Let's pause to brag about MU

By JACK M. COLWILL

Sunday, March 27, 2016 at 12:00 am

I recently was preparing a talk about our rapidly changing national health care system for a community group. But my thoughts turned repeatedly to the great “dys-ease” caused by ongoing negative publicity about the University of Missouri. Friends whom I know nationally called and asked, “What the hell is going on at Missouri?” Departmental chair candidates have turned us down because of perceived instability. A black medical student told me he had been called at home and advised not to attend this medical school. Then you find that the legislature is deciding to punish the university because of its handling of the conflict. What sort of craziness is this? The long-term damage is incalculable.

Having been a faculty member for more than half a century, I changed my topic and decided to brag about MU. Few really appreciate the degree to which this state is being served by the university. I focus on the School of Medicine and the Department of Family and Community Medicine in which I have been based. The following is a condensation of some of the points I made. Other departments and schools also have much to brag about, and I hope they do.

This medical school always has focused on educating physicians for Missouri. Each of Missouri’s three other medical schools and two osteopathic schools graduate many more physicians than we. Nevertheless, more MU graduates practice across Missouri than those from any other medical school. And they are more than twice as likely to practice in Missouri. Our school is noted for its innovative problem-based curriculum — one in which students in their first two years learn the basic sciences of medicine through clinical problems brought by a “patient of the week.” To say students are enthusiastic about this curriculum is an understatement. Further, our students turn out to be stars on board examinations. After entering residencies in the various specialties across the country, more than 80 percent are evaluated as “exceptional” or “among top performers” — the top two of seven rating categories.

Many readers assume this medical school is primarily funded from state appropriations. In reality, our department receives only 6 percent to 8 percent of its funding from the university and heavily subsidizes its educational programs from clinical income and training grants. Other clinical departments likewise have only small proportions of funding from the state. During the 1970s, Dean Charles Lobeck funneled increased state appropriations into the basic science departments in a successful effort to enhance their research programs. Today the medical school ranks only 65th among 81 public medical schools in tuition and state support per student.
All medical school graduates enter residency training in one of the specialties after graduation. Over the past 40 years, 428 family physicians completed their residencies in our department. Almost half still are in Missouri. And one-third practice in towns of fewer than 50,000 located more than 30 miles from metropolitan areas. We are addressing state and national shortages and should expand these programs.

Our department, faculty and graduates have become national leaders. The department has been ranked among the top 10 nationally for 22 years by U.S. News and World Report. Nine graduates have been or are chairs of departments of family medicine across the country. Three have been or are deans of medical schools or vice chancellors for health affairs. Seven were elected national president of the Society of Teachers of Family Medicine.

One of the most prestigious recognitions in medicine is election to the Academy of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences (formerly Institute of Medicine). Each year, 70 people from health care are elected from across the nation. In our earlier years, three of us were elected. More recently, three of our graduates have been selected: Al Berg, Michael LeFevre and Robert Phillips. Berg and LeFevre each have chaired the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Few recognize the enormous impact Lefevre, the associate dean of the department, has had as chair of the task force, which designates evidence-based preventive services, such as colonoscopy for colon cancer, as a free service for all people under the Affordable Care Act.

Virtually none of our success would have occurred without the amazing transformation of University Hospital over the past 15 years into a thriving, cutting-edge health care system. Before that, we had a deficit-running hospital and the UM Board of Curators feared a fall in bond rating. This year, MU Health Care will serve more than 200,000 individual patients and will provide continuing primary care for 70,000 patients at the same time the system assists in educating health professionals for Missouri.

A mentor once said to me, “People come and people go, but institutions persevere.” We need to celebrate our achievements. Now is the time for enhancing, not for punishing, MU.

_Jack M. Colwill, MD, is a professor emeritus with the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of Missouri-Columbia._

**MISSOURIAN**

**DEAR READER: Hiring more black faculty at MU is only half the battle**

TOM WARHOVER, Mar 25, 2016
Every good business knows that recruiting good people is only part of the battle. If you can’t keep them, all you’re doing is dumping money and time to start the search all over again.

The task becomes Sisyphean; roll the hiring rock up the hill and then go fetch it at the bottom again.

And so it goes with MU’s hiring of black faculty.

Reporter Emma VanDelinder and photographer Mariah Brannan dug deep into some of the challenges in keeping black faculty members at MU and why too many choose to leave.

It’s complicated. But the causes are more varied than some redneck in a pickup truck with a Confederate flag (although that’s not exactly a welcome mat, either).

With just 55 black professors for a campus of more than 35,000 students, you can imagine how many ways those faculty members get pulled by black students looking for mentors and by well-meaning faculty looking for racial diversity on committees or for guidance on how to move forward in the conversations about systemic racism on campus.

It takes some big shoulders to carry all that weight.

No wonder that an assistant professor, struggling to do the research necessary for the brass rings of tenure and promotions while teaching classes, would figure there may be other places to go. Places with more respect. Places with more money.

VanDelinder struggled for a couple of months to develop her article. The statistics were easy enough; the interviews, less so. Faculty members were reluctant to talk. The interviews were just one more demand on their time.

And faculty of all colors on campus have become more reluctant, it seems, since the protests of fall. The most common response has been to shovel interview requests over to the MU News Bureau, which is the university’s public relations arm.
VanDelinder’s persistence paid off. I’m grateful to the sources who agreed to work with her on the article.

These are the kinds of stories we have committed to tackling. They aren’t like the adrenaline-pumping breaking news days of 2015, but they come out of those deep, complex issues raised then.

The Missourian published two other enterprise reports about the city’s largest business in the past week.

Ruth Serven reported on academia’s “working poor:” all those adjuncts and graduate student assistants who carry much of the load of any university but with no job security and little pay.

Jillian Deutsch took a look at the thing striking fear in the hearts of MU administrators: the possible loss of membership in the AAU. That’s an elite club of 62 research universities. Nebraska was booted out in 2011.

The impact there, according to Deutsch’s reporting? Not much.

There are more enterprise reports to come as we attempt to shine light on some big issues in college town.

**University of Missouri to overhaul parking permit sales and enforcement**

By Rudi Keller

Friday, March 25, 2016 at 2:00 pm
A new parking enforcement system for the University of Missouri is expected to increase
permit sales and fine collections when implemented in the fall semester, Mike Sokoff,
campus director of parking and transportation, told the Faculty Council on Thursday.

The NuPark system developed at Texas Tech University uses car-mounted cameras to read
license plates for a match against a database of permit holders, Sokoff said. If records indicate a
car is not in the database or not in its assigned lot, enforcement staff will verify the information
and issue a ticket if necessary, he said.

The new system eliminates permit tags and should result in a 5 to 10 percent increase in permit
sales with new revenue of $66,000 to $132,000 per year. More enforcement and a system that
allows electronic payments should increase fine collections by 25 percent, or $300,000 annually,
Sokoff said.

“Having an online payment system will allow us to have more fines paid more quickly,” Sokoff
said in an interview Friday. “That will translate into real dollars to use for maintenance.”

Currently, the university collects on about 52 percent of tickets issued, he said. The extra revenue
will help clear a backlog of deferred maintenance on lots and parking garages that will require
about $1 million annually for five to 10 years, he said. The parking and transportation office
annual budget is about $11 million.

“We receive no state funds, no general operating funds from the state or university,” Sokoff said.
“We are a complete auxiliary service.”

Parking permit fees, currently $216 to $372 per year for employees and $120 to $168 per year
for students, will not change, Sokoff said. Neither will fines, which run from $10 for a meter
violation to $100 for parking in a handicapped spot. The university charges an extra $15 after the
fifth violation in a year and $50 extra per violation after the 11th in a year.

The university is considering whether to extend enforcement hours until 7 p.m. to match the
city’s enforcement hours, Sokoff said. Parking lots are restricted to permit holders until 5 p.m.
each day. The city enforces parking meters on streets through campus, while Sokoff’s employees
enforce meters on lots.

During the council meeting, members questioned how the system will work for couples who
both park at the university or people with multiple cars. Sokoff said faculty and staff permit
holders will be able to register up to three license plates and couples may cross-list their cars, but
the vehicle used must be in the permit holder’s assigned lot. Student parking permit holders will
only be able to register one vehicle.
Voter ID, ethics measures up next in Missouri Legislature

BY SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, MO. - The Missouri legislative session is just past its midway point, with a number of the GOP's top priorities yet to reach a final vote and disagreements between Senate Democrats and Republicans likely to cause more setbacks.

Democrats who are still upset over Republicans' use of a rare procedural move to break a 37-hour filibuster over a religious objections measure earlier this month delayed even the most mundane tasks in the two weeks leading up to lawmakers' spring break.

But despite Democrats' rebellion, Republican legislative leaders are confident their work will get done between Monday and the end of the session — May 13 — passing priorities like changes to state ethics laws and requiring voters to show photo identification at the polls.

"Fractured or not, we're still 23," Republican Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard said, referencing the 23 Republicans in the now-32-member Senate. "We're still going to move on our business as the majority party."

Democratic senators have already staged three filibusters, including the failed one over the religious objections measure, which would create protections for businesses that object on religious grounds to providing goods or services for same-sex marriages. Democrats and gay-rights advocacy groups say such measures, which have passed in other states, sanction discrimination.

"As long as you don't have great expectations, they've probably gotten about as much done as you might expect," University of Missouri-Columbia political scientist Peverill Squire said. He predicted certain issues in the Senate "may not be able to get done very easily or smoothly" because of remaining tensions.

Democrats have slammed House-sponsored voter ID legislation, for example, as potentially keeping registered voters who don't have the proper photo identification from voting. Senate
Minority Leader Joe Keaveny has said those are likely candidates for another Democratic filibuster in the Senate.

The House, however, has sped through changes to state ethics laws, which were motivated by the resignations last year of two former lawmakers accused of inappropriate behavior toward interns. A proposed ban on lobbyist gifts to lawmakers is awaiting Senate approval, and House members and senators are hashing out differences over a measure to end the revolving door of lawmakers becoming lobbyists immediately after leaving office.

"I started the session off with a call for substantive, meaningful ethics reform," GOP House Speaker Todd Richardson said. "I'm happy we're making progress in that direction, and we've got more progress to do."

Several bills related to abortion also still are pending and will likely see Democratic pushback in both chambers, including a ban on the donation of tissue from aborted fetuses and a proposed requirement that both parents must be notified for someone under 18 to receive an abortion, with some exceptions.

Other top issues lawmakers say will be addressed in the remainder of the session include the proposed $27 billion state budget and ways to pay to fix roads and bridges that have fallen into disrepair.

The religious objections measure still needs approval from the House in order to be put in front of voters. Richardson backs it, and Republicans have more than enough votes to pass it with a simple majority that’s needed. Constitutional amendments don’t need approval from Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon, who opposes the measure.

"If the Senate continues to be a little slower paced than normal, then we’ll adjust our strategy and deal with it then," Richardson said. "But there's plenty of time left in the session for things to get across the finish line."
MU reveals new donations following budget cuts

COLUMBIA — Following recent budget cuts, MU officials announced Thursday the university has raised $65 million over the past six months, all toward a $1.3 billion campaign called "Mizzou: Our Time to Lead."

The money will go toward:

- Building a billion-dollar endowment
- Creating up to 10 signature institutes
- The construction of new buildings

Last December, donations were down $6 million and $17 million in total for the year 2015. In February of this year, donations rebounded, as $21.9 million was brought in through gifts.

MU’s Vice Chancellor for development, Thomas Hiles, said he hopes the legislature notices an upward trend.

"I hope our legislators understand the importance of higher education as a priority and higher education as part of an economic development plan," Hiles said.

Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, the chairman of the House budget committee, released a statement last month explaining why he felt the cuts were necessary.

"The decision to further reduce appropriations for the system was not made lightly and recent events have proved to Missourians that existing performance measures are not the only indicators of a university's performance," Flanigan said.

Hiles said while the University has been through adversity, it's trending in the right direction.
“We did take a hit, I alluded to earlier, right after the November resignations and some of the other controversies that surrounded us but our donors have stayed with us, and they’re very passionate about Mizzou,” he said.

Earlier this month, the state legislature cut nearly $8 million from the UM system. Interim Chancellor Hank Foley stated he anticipates enrollment to drop by 1,500 students, resulting in an approximate $32 million budget gap.

YOUR VIEW: KOMU 8 responds to Melissa Click coverage

COLUMBIA — KOMU 8’s Jim Riek sat down with former MU professor Melissa Click Feb. 15, two days after the Columbia Police Department released body camera footage of Click from October.

After airing the video and streaming it online, viewers took to Facebook voicing their opposition to KOMU’s decision to conduct this interview.

"Maybe you should talk to the person who is in charge of firing her! She has displayed a behavior that Mizzou should not award or encourage." - Jordon Rose

"Stop giving her attention!!!!! She is an embarrassment to the university and community!!!!" - Darren Totten

"REALLY?? HOW much are we as a society going to reward her bad behavior? Let's grant her ANOTHER interview. She should be suspended WITHOUT pay. And ultimately FIRED." - Shannon Wilson

Randy Reeves, the KOMU 8 news director, spoke before Click was fired from MU about the logic behind our coverage and any effect it might have on our news station's credibility.
Reeves said he does not think KOMU 8 over-covered Melissa Click and the issues surrounding her, because state legislators were still talking about it at the time, and it is a major issue that weighed into possible funding for the university.

“We’ve got to cover it. There’s no choice,” Reeves said.

Whether KOMU covers it or not, he said, Click’s case would remain a topic of conversation until the university or lawmakers reached a resolution.

“Frankly, I think it would be a huge blow to our credibility not to cover a story that’s impactful in so many ways to one of the largest employers in our viewing area,” Reeves said.

He said KOMU 8 News reached out to MU’s Communications Department for a comment, but employees there have chosen not to talk to us.

“They have the right not to talk to us because it’s a personnel issue for them,” Reeves said. “It’s a very dicey situation where, legally, certain things can’t be said about an employee.”

The day Click was fired KOMU 8 News also spoke with Tom Warhover, the executive editor of the Columbia Missourian, which has also run numerous stories on her.

"We'll stop covering the story when the story runs dry," Warhover said. "There's no way to predict how this will continue to resonate"

He said the Missourian received multiple comments on the coverage of Click, but not on how much it has been covered.

"After Dr. Click was suspended, I realized this story was not going anywhere any time soon," he said.

Columbia plans construction during students' spring break
COLUMBIA- Columbia Public Works said it planned some road closures and construction projects while students are away on break.

Columbia Public Works said it's using the University of Missouri and Columbia Public Schools' spring breaks to get ahead on road projects. The city told KOMU 8 News it planned construction and closures to start Monday because the town will be emptier. It said the construction sites will cause an inconvenience for less.

The city posted signs around the affected areas so drivers who are downtown for their daily commute can seek alternate routes and plan ahead for travel.

Most of the projects are set to start Monday and be finished by the end of the week.

According to public works, some major spots to avoid include the intersection of Elm and Eighth Streets and the intersection of Fifth Street and Turner Avenue.