GUEST COMMENTARY: Financial support for university centers helps fuel research, add faculty

HANK FOLEY, 2 hrs ago

On Oct. 8, MU kicked off its $1.3 billion Mizzou: Our Time to Lead campaign with the announcement of the third-largest gift in our history: $25 million from Rich and Nancy Kinder to fund the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy. Signature centers, such as the Kinder Institute, are vital to fuel research and attract world-class faculty to Mizzou. These centers provide a valuable resource for our state and enrich the educational opportunities for our students. This is why these signature centers are one of three campaign priorities for the university and need support from everyone — friends, alumni and state leaders.

This new comprehensive campaign and these centers, such as the Kinder Institute, the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders and the Reynolds Journalism Institute, will provide essential support to build on two of Mizzou’s core values: excellence and discovery. These efforts combine passions of donors such as the Kinders and Bill and Nancy Thompson with Mizzou’s strengths. Our goal by 2020 is to have five to 10 signature centers with endowments of $10 million or more. Our second and third campaign priorities are to grow our endowment beyond a billion dollars and spark a campus renaissance to build world-class facilities for teaching and learning.

Signature centers and institutes pull the very best of MU together and provide the framework for interdisciplinary collaboration. They also make Mizzou distinctive. For example, we envision that students and faculty who want to study and teach about constitutional democracy will seek out Mizzou’s Kinder Institute. We already see this happening with the study and treatment of autism at the Thompson Center for Autism and the shaping of journalism’s future at the Reynolds Journalism Institute.
With the wide array of expertise located on the same campus, including schools and colleges of agriculture, arts and science, business, engineering, journalism, law, medicine and veterinary medicine, Mizzou is an ideal environment for making connections across fields of study to foster learning and discovery. The new knowledge developed through these centers and institutes will make a real-world impact.

Thanks to the generous support of the Kinders, the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy is the only such center in the country supported by a $25 million endowment. This support will provide our students with an intellectual community to study American political thought and history while allowing them to explore the theory and practice of constitutional democracy from a global perspective through faculty-led study abroad courses and summer internships in Washington, D.C.

One of the main reasons Rich Kinder chooses to give back to the university that had such a positive influence on his life is because he believes it’s the university’s role to teach our young people how to think critically and understand the role of our constitution in building our great democracy. He also has articulated that the Kinder Institute’s focus is excellence. Kinder and I agree that an ambition for the Kinder Institute, and all of our signature centers, is world-class research and teaching. I am very grateful to the Kinders, the Thompsons and all of our donors for their belief in our university and their willingness to take the lead in building a stronger future for Mizzou.

At MU, we are at the nexus of change. Private support to these signature centers during the Mizzou: Our Time to Lead campaign will ensure we make the most of this opportunity.
Columbia Police investigating armed robbery at Hitt Street Mini Mart

TIM TAI, 9 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Columbia police are investigating an armed robbery at the Hitt Street Mini Mart, also known as "No Gas," at Hitt and Locust streets in downtown Columbia.

Two people took an undisclosed amount of cash from the register and fled south on foot, Columbia Police Sgt. Chad Gooch said.

A Columbia Police Department news release described the two as males in their late teens to early 20s wearing dark clothing.

Police were alerted at 9:53 p.m. by a panic alarm, Gooch said. Two employees and one customer were inside the store at the time. There were no known injuries, and no property damage was reported, Gooch said.

At 10:05 p.m., the MU Alert Twitter account sent out a notice of the robbery near MU's campus and urged people to "take precautions."

Gooch said the incident was likely what prompted MU officials to issue an emergency alert. He said Columbia Police notified the MU Police Department due to the incident's proximity to MU and because the men fled in the direction of campus.

The men were still at large as of 10:50 p.m., but "officials believe the two suspects never entered the MU campus," according to the MU Alert website.
Columbia Police investigating downtown robbery

**MU Alert says Wednesday night robbery happened near campus.**

MU Alert tweeted Wednesday evening that the robbery happened near the Mizzou campus. Columbia Police tell ABC 17's Jillian Fertig that the robbery happened at the Mini Mart.

Police also say there were two suspects, and that they fled with an undetermined amount of cash. Police say the suspects are described as black men in their late teens to early 20’s. They were last seen wearing all dark clothing.

Armed robbers on the loose in Columbia

**No MU Mention**

Columbia, MO — Columbia Police are searching for two suspects after an armed robbery Wednesday night.

The incident occurred just before 10 p.m. at the Hitt Street Mini Mart.
According to police, two armed men entered the business and demanded money. There were three victims inside at the time.

The suspects left with an undisclosed amount of money. No one was injured in the incident.

Police describe the suspects as black males in their late teens to early 20s. They were last seen wearing all dark clothing.

If you have any information about this incident, call Columbia Police or CrimeStoppers at 875-TIPS.

KSHB-KC (NBC) - Kansas City, MO

University of Missouri Revokes Cosby’s Honorary Degree

Bill Cosby did hold an honorary degree from the University of Missouri, but just a few hours ago -- Mizzou confirmed to 41 action news they rescinded that degree. Last month -- a faculty committee recommended MU take back the degree given to the comedian 16 years ago.

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=7aeecad0-acb6-4982-a2c2-2f5bb4de50b1
After stepping down as chancellor, Loftin isn’t dwelling on the past

Former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin: “You can look back and say that if I’d done this differently, this might not have happened. But what’s the value in that? You cannot go back and relive history. I can’t change what’s happened.”

By Taylor Blatchford
Dec. 30, 2015

R. Bowen Loftin first visited the University of Missouri in the late 1970s. A physics professor at Texas A&M University at Galveston, he and a colleague came to Columbia to use the nuclear reactor for research. He cold-called the director of the reactor explaining that they wanted to collect data but had no money to compensate the university.

“They were very welcoming,” Loftin said. “I’ll never forget how wonderful it was to be with the people here at Mizzou, because they were really quite helpful in spite of the fact that we gave them nothing in return except acknowledging their support in publications.”

He didn’t visit MU again until November 2013, when Texas A&M traveled to Columbia for a football game while he was A&M’s president. A month later, he was named MU’s chancellor.

As chancellor, he worked to give students and visitors the same welcoming feeling he had felt when he first visited, making a point to talk with them on Francis Quadrangle and around campus. Despite his resignation, he wants to continue to be part of this atmosphere.

“I think all this stuff we’ve gone through the last few months has sort of tainted things a bit, but I do believe fundamentally that Mizzou is a very welcoming place,” he said. “You can certainly talk about individuals and talk about issues of racism here, which have
been quite prominent lately, but I think by and large, the university does welcome people.”

Loftin resigned Nov. 9 following increasing criticism from students, faculty and administrators.

He plans to stay in Columbia for the rest of his academic career, he said in a mid-December interview in the public first floor of the Residence on the Quad, the traditional home of MU’s chancellor. He and his wife Karin live in the second and third floors, but they’re currently searching for a new home in Columbia and plan to move in the next few months.

Even though he’s in a new role as the director for research facility development, he still hopes to work with students. The 66-year-old former chancellor doesn’t want to dwell on past events from his 22-month tenure; he wants to learn from them and move forward.

“I don’t envision myself being at a university anywhere else but here,” he said.

A HISTORIC WEEK

Loftin announced Nov. 9 that he would be transitioning into a new role, effective Jan. 1. Two days later, the UM System Board of Curators voted to accelerate the transition of chancellor responsibilities to interim Chancellor Hank Foley and immediately remove Loftin from the role. Loftin said he’s been working out of the office in his home since then.

Although the fall 2015 semester was filled with student movements and protests against administrators over MU’s racial climate, graduate student health insurance and Planned Parenthood, administrators — including nine different deans — had also called for Loftin’s removal. In a letter to the curators, the deans wrote that Loftin had created a “toxic environment through threat, fear and intimidation.”

Loftin didn’t want to discuss his resignation, but he said the first inkling that faculty and other administrators had “any issue at all” with his leadership was on Sept. 23. He realized his time was limited as chancellor in early October through “different encounters and different kinds of meetings.” In their letter, the deans wrote that they
asked UM System President Tim Wolfe for Loftin’s resignation in meetings on Oct. 9 and 13.

Wolfe announced his resignation at 10:15 a.m. Nov. 9, a week after graduate student Jonathan Butler had started a hunger strike with the goal of Wolfe’s removal. Loftin said Wolfe’s resignation was what he’d remember most about that week because it was a complete surprise to him, even though the two of them had previously met and talked about Loftin’s future at MU.

“We spent time together that evening before and the morning before he made the announcement, and never was that mentioned to me in any way,” Loftin said. “That was quite a shock. It changed everything.”

REFLECTIONS

Loftin said he has had more time to himself since stepping down, compared to his hectic daily schedule as chancellor.

“You have very little time to reflect, which is a loss, quite frankly,” he said. “I guess you could say ‘no’ more, but I feel like saying ‘no’ is not quite the right thing you want to do as the leader of a major campus.”

Loftin said he doesn’t think about what he would change about his time as chancellor. His wife Karin said in an email she supported her husband 100 percent and “he always had the best interest of Mizzou in mind.”

“Cherish what you have, what you had,” he said. "Don’t worry about trying to change it, because you can’t.

“You can look back and say that if I’d done this differently, this might not have happened,” he said. “But what’s the value in that? You cannot go back and relive history. I can’t change what’s happened.”

He said the biggest problem at MU is its need to evolve for the future.

“You can dissect all these smaller topics here, but fundamentally I think the problem is that Mizzou is caught up, as are other universities around the country, in a very, very rapidly changing landscape of higher education,” Loftin said. “It’s really a matter of
adapting or slowly becoming less relevant. I think that’s where we are today and have been for a while.”

Loftin’s time as chancellor was marked by a series of controversial events, beginning with a balcony collapse at University Village apartments and the investigation of swimmer Sasha Menu Courey’s sexual assault and suicide in spring 2014, just months after his tenure began. He created a full-time Title IX administrator position in June 2014, which was later filled by Ellen Eardley.

In fall 2014, racial tensions on campus escalated following the shooting of black teenager Michael Brown by white police officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson. MU students held protests, marched to Loftin’s doorstep and called him out for a lack of action in race relations forums.

Loftin was criticized more than ever during a series of events in the fall 2015 semester, including the cancellation of graduate student health insurance, controversies over Planned Parenthood contracts and more instances of racism on campus. Students used the hashtag “#LoftinCantExplain” to demand faster, more effective responses from the chancellor following instances of racial discrimination.

Even with constant criticism, however, Loftin said he always found joy in talking to students. He spent at least two hours each day on Twitter reading every tweet that mentioned him, replying to direct messages and using his timeline to “get the pulse of the campus.” He was well-known for shaking students’ hands at football games and obliging to requests to take photos.

“The job is very intense,” he said. “No matter how you do it, it’s very intense. You have to find some way to derive benefit from it, otherwise it’s empty, it’s very empty.”

He said what he did as chancellor changed every day based on his calendar, from sitting in meetings to going to as many as 14 student organization events in one day.

“Clearly, I’m not a young person anymore,” he said. “I’m fairly old, and you really have to push yourself hard to keep up each and every day with all the responsibilities you may have. Those are all things that I find important to do, but they do consume virtually all your waking hours.”
FROM ONE SEC SCHOOL TO ANOTHER

Loftin wasn’t originally planning on coming to MU. In July 2013, he announced that he would be stepping down from his position as Texas A&M’s president in order to focus on teaching and research. The Houston Chronicle reported that he was forced to step down, but he called that resignation “a very different circumstance” to his resignation at MU.

That fall, however, a member of the search firm hired by the UM System to replace former MU Chancellor Brady Deaton called. Loftin met with then-President Wolfe at a meeting in Washington, D.C., then with the search committee in Kansas City and the Board of Curators in St. Louis.

Wolfe announced his appointment as chancellor in December 2013, and Loftin began the position the next February. He said at the announcement that he wouldn’t have dreamed of coming to MU without a long-term commitment.

“Mizzou presented an interesting challenge,” Loftin said. “There were a number of things about the university that attracted me, and No. 1 was the students here.”

Here, he wears black and gold bow ties instead of maroon and white. The maroon ones are stored upstairs with his other A&M-colored clothing, he said. He has over 400 bow ties total.

He said the two universities have “a very similar culture among faculty,” but there were parts of MU he still had to adjust to. He said one main difference between MU and Texas A&M is in MU’s comprehensive nature, as A&M is better known for agriculture and engineering.

Loftin said when he was hired at MU, there was a “sense of urgency” compared to at A&M. Soon after he was hired, he adjusted MU’s strategic plan to raise the university’s ranking in the Association of American Universities.

“It was made very clear to me by both the president and by the board that they wanted things to change,” he said. “Given what I saw and my own circumstance in terms of how much time I had here, I felt it was important to move quickly.”

A FUTURE AT MU
Loftin’s new administrative position has multiple parts: He will oversee construction and renovation of research facilities on campus, with current projects including Lafferre Hall and a new wing of the Missouri Orthopedic Institute. He also hopes to connect the Tiger Institute, a partnership between MU and health IT company Cerner, more directly to MU’s research community.

Loftin wrote in his transition agreement that he anticipates holding his new position for five years. After that time, he said he will re-evaluate and potentially teach or do research at MU.

“I don’t view administrative roles, like the one I’ve been asked to do, as permanent,” he said.

He said he plans to finish his academic career at MU, and he anticipates returning to Texas someday.

As for MU, Loftin said that while it’s not his place to set goals for the new chancellor, he hopes they will “continue to advance Mizzou in terms of its mission of educating the students and discovering new knowledge.”

Loftin said he expects Foley to hold his position as interim chancellor for at least 18 months, because the Board of Curators will likely select a new system president before beginning the search process for MU’s chancellor. At the end of 2015, no search committees have been announced for the president or chancellor positions.

Even in a different role, Loftin said he hopes to continue working with students — the reason he originally came to MU.

“I get joy out of it,” he said. “Others get joy out of other things. You have to figure out where’s your bliss at, if you will, and what really will make you happy.”
Kindergarteners Learn Compassion with MU Health School Program

There's nothing normal about life with stage 4 cancer--especially when you're only 5 years old. But child life specialists at the University of Missouri's children's hospital draw on a national program to keep kids connected with their peers during this difficult time. Teresa Snow has more in this report from the University of Missouri. While Rhyan Loose stays at University of Missouri's children's hospital for cancer treatment, her friends go to school. As Rhyan builds a castle in the hospital playroom, somebody is taking Rhyan's seat in kindergarten class. "The monkey will sit in the chair to remind them that she's still part of the class." Monkey in My Chair is a national program aimed at helping young cancer patients stay connected with their school, and in turn, helping classmates better understand the challenges of fighting cancer. "So with the monkey in the chair it actually lets the kids in school that you are still being thought of but you are missing school for other reasons." The monkey kit includes of course, the monkey, but also a backpack for teachers to send home Rhyan's classwork and well wishes from her friends. And there's a book to help teachers explain the difficult situation. Rhyan named her monkey Bailey. And Rhyan's classmates make sure baily goes everywhere they go during school. "We put her around our neck and we take her by our side. The monkey helps, but her friends know life at school is not the same without Rhyan. "I miss that Rhyan is not here because i can't play with her." "They're learning with this whole process we wish this would never have happened but with it happening the kids are learning compassion. "Rhyan get well soon" from the University of Missouri, Teresa Snow reporting.

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=7aeecad0-acb6-4982-a2c2-2f5bb4de50b1