new roles for a while.

“We’re still in a place of instability, and we will be for a while,” Thompson said. “Through that instability and unsureness, I think things will change.”

Top 10 stories of the year

Missouri wide receiver J’Mon Moore (left edge of frame), safety Anthony Sherrils (second row), safety Ian Simon (wearing Tigers sweatshirt) and defensive lineman Charles Harris speak to reporters at the Concerned Student 1950 camp on Carnahan Quadrangle on Nov. 9 after University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe resigned in response to the protest.

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1. Boycott puts Tigers in eye of the storm

The Missouri football team spent most of a disappointing 2015 season doing as little as possible to call attention to itself. In four games, the Tigers didn’t even score a touchdown.

But an unremarkable season became unforgettable when sophomore safety Anthony Sherrils sent a tweet on Nov. 7 that included a photo of more than 30 players with the following message: “The athletes of color on the University of Missouri football team truly believe ‘Injustice Anywhere is a threat to Justice Everywhere.’ We will no longer participate in any football related activities until President Tim Wolfe resigns or is removed due to his negligence toward marginalized students’ experiences. WE ARE UNITED!!!!!!”
Suddenly, a weeklong protest about the administration’s perceived inattentiveness to racism on campus became international news. With Missouri's upcoming game in Kansas City against BYU jeopardized — and the athletic department on the hook for $1 million if the game was canceled — the Concerned Student 1950 group and hunger-striker Jonathan Butler had some leverage. The leverage grew the next morning after a team meeting, when Coach Gary Pinkel’s official Twitter account sent a photo with the players and coaches locked arm-in-arm and the message: “We are united. We are behind our players.”

As the number of protesters and reporters swelled — sometimes incompatibly — on Carnahan Quad, Wolfe was clearly wounded. Faculty members who were unhappy with Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin for mostly unrelated reasons attached themselves to the cause.

Two days after Sherrils' tweet, Wolfe resigned. Loftin soon followed suit.

The protesters celebrated, Butler ate and the game against BYU went on as scheduled. The Tigers even won — a rare bright spot in a 5-7 season — and celebrated wildly afterward with Pinkel, who had capped a wild week by announcing he was suffering from non-Hodgkin lymphoma and retiring.

The long-term effects of the protest have yet to be seen, though. Three of the four leaders of the player boycott — Sherrils, defensive end Charles Harris and wide receiver J'Mon Moore — remain on the team, so they might have more ideas about using their collective power to achieve their goals. But the new head coach, Barry Odom, might not be as receptive as Pinkel was. And, as he tries to raise money for another round of facility improvements, Athletic Director Mack Rhoades will have to soothe raw feelings of some angry donors who were frustrated that the coaches and athletic director publicly supported a cause that led to the demise of their bosses.

2. Pinkel's era finishes with a surprise announcement

At around 3 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 13 — just before the football team boarded its buses bound for Kansas City to play BYU at Arrowhead Stadium the next day — Coach Gary Pinkel informed players, coaches and staff that he would be resigning at the end of the season. Not only that, but he was doing so to focus on battling non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a disease he had been diagnosed with in May.

The winningest coach in program history — the one who would ultimately compile a 118-73 record and led the team to four conference championship games over 15 seasons — was stepping down in a matter of weeks.
All of a sudden, a program that had prided itself on stability had none. And Missouri Athletic Director Mack Rhoades had a career-defining hire on his hands just seven months into his tenure.

Rhoades spent the week after Missouri’s season-ending loss to Arkansas on Nov. 27 interviewing candidates to be Pinkel’s successor, including sitting head coaches such as Bowling Green’s Dino Babers, California’s Sonny Dykes and Temple’s Matt Rhule.

In the end, Rhoades came back to the candidate he knew best: Missouri defensive coordinator Barry Odom.

Odom, a former Missouri linebacker and assistant under Pinkel, withstood two rounds of grueling interviews designed, Rhoades said, to test his patience and mettle. Despite serious overtures from Memphis and uncertainty over whether Rhoades would call his number, Odom was Missouri’s man.

Rhoades introduced Odom to the team Dec. 3 at the Mizzou Athletics Training Complex. Odom was immediately mobbed by his current — and, now, future — players.

“Where you graduate college from is always going to have a special place in your heart,” Odom said at his introductory press conference on Dec. 4. “This is where I wanted to be, without question.”

3. Alden ends 17-year tenure as MU athletic director

The physical appearance of Missouri’s athletic landscape would be barely recognizable to a visitor from 1998, when Mike Alden took over as athletic director. The football stadium has been adorned with soaring additions, Mizzou Arena sprouted from the soil and the Mizzou Athletic Training Complex is full of all the bells and whistles and flat-screen TVs the modern college athlete has come to expect.

That’s what happens when an athletic budget grows from $13.7 million to $85 million during the 17-year tenure of one AD. That financial growth is one way to judge an athletic director, although it was part of a nationwide boom in facility-building and salary-padding as the value of media-rights deals exploded.

Perhaps a better gauge for evaluating the performance of Alden — who announced on Jan. 29 that he was resigning his AD post to become a teacher in MU’s College of Education — was Missouri’s resurgence in football and its move from the familiar but dysfunctional Big 12 to the stable and more lucrative Southeastern Conference. Alden played a key role in both developments.
His decision to hire Gary Pinkel as Larry Smith's replacement after the 2000 season was the shrewdest personnel move of his tenure. Pinkel raised the program to respectability and then to heights unimaginable in the 1980s and '90s.

Missouri’s higher profile in football surely made the school more attractive to the SEC in 2011. Alden acted in concert with former MU Chancellor Brady Deaton to move the school from the Big 12 to the SEC, which figures to be a smart long-term financial move.

“I think he will have an incredible legacy,” Deaton said of Alden. “Athletics has risen — I think, without doubt — to the most illustrious period in the history of the university. He's led it there.”

4. Mauk’s troubles are symptomatic of directionless season

Even if Missouri’s offense started out 2015 struggling, at least it would have a redshirt junior quarterback with a 13-4 record as a starter over two years to help shepherd the Tigers along.

Or so the thinking went.

Then Maty Mauk got suspended indefinitely for an unspecified reason on Sept. 29, three days after Missouri’s first loss of the season at Kentucky. True freshman Drew Lock filled in, and, after a promising starting debut in a win against South Carolina, he and the offense cratered on their way to three straight losses.

For a brief moment, Mauk returned. Coach Gary Pinkel reinstated the quarterback Oct. 25, the Sunday of Missouri’s bye week, and Mauk went through Tuesday practice with the team.

By Sunday, he was suspended again, this time for the rest of the season. No official reason was ever given, but an employee at the FieldHouse bar in Columbia said Mauk got into an altercation at the establishment the Wednesday after his reinstatement … hours after he had apologized to the team for his previous behavior.

The Tigers limped through the final four weeks of the season — and a few other momentous occasions that pushed Mauk’s suspension further down on this list — and put the finishing touches on a 5-7 season with a lifeless 28-3 loss at Arkansas.

“I didn’t want it to end this way,” Pinkel said after the Arkansas loss, his final game as Missouri’s coach.

While the defense finished in the top 10 nationally in points and yards allowed per game, the offense finished in the bottom five in both categories: 124th out of 127 teams in yards per game, 126th in
points per game. In the middle of Missouri’s worst offensive season since 1971, the Tigers also endured their longest stretch of games without a touchdown since 1937.

The latest on Mauk? His father, Mike, told the Tribune on Dec. 18 that his son has been reinstated to the team and plans to be at Missouri next semester.

5. Anderson’s debut is a dud

There were questions about the state of the Missouri basketball program entering the 2014-15 season because of the early departures of guards Jordan Clarkson and Jabari Brown, an unproven core of returning players and a coach unproven at the Division I level.

But no one expected Kim Anderson’s first season to go as poorly as it did. The Tigers had a string of discipline issues while compiling a 9-23 record that set the school mark for losses.

There was actually hope that the underclassmen-laden team might be making progress in early January after back-to-back victories, including an upset of LSU in the SEC opener, to get back to the .500 mark. But that evaporated during a school-record 13-game losing streak that began Jan. 10 and nearly stretched into March.

Somewhere in the middle of all that losing, the team seemed to lose its spirit, dropping its final four road games by an average of 17.8 points.

“Because we had so many young guys and so many guys that were new to the program, I knew that team chemistry would be a challenge, especially if you weren’t successful,” Anderson said. “And I think that’s where probably the issues came.”

Missouri eked out victories over Florida and Auburn late in its final two home games, but the Tigers still finished 3-15 in league play. They couldn’t overcome their anemic offense, which averaged 60.5 points — the program’s lowest output since the 1951-52 season — and were held below 60 on 14 occasions.

6. Bruins continue title streak

Even before she began her playing career at Missouri, the court at Mizzou Arena was conquered space for Sophie Cunningham.

In March, Rock Bridge’s all-time leading scorer helped the Bruins claim their fourth state title in her four years at the school with a 49-35 victory over Liberty. Cunningham averaged 21.1 points and 7.3
rebounds, was named the Class 5 Player of the Year and made the McDonald’s All-American team in her final high school season.

The Bruins also enjoyed success on other fronts. The girls tennis team swept all six matches in the postseason, including a 5-0 win over Notre Dame de Sion in the state championship, and captured its 10th state title. And in November, the boys swim team ended Rockhurst’s 11-year state title streak by winning its first-ever team state championship.

**7. Wrestling team’s perfect regular season leads to fourth place**

The Missouri wrestling team entered the NCAA Championships in March at the Scottrade Center on the heels of the best regular season in program history and seeking its first national championship.

The Tigers were 24-0 and the nation’s No. 1 team. They’d gone into the belly of the beast in February and claimed the NWCA National Duals title by defeating then-No. 1 Iowa at Carver-Hawkeye Arena. They had three No. 1 seeds: 125-pounder Alan Waters, 149-pounder Drake Houdashelt and 197-pounder J’den Cox. They were one of five teams to qualify wrestlers at all 10 weights.

Missouri got off to a shaky start on Day 1. On Day 2, Waters lost 4-2 in the semifinals to Ohio State’s Nathan Tomasello, the eventual national champion, and the Buckeyes’ Kyle Snyder beat Cox, the defending national champion, 3-2 in their semifinal bout.

The next day, Houdashelt defeated Edinboro’s David Habat 3-1 in overtime to win the national title and finish his season 37-1. He became the fifth Missouri wrestler ever to win a national title, joining two-time champion Ben Askren, Max Askren, Mark Ellis and Cox.

Ohio State celebrated its first national championship. The Tigers settled for fourth place, the second-best finish in program history behind the third-place finish in 2007.

**8. Edwards places fifth in JGR debut**

For Carl Edwards, the beginning of 2015 was supposed to be a relief.

All the talk throughout 2014 before his switch from Roush Fenway Racing to Joe Gibbs Racing was finally announced was behind him.

Now in the No. 19 Toyota instead of his theretofore signature No. 99 Ford, Edwards, though, got off to a rough start, finishing 23rd in the Daytona 500 and driving outside of the top-16 Chase spots for most of the first three months.
Edwards had his ’15 breakthrough in May, ending a 31-race winless streak with a victory in the Coca-Cola 600. He had a nice run in July, taking back-to-back poles, before adding another win in September at the Bojangles’ Southern 500.

Edwards went on to advance to the third round of the Chase, finishing in fifth — tops outside of the final contenders — to cap a strong first season with JGR.

He’ll go after a title in 2016 with a new crew chief, with Dave Rogers moving from Denny Hamlin’s team to replace Darian Grubb.

Tolton’s high-flying Michael Porter Jr. averaged 26.1 points and 7.5 rebounds as a sophomore. *Nick Schnelle*

9. **Michael Porter Jr. packs the house**

It’s usually best to get to the arena early to see Michael Porter Jr. and the Tolton boys basketball team play. The area’s venues can only hold so many spectators, and usually it isn’t enough.

Porter’s star has grown exponentially in the wake of his national No. 2 ranking among recruits in the Class of 2017 and his monstrous dunk last December that catapulted him to the No. 1 play on ESPN’s “SportsCenter.” Most of his appearances since have included some sort of rim-rattling slam or other eye candy.

With a deep and athletic squad, the Trailblazers have a legitimate shot at a state championship in 2016 with Porter in the captain’s chair.

10. **Jamieson remains as coach**

After two below-average seasons in the SEC, the Missouri baseball team entered 2015 with low expectations. The most noise being made was whether Coach Tim Jamieson’s 21st season would be his last.

Missouri enjoyed a rebound, going 30-28 overall and finishing seventh in the SEC with a 15-15 mark, a nine-game improvement from 2014. The Tigers posted five wins against top-10 opponents, won six of their 10 SEC series and climbed as high as No. 14 in the polls. But with a 2-9 mark down the stretch and a slew of midweek losses sinking their RPI, the Tigers were one of the first four teams left out of the NCAA Tournament.
In his first major personnel decision since taking over, MU Athletic Director Mack Rhoades chose to let Jamieson continue the development of the team. Jamieson earned a three-year contract extension and got a pledge from Rhoades that Missouri would invest more money into baseball.

“Coach Jamieson led our program to high levels of success in the past,” Rhoades said, “and we anticipate the same in the future.”

Attorney general candidate wants exemptions for gay marriage

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COLUMBIA (AP) — A Republican candidate for Missouri attorney general wants the Legislature to exempt businesses and religious groups from participating in same-sex couples’ marriage ceremonies.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that Republican Josh Hawley pitched the proposal to legislative leaders this month.

Hawley is a University of Missouri School of Law associate professor. He faces a primary against Columbia Sen. Kurt Schaefer.

A leader of gay rights advocacy group PROMO says Missouri law already allows businesses to refuse gay or transgender customers.

Hawley's proposal is part of a larger response to the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in June that legalized gay marriage.
Some conservative groups are pushing for measures they say will protect religious freedoms of businesses that might oppose such unions. Advocacy groups want more safeguards against discrimination.