Graduate workers to hold union authorization election after year of administrative pushback

An email sent by the Graduate Professional Council to students last Friday sparked an exchange between graduate students and interim Chancellor Hank Foley, the latest in the effort to form a graduate worker union.

Since September, CGW has collected signatures, campaigned on social media and met with MU and UM System administration regarding unionization and graduate worker issues. In February, Middleton said the administration needed legal clarity on the employee status of graduate students before the union could be recognized. The election will determine whether graduate workers support CGW as their future representative in collective bargaining. Then, CGW will look to the courts.

Legal Battle

According to a contract obtained by The Maneater, the UM System has hired law firm McCarthy, Leonard & Kaemmerer, L.C. as outside legal counsel to provide advice and representation related to labor relations. The hourly billing rate for Michael Kaemmerer is $330 per hour, and for other attorneys in the firm it ranges from $175 to $285 per hour, according to the contract.

“I believe, if my math is correct, that before lunch, he makes as much as I do in a week,” CGW co-chairman Eric Scott said. “And you know, I actually teach students at the University of Missouri. It’s very troubling to me that they have this contract with Mr. Kaemmerer in the first place. … We’ve heard that there are probably going to be layoffs or that there are vulnerable nontenured faculty and staff being laid off or having their workloads increased. At the same time there’s a lot of crying poor, system HR is paying for this lawyer whose job is primarily to obstruct our constitutional rights.”

Scott said Kaemmerer sat in on “a number of conversations” with the administration under the pretense of being in town and deciding to stop by.

On April 9, CGW became officially affiliated with the Missouri National Education Association and plans to file a lawsuit to get a legal determination on their employee status.

UM System spokesman John Fougere did not comment on the UM System’s hiring of outside legal counsel.
Any vote to unionize will not be recognized by the university, Foley said in an April 8 email to graduate students in response to GPC’s email about the upcoming election.

“It is surprising, and disappointing, that at the same time MU administration has responded to graduate student requests for improved communication that this announcement was made without any consultation with us,” Foley said.

On April 6, the Coalition of Graduate Workers emailed interim Chancellor Hank Foley, interim UM System President Mike Middleton, the UM System Board of Curators and dozens of top UM System and MU administrators to notify them of the planned graduate worker union authorization election on April 18–19.

On April 8, the Graduate Professional Council emailed graduate students about the upcoming election and encouraging them to vote. GPC passed a resolution affirming graduate workers' right to unionize, but it does not have an official position on whether they should do so, Director of Communications for GPC Matt McCune told The Maneater in February.

Foley said in his email that GPC leadership did not mention plans to hold the union authorization vote in a meeting the day before CGW sent their email. His email incorrectly attributed the unionization efforts to GPC.

“The decision to unionize carries both significant pros and cons for our graduate students, and we feel it is in your best interest to be fully educated on the ramifications of unionization,” he said. “Should graduate student leaders decide to proceed with such a vote at this time despite the lack of consultation with MU administration, and should such a vote indicate that graduate students would like to pursue a union, university leadership will begin an educational campaign to ensure that all graduate students impacted by this decision will be knowledgeable about what this means at the University of Missouri.”

The Forum on Graduate Rights, of which CGW is an extension, responded to Foley’s email that day, saying the assertion that there was a “lack of consultation with MU administration” was “blatantly false.”

“It also demeans the autonomy of GPC, undermines shared governance, and implies that graduate student employees are unable to discern for themselves the value of the options available to achieve the improvements previously articulated via the FGR Demands,” the statement read.

Foley, GPC and CGW met later that day to go over his email, according a memo provided by GPC.
The unionization effort began after graduate workers were informed 13 hours before their health insurance coverage period ended that it would not be renewed. The insurance was quickly reinstated in response to protests, but the event brought other graduate issues to the forefront, such as the lack of quality child care and housing.

In early September, CGW announced plans to hold a union card drive, which sought to collect a plurality of graduate worker signatures in support of holding a union election.

In December, CGW members met with university officials and informed them of the success of their drive and their desire to unionize. They met several times over the next two months.

“We said, ‘We want to work together with you on an election,’” Scott said. “And they asked us to give them until mid-February.”

In a Feb. 10 news release issued after an unpublicized meeting with CGW, UM System and university leadership responded to graduate workers’ desire to unionize by raising a question of legality under the Missouri Constitution.

“We believe that the university needs clarity on the graduate students’ legal right to organize, as there is no legal precedent or clarity in current Missouri law to make that determination,” Middleton said in the release.

The Missouri Constitution does not clarify if graduate workers are employees, and while employees have the right to unionize under Article 1, Section 29, students do not.

UM System spokesman John Fougere said in an email the university supports MU’s efforts in working with graduate students to find common ground.

For the union to move forward as the representative of graduate workers, CGW needs both the support of graduate workers and the administration. The election is following the appropriate protocols to officially indicate whether graduate workers support unionization.

In March, graduate student Ginny Chadwick, the former First Ward city councilwoman, withdrew her bid for Southern Boone County Commissioner after her supervisor told her she would have to either resign her position or take a leave of absence because of Regulation 350.020 on Labor Union Recognition in the UM System’s Collected Rules and Regulations.

"The holding of any elective full-time office in local, county, state or the Federal government is forbidden while the person is serving on the University staff," the rule states.

The wording in the section of the bylaws is set to change “staff” to “employee” and “he” to “he or she” in July.
“In terms of virtually all the paperwork, we get treated as employees,” Scott said. “With Ginny Chadwick’s desire to run for a full-time office, she got treated as an employee. Pretty much the only thing where they have chosen to say, ‘Well, we just don’t know’ is the question of our unionization.”

MISSOURIAN

Former Chancellor Loftin never worked at MU-Cerner health institute

WILLIAM SCHMITT, 18 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Former MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin appears to have set down roots in Columbia, but he never took the administrative job that awaited him after he stepped down Nov. 9.

Loftin was supposed to work as director of university research with the Tiger Institute for Health Innovation, which is run by MU and health care company Cerner Corp. The transition agreement signed Nov. 9 by Loftin and former University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe called for Loftin to be paid $344,250 — 75 percent of his salary as chancellor — plus an annual stipend between $10,000 and $35,000.

However, he never worked at the Tiger Institute, Cerner spokesman Dan Smith and MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

"Dr. Loftin's terms of transition agreement provided that the position with the Tiger Institute would come about with the concurrence of Cerner," Basi said in an email. "That concurrence did not occur and the position turned out not to be feasible, so Dr. Loftin did not assume a position with Tiger Institute."

On Nov. 12, Cerner sent a letter to Donald Cupps, who chaired the UM System Board of Curators at the time, to express concern that the transition agreement was made "without the
prior knowledge or consideration of Cerner Corporation. ... Cerner was not consulted or notified in advance that the Tiger Institute would be included in the transition term sheet."

"Upon learning of the document, we immediately requested the removal of all references to Cerner and the Tiger Institute ... pending the appropriate review by the Tiger Institute's Board of Governors," the letter continued.

Smith said Monday "a position for Mr. Loftin with Tiger Institute has never been proposed to the institute's Board of Governors."

Cerner referred other recent inquiries about Loftin's employment to MU. Basi said Tuesday that he was looking into questions about Loftin's employment and compensation status.

Another clause in the transition agreement called for Loftin to move out of the Chancellor's Residence within 120 days after his term as chancellor ended Dec. 31. That's April 29. A woman who answered the front door of the small mansion at Ninth Street and University Avenue on Tuesday morning said neither of the Loftins was home but both still lived there.

In March, the couple bought a house in the Fifth Ward. To do so, they took out a $340,000 loan with Bank of America, according to a deed submitted to the Boone County recorder of deeds' office.

Their 3,200-square-foot home was built in 1990, and it includes four bedrooms, four full bathrooms and a finished basement, according to the Boone County Assessor's website. The current appraised value of the house and the land combined is $270,050.

R. Bowen Loftin had updated his voter registration address with the Boone County Clerk's office as of Tuesday afternoon, but Karin Loftin had not.
Mizzou job cuts may have profs emptying trash

By Koran Addo St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 8 hrs ago

Whether interim Mizzou Chancellor Hank Foley will be cleaning his office and taking out his own trash come July 1 is unclear.

What is known, however, is that dozens of custodial staff positions at the University of Missouri-Columbia will be eliminated over the next three months, meaning others will have to pick up the slack.

In all, about 16,000 Mizzou hospital and campus employees — including professors — will be responsible for the upkeep of their offices beginning this summer.

Students will be immune to the extra work.

The elimination of custodial positions is part of a nearly $5.5 million plan to cut spending within MU Operations, the department responsible for cleaning, maintaining and repairing the school’s buildings.

A total of 50 positions will be cut through layoffs and attrition.

The department will also cut back on landscaping, mail delivery and long-term maintenance projects.

The cuts to MU Operations do not include MU Police or the MU Environmental Health and Safety department.

Cutting $5.5 million out of MU Operations is just one part of the overall dilemma the university is trying to solve — namely erasing an estimated $32 million budget gap projected for the 2016-17 fiscal year.
Having to take out his own trash is not a big deal to Faculty Council Chairman Ben Trachtenberg.

“Frankly, you’re not going to see a lot of faculty complaining, especially when people are being laid off,” he said.

The concern for a number of university employees contacted on Tuesday is whether these cuts are a harbinger for more painful days ahead.

Some say the dominoes started falling last month when the university put a stop to all merit-based pay increases and instituted a universitywide hiring freeze.

University leaders are anticipating a drop in enrollment this fall that could top out around 1,500 fewer students. If that decline becomes real, it could lead to a $20 million loss in revenue.

With the projected decline in students, recruiting becomes that much more important.

As of now, university leaders say they don’t know how cutting services will impact the recruiting process.

“One of the major selling points of the campus is its beauty,” spokesman Christian Basi said. “Prospective students constantly tell us it was the campus visit that sold them.”

Part of the cuts to MU Operations will result in scaled back landscaping and reduced upkeep in general: Parking lots will only be cleaned on Mondays and there will be no weekend cleanup after home football games.

“Oh obviously we are going to make sure we present the campus in the absolute best light,” Basi said.

But it will be difficult to determine if the reduced services have any long-term impact, he added.
Either way, the university is already preparing to lose students. Two dormitories — Laws Hall and Lathrop Hall — will close at the end of the school year.

And two more, Excellence Hall and Respect Hall, will be used as backups this fall, opening only if other residence halls fill up.

It wouldn’t be cost-effective to keep open half-empty residence halls, Basi said.

To the east 115 miles, the University of Missouri-St. Louis is taking similar cost-cutting measures. UMSL’s leadership is considering eliminating 85 positions — a roughly 6 percent reduction in the university’s 1,300-member workforce.

UMSL is facing an estimated $15 million budget gap created by reduced funding from the state and a steady drop in transfer students.

50 jobs eliminated as University of Missouri cuts hit cleaning, maintenance operations

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at 11:54 am

The University of Missouri will be shaggier and dirtier and faculty will be responsible for taking their own trash to dumpsters under the plan for cutting 50 jobs in campus operations detailed in an email memo sent Friday by Vice Chancellor Gary Ward.

Landscaping operations will be cut back so sidewalk edges are trimmed no more than twice a year and only in the most visible locations, Ward wrote. After Saturday football games, the debris left by tailgaters will not be picked up until Monday, he wrote.

Custodial staff no longer will clean or remove trash or recyclables from offices, Ward wrote.
“This frees up custodians to assist with recycling, which, previously, has been a volunteer effort,” Ward wrote.

The plan to save $5.47 million in the MU Operations division that employs 842 people exempts the MU Police Department and MU Environmental Health and Safety. Ward warned it likely means slower response time for maintenance issues, less overtime and slower snow removal.

In the email, Ward warned that “we will be unable to sustain the level of service for which you have become accustomed. I do not anticipate that changes beginning July 1, 2016, will inhibit the academic mission at Mizzou, nor is it my intention for that to ever happen.”

Ward’s email is his response to a March 9 directive for a 5 percent cut to general fund budgets from interim Chancellor Hank Foley. The directive imposed a hiring freeze and warned there would be no salary increases.

The Columbia campus is trying to cover $22 million of an expected $32.5 million shortfall because of declining enrollment and new commitments such as the new Division of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, spokesman Christian Basi said. The cuts do not take into account possible state budget reductions or increases.

Of the 50 positions in operations to be cut, 21.75 currently are vacant and will not be filled, and many others are in auxiliary departments such as campus catering or facilities, Basi said. Many are held by students, he said.

An additional 10.5 full-time equivalent positions will be eliminated June 30, and five employees already have received notice they will be laid off, Basi said.

The College of Arts and Science will have to cut $4.2 million but expects to do so without layoffs, Dean Michael O’Brien wrote in an email Tuesday. The cuts will require the college to eliminate vacant positions, reduce staff travel and reduce equipment purchases, he wrote.

“I have not sent out any e-mails because the chairs and directors are working directly with their faculty and staff to manage the reductions; it is not a top-down approach,” O’Brien wrote.

Ward wrote that his email is not intended to be a comprehensive list of the actions he is taking to balance his division’s budget. It does, he wrote, include “those that might be most noticeable aesthetically to faculty, students and visitors to campus; and those that realize the most cost savings for the department.”

The issue of trash removal and office cleaning should not be an issue in arts and science, O’Brien wrote.

“I think people see our financial picture as very, very serious and will do what it takes to make things work,” he wrote.
Budget cuts at MU mean delayed trash pickup

Budget cuts mean less custodial staff on weekends, delaying clean up after football games to Monday

COLUMBIA, Mo - The MU Operations department announced earlier on Tuesday that it would be eliminating more than 50 jobs from their fiscal budget for 2017.

The University told ABC 17 that due to the lower amount in enrollment, budget cuts needed to be made and they felt that by eliminating certain jobs, that would help keep that budget lower.

Jobs that are impacted include, but not limited to, custodial staff, mail service only once a week, and lower amount of maintenance crews.

The custodial staff on the weekend crews to clean up after weekend home football games wouldn't be working until Monday during their regular shift starts.

University of Missouri's Spokesperson Christian Basi told ABC 17 that the crews that currently work the Sunday clean up shifts are coming in on overtime to assist and they no longer wanted workers to work on overtime.

Senator Kurt Schaefer told ABC that he doesn't agree with the job cuts and feels that they could have found other ways to cut the budget. "If the fact that they need to make the cuts is a decision that was made from administration, then that responsibility should fall on the administration and they should be absorbing the impact of the cuts.

Residents that live near campus say they aren't happy with the new change, feeling that even with the current system in place, it is still a failed system. Maria Goslin told ABC 17 that "Well I am ill, and I can hardly pick up my own trash, not much less picking up someone else’s."

Senator Schaefer reiterated that, "it's unfortunate whenever you, the person or people, had nothing to do with the decisions that were made caused the unfortunate outcome in the declined enrollment, are the ones that bare the impact."
MU Operations department details cutbacks, including 50 jobs

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The MU Operations department announced Tuesday it would eliminate 53.5 positions due to expected budget cuts in fiscal year 2017.

In a memo to MU faculty and staff, Vice Chancellor for Operations Gary Ward said the budget cuts will likely amount to $5.47 million. Ward said those cuts, however, should not affect Mizzou's academic mission.

The changes to the department include eliminating 53.5 positions through attrition and layoffs, offering fewer student positions, and reducing partnerships in which MU Operations would share project costs with other campus departments.

MU spokesperson Christian Basi said that one of the reasons for the cuts is the decrease in enrollment which accounts for about 20 million dollars of a projected 32 million dollar budget shortfall.

Other departmental changes include:

- Custodial staff won't clean offices or remove trash from offices anymore; instead, MU employees will be responsible for carrying their trash and recyclables to receptacles in their buildings
- Mail services will deliver mail once daily
- Response times for maintenance and repair orders will likely increase due to staffing reductions
- Expectations for campus landscaping appearance will be lowered
- The DigiPrint Center at the MU Student Center will close; the Ellis Library center will accommodate all on-campus printing needs
- Summer paving and maintenance projects will be reduced
- Trash pick up after University football games will be held off until Mondays.

In his memo to faculty and staff, Ward said the following: "We are grateful to serve the University of Missouri and have made no easy decisions. We will continue to streamline functions and share services throughout our division."
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) -- The University of Missouri department tasked with cleaning, maintaining and fixing buildings on the Columbia campus is eliminating 50 jobs.

The move comes a month after university administrators announced they were cutting spending by 5 percent and putting a hiring freeze in place. That's to address an anticipated $32 million budget gap for the fiscal year that starts in July.

The cuts do not include campus police or the school's environmental health and safety department.

Gary Ward is the campus' vice chancellor for operations and chief operating officer. He says in a memo to staff that the spending cuts will leave MU Operations unable to sustain current service levels.
MU System report boasts impact on state's economy

COLUMBIA, Mo. - A new study of the University of Missouri System's impact on Missouri shows some impressive numbers.

The study is titled "Economic Impact on Missouri of the UM System." It was funded by The Missouri 100, an advocacy group supporting “the most pressing priorities of the UM System, its four campuses, MU Healthcare and Extension."

The study suggests Missouri's economic growth rate is 25 percent higher due to the UM System's research and development efforts.

It also claims aggregate income would decline if the UM System stopped educating students.

The study points out, over the course of a generation, the more-educated workforce is worth more than $240 billion in “extra real gross domestic product.”

Professor and Kenneth Lay Chair in Economics Joe Haslag is the report's co-author. He said the study goes well beyond recent controversies surrounding the Columbia campus. He said, “At the very core, that's not what we are. We're not a football team. We're not all about campus protests. All of those things have a place, but day-to-day throughout the entire academic year, this year, just like all past years, we have students who are attending class. Hopefully, they're getting something out of those classes.” Dr. Haslag said, “We have faculty who are conducting basic research and that basic research has implications for how fast the state grows.”

MU display targets problem of student suicides

COLUMBIA - 1,100 t-shirts littered MU’s campus Tuesday to represent the average number of college students who commit suicide each year across the country.
The rows of colored shirts are an eye-opening reminder of how prevalent suicide is.

Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC’s research shows, more than 100 people take their own life everyday in the United States, which is equivalent to a person every 13 minutes.

The t-shirt display Tuesday was put on by Active Minds Mizzou, a mental health advocacy organization.

Active Minds advisor Christine Glissmann explained mental health is like physical health, both must be well-maintained.

Glissman said there are three things we can do as a community to improve mental health awareness. First, improve the language used to classify people suffering from mental health problems. Second, remove the negative stigma.

"There is a fear that if you say you have a mental illness or you are diagnosed with a mental illness that you'll be seen as weak," Glissmann said. "Actually, it takes a lot of strength to actually be able to say, 'Hey I need help'"

Lastly, Glissmann said she believes it's important to stay educated about mental health and willing to talk to people who might be struggling.

Dr. Kim Daniels, a licensed psychologist at the MU Counseling Center, said, "It is important to understand what options people have at their expense."

"There are several types of resources for people with mental health problems, its just about finding what works best for you," Daniels said. "Often times its best to start with your primary care physician."
MU Closes Two Residence Halls

COLUMBIA - **Incoming Freshman may have to adjust their living plans at The University of Missouri.** The University has announced that access to Residence halls Respect and Responsibility will be closed this fall due to a drop in enrollment. MU Spokesperson Christian Basi says its for financial reasons.

“We are temporarily restricting access to two of our residence halls, we’re doing this because we want to make sure we are utilizing our residence halls to their fullest capacity so that we are being fiscally responsible,” Basi said.

Basi added that the two halls selected based on their need for possible repairs.

MU Student and Responsibility Hall resident Courtney Pettigrew says that next years students will miss out on the suite-style layout of the halls and its convenient location.

“With the halls closing, I feel bad for the future students coming in” said Pettigrew “it’s close to the dining halls like plaza and Rollins and living in Responsibility is really convenient.”

Freshman applications have decreased by 870 this time last year, and enrollment is projected to decrease by 1,500 at the start of the fall semester.

MISSOURIAN

**Former MU physician faces charges of aggravated stalking**

ERIN BORMETT, 20 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **A former surgeon with MU Health Care has been charged with two accounts of aggravated stalking after threatening to kill two people last year.**

Gregory McClain, 43, was charged Friday with multiple incidents of aggravated stalking, a felony, between December 2014 and March 2015. McClain's attorney, Christopher Slusher, entered a plea of not guilty on his behalf.
According to court documents, McClain made threatening phone calls to a former coworker calling himself "the Gorilla." He asked the coworker to follow directions and told her he would "have fun with her body parts, rip her heart out and dismember her body."

This coworker was granted a protection order against McClain for stalking in December 2015.

McClain also made phone calls to the coworker's supervisor. McClain told the supervisor he "would get body parts sent to him" and that he would "rip him apart from his nerves to his ears and feet." He also talked about the man's family.

McClain's cash-only bond was set at $100,000.

Slusher and Cole County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Richardson were not available for comment Tuesday afternoon.

Speaker explores religious, racial identity changes during the Great Migration

IDA SOPHIE WINTER, 8 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — On a Sunday in April 1942, Wentworth Arthur Matthew refused the label "negro" while registering for the U.S. draft. Along with thousands of others participating in the Great Migration, Matthew, a naturalized immigrant from St. Kitts, insisted on defining himself by both the racial and religious term "Hebrew" on the official draft document.

This is how Judith Weisenfeld framed the story of how black Americans participating in the Great Migration — an early 20th century geographic movement away from small, rural and largely southern communities to urban areas in the North and South — rejected European-
assigned identities. Instead, they asserted new connections with "the divine" through racially and religiously intertwined movements.

Weisenfeld's speech was the MU Department of Religious Studies's annual Distinguished Lecture in Religion and Public Life. She is Princeton University’s Agate Brown and George L. Collord professor of religion.

Weisenfeld’s speech focused on how black Americans moved away from Protestantism to develop and join Ethiopian Hebrew congregations, the Islamically influenced Moorish Science Temple of America, Nation of Islam and the Father Divine’s Peace Mission Movement. She said they believed these paths connected them to their African and divine identities.

Weisenfeld, who researches African-American religious history in the early 20th century, spoke on how large populations of black migrants, both American-born and of immigrant, usually Caribbean origin, moved to U.S. cities in search of better economic opportunities. In creating new communities together after slavery and during the development of Jim Crow, they struggled with continued oppression despite expectations that things would change for the better. They began searching for religious and racial identities outside of European-assigned Protestantism and the term "negro," which many saw as demeaning.

Weisenfeld said membership in these groups went beyond intellectual assent to changing their whole selves — how they ate, how they dressed and how they lived. Religious adherents believed that misnaming people and groups disconnected them from "divine knowledge" and "sacred destiny." By casting off European names and racial designators, individuals and new movements signified community with each other and dissent against the dominant European culture.

"They understood their bodies to be critical sites for practicing and performing their new religio-racial identities," Weisenfeld said. "These embodied performances (and) expressions tie the individual to the relevant narrative of identity ... to restore them, their entire beings, to their original and right form."
Weisenfeld focused on the Moorish Science Temple, founded by Noble Drew Ali, who proclaimed himself God's prophet and preached that black Americans were descended from Moroccans. According to Weisenfeld, he said Europeans used names like "colored" and "negro" to obscure Muslim identities. Members of the temple took on the surnames of "El" and "Bey" to signify their "original" identities and community.

Weisenfeld also examined the Father Divine movement, in which black and white people gathered in celibate, sex-segregated communities under Father Divine, who was cast as the living embodiment of God. They cast off race as being a man-made, devilish invention, and renamed themselves to cut ties with their earthly families and selves.

Weisenfeld concentrated on this topic because she wanted to explore how black Americans developed and assumed their new religio-racial identities. She said historians often ignore participants' "lived (religious) experiences," and focus more on politics than religion.

Weisenfeld's book on the same topic, "New World A-Coming: Black Religion and Racial Identity During the Great Migration," will be published by the NYU Press later this year.