Dog walking seniors are healthier — but think hard before buying grandpa a puppy

By Karin Brulliard  April 27 at 8:00 AM

Walking is the most common form of physical activity for people over age 60, and it’s good for them. Among other benefits, it’s linked to a lower risk of heart disease, and it can improve leg strength and increase endurance.

Dog owners, studies have found, get more exercise than people who don’t have dogs, probably because of the walking involved.

So, do seniors who walk their dogs have better health and get more exercise? Yes, according to a new study in the journal the Gerontologist.

To come to this conclusion, researchers at Miami University in Ohio and the University of Missouri looked at data from the 2012 Health and Retirement Study, a biennial survey of Americans older than 50 that is sponsored by the National Institute on Aging. They found that those who walked dogs had lower body mass indexes, fewer limitations in daily activities, fewer chronic conditions and fewer visits to the doctor. They also got exercise more often and did it more vigorously.

Those who owned dogs but didn’t take them on strolls, however, had poorer health. “Dog walking appears to be the mechanism by which dog ownership promotes health,” the study said. It noted, however, that it wasn’t clear whether the dog walking actually caused the better health.

Still, co-author Rebecca Johnson, a professor at the University of Missouri and director of its Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction, said she felt confident that the association between the dog walking and health, combined with
previous studies on the benefits of dog ownership, should be enough to prompt medical professionals to recommend seniors both have a pooch and walk it.

“The whole body of literature on dog ownership ... indicates that the dog is unconditionally loving,” Johnson said. “They are a social lubrication, meaning other people talk to people if they’re out walking their dog. They’re a bridge to other generations.”

[How much is a pet dog worth? A court will soon decide.]

But there may be good reasons to think hard about adopting a dog. Hal Herzog, a psychology professor who studies human-animal relationships at Western Carolina University, praised the study’s large sample size and analysis, and he said the association between dog walking and health appeared to be strong. But he said it’s important that it didn’t show dog walking caused better health.

“It is equally likely that elderly people who are in good health have the energy to walk their dogs,” he said. “It is critical in these types of studies that readers do not confuse correlation and causality.”

There can also be cons to owning dogs, Herzog said. The Centers for Disease Control, for example, reported in 2006 that more than 86,000 people are injured each year in falls associated with cats and dogs — mostly with dogs — with increasing rates of injury as people get older.

Johnson acknowledged that dogs can come with downsides, and she noted that one doesn’t have to own a dog to reap the benefits of walking one — walking shelter or friends’ dogs works, too. But she said seniors shouldn’t have to forgo pet ownership just because it can involve lifting heavy bags of dog food, changing litter or visits to the vet. Older people also have trouble changing light bulbs, she said.

“They need help, but that doesn’t mean they shouldn’t have electric light,” Johnson said. “People say, well, it’s a burden for older people to have dogs because they need help. Sure, they need help. As they age, they need help with a lot of things.”
Missouri lawmaker targets university travel expenses

Rep. Caleb Jones says he’s heard complaints about Mizzou reimbursing travel for employee spouses.

The university says travel is reimbursed when it is necessary and of benefit to the university.

BY JASON HANCOCK
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JEFFERSON CITY - A Republican lawmaker from Columbia is seeking a ban on Missouri universities paying travel expenses for the spouses of employees.

Rep. Caleb Jones said he’s heard complaints about the practice in recent months. When he sought information about from the University of Missouri-Columbia, he said he came up empty handed.

“I’ve had people call me anonymously and say that the university is flying wives and husbands of employees across the country on education junkets,” Jones said. “I don’t think that’s a good way to use our taxpayer dollars.”

The legislation got a hearing last week in the House Emerging Issues Committee. With a little more than two weeks left before the legislature adjourns for the year, Jones said will try to add the bill as an amendment to other legislation that is further along in the process in the hopes of getting it across the finish line.

“We need to fix this,” he said.

Jones said he was open to amending the bill to ban all travel reimbursement for non-employees.

No one testified in opposition to Jones’ bill during the committee hearing.
John Fougere, spokesman for the University of Missouri System, said the system’s policy states that reimbursement of expenses for non-employees is made when the travel is necessary and of benefit to the university.

“In general, necessary would mean the spouse’s presence is expected or customary, and benefit to the university means their presence helps further the mission of the university,” he said.

Christian Basi, spokesman for the University of Missouri-Columbia, said that while expenses may look like they are being paid by the university, many times the actual funding comes through grants or from a private company.

For example, Basi said a professor might have a contract with a private company, either for research or technology development.

“It is not unusual for the company to invite the professor to their headquarters to discuss the research or business,” he said. “If the company has a contract through the university, the reimbursement money for the travel could be routed through the university. It is during these trips that companies might invite a spouse to attend, but that is paid by the company, even though the funds might be routed through the university.”

The University of Missouri has repeatedly faced criticism from state lawmakers this year following student protests last fall. The state’s $27 billion budget originally cut the university’s funding by more than $8 million. The budget cut was eventually reduced to $4 million.

After rough first year, AD Rhoades bullish on Mizzou's future

By Dave Matter St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 8 hrs ago

COLUMBIA, MO. • On the eve of his one-year anniversary as Missouri athletics director, Mack Rhoades joked that a few gray hairs have popped up since he started the job last spring.

He’s lucky the only casualties are a few follicles.
A job Rhoades said wasn’t “a fixer-upper” the day he replaced Mike Alden proved to require more troubleshooting than he anticipated.

A refresher: In the middle of the football team’s second losing season in 11 years, players aligned themselves with a campus protest aimed at ousting the university system president and staged a boycott that sparked international headlines. Later that week, Mizzou all-time football wins leader Gary Pinkel announced he had cancer and would retire at season’s end. Not long after Rhoades’ unexpected job search to hire Barry Odom as football coach, Mizzou announced self-imposed sanctions for the men’s basketball program for NCAA violations, followed by another last-place finish for Kim Anderson’s team and Rhoades’ subsequent decision to keep Anderson on the payroll for another season.

By April, Rhoades could come up for air.

“Most of the days have flown by extremely quick,” he said Tuesday, meeting with reporters to reflect on the last year. “Some of the days were longer than I would have liked.”

Rhoades likened his job to “drinking water through a fire hose,” but as the boss of a department that seemed to have more flames than hoses the last year, he insisted he’s more excited about the future than the day he started at MU. Much of his first-year agenda was sidelined while he managed one crisis after the next — notably an aggressive ticket sales campaign that never got off the ground — and when he compares his first 12 months at Mizzou to his last A.D. job at University of Houston, there’s a lag of production.

“I feel we’re a little bit behind,” he said. “That’s OK. We dealt with the stuff we needed to deal with. I tell our staff, ‘We have two choices: We can get worse from it or better from it. Worse is not an option.’”

While Mizzou’s two most high-profile teams endured losing seasons under Rhoades’ watch, his first year will be remembered for last November’s football team boycott, an offshoot of the student protests and racially fueled unrest on campus.
“If anything, as I think back, did I need to have a better understanding of what was going on on campus and how those things were handled and how they might filter down to our football program?” Rhoades said. “When you have 20 minutes to react, you do the best you can. I also think since that time has happened we’ve done a lot of great things. That’s where our focus has been. How do we move forward? How do we make sure we create an environment within our athletics program that (a boycott) never happens again?”

To prevent a similar incident, Rhoades said MU has made sure coaches and administrators connect more with athletes on issues beyond “the Xs and Os.” Rhoades has launched a student-athlete working group that represents every team on campus so the administration has a better feel for athletes’ issues. In the fall, every athlete will participate in mandatory curriculum centered on teaching life skills.

While MU projects decreased enrollment as a result of last fall’s turmoil, cash donations and pledges toward MU athletics since Jan. 1 have eclipsed last year’s totals through the first four months of 2015, Rhoades said. Football season ticket renewals stand at 75 percent, down from this time last year but ahead of the pace in 2013, when the Tigers were also coming off a 5-7 season. Rhoades said MU projects a renewal rate of around 85 percent by the summer.

As for Mizzou’s men’s basketball program, Rhoades said he’s had a lot of “frank conversations” with Anderson since the end of MU’s 10-21 season.

“I told him at the end of next year we can’t feel like we’re still three our four years away from having real progress for our basketball program to be relevant,” Rhoades said.

For now, he’s committed to Anderson’s recovery plan.

“Kim didn’t have to take the job,” Rhoades said. “The reality is he inherited a really, really tough situation. Unless you walk these halls and understand what that entails every day it’s hard to put your arms around it. He has.”

Also in the works:
In the next month, Mizzou expects to announce plans for a new football training facility that will include coaches' offices, locker rooms, weight rooms, along with a dining hall and academic center for all athletes. MU has scrapped plans to build the facility behind the south end of Memorial Stadium and instead will use the land where the current team facility is located.

Rhoades said MU is leaning toward tearing down the 44-year-old Hearnes Center and replacing it with a 5,000-seat arena that would host volleyball, gymnastics and wrestling. But he's also thought about renovations that would preserve the intimate and nostalgic look of the lower bowl.

To boost ticket revenue, Mizzou plans to form a sales team modeled after professional sports franchises. “They'll work on commission,” Rhoades said. “We'll have a director of ticket sales and that’s all they’re focused on, calling people and selling tickets. I’m optimistic.”

Mack Rhoades reflects on a tumultuous first year as Mizzou’s athletic director

Last year included a football boycott, Pinkel’s retirement and basketball sanctions

Rhoades: ‘More excited’ about MU than when he was hired

The south end-zone project has morphed into a new training center project

— Tod Palmer

Missouri athletic director Mack Rhoades on Tuesday compared his first year on the job to “drinking water through a fire hose.”

“We certainly had some challenges this year, some that certainly I didn’t anticipate,” said Rhoades, who was lured away from Houston last spring as Mike Alden’s successor. “I thought, candidly, that was maybe one of my strengths, but there are some things that happened that you can’t anticipate.”
Rhoades’ first official day as the lynchpin for the Tigers’ athletic department was April 27, 2015, and he was kept busy in his first nine months on the job.

There was a boycott by the football team amid racial protests on campus; the retirement of the football program’s all-time winningest coach, Gary Pinkel; a joint investigation with the NCAA into infractions within the men’s basketball program; and the Maty Mauk saga, which culminated in the Mizzou quarterback’s dismissal in January.

What has the last year taught Rhoades?

“Stay true to your core values,” he said at a news conference in Mizzou Arena. “You’re going to be bombarded with opinions. Everybody’s an armchair quarterback, ‘Oh, you should have done this,’ ‘Why didn’t you do that?’ You make decisions for the right reason. I’ve never made decision based on what looks best, but really what is best for our program moving forward.”

Despite the challenges, Rhoades said he’s more excited about the job than when he was hired and stressed that he’s eager to turn those challenges into opportunities for growth.

Rhoades also mentioned the many great things have happened at Missouri during the last year — including hiring Barry Odom as Pinkel’s successor, J’den Cox’s national wrestling title and subsequent Olympic berth, and a breakthrough season for women’s basketball.

“You look at our donation totals and our pledge totals since January 1st of this year compared to January 1st of last year — we’re up,” Rhoades said. “That’s been positive.”

Missouri’s cumulative student-athlete grade-point average for the fall semester — 3.03 — was the highest in school history.

Rhoades also said 75 percent of football season tickets have been renewed, which lags behind last year but is ahead of the pace from 2012 after the Tigers’ most recent 5-7 campaign.

“We think, moving forward, we’ll have about 85 to 86 percent renewal rate,” he said.

Partly in response to last fall’s turmoil, “Mizzou Made” will expand from a social-media construct into an all-encompassing, student-athlete enrichment program.

“We’ll unveil what we call ‘Mizzou Made:Preparing Champions for Life’ in the fall of 2016,” Rhoades said. “It will be a very dynamic, outside-the-box, fun curriculum that’s mandatory for all of our student-athletes.”
It will be in partnership with the wider Mizzou campus that focuses on life skills and career development among other core aims.

“When we talk about preparing champions for life, are we really doing that?” Rhoades said. “We want to make sure — when our students come in as freshmen and not waiting until they’re juniors and seniors — we talk about what you want to be and what you want to do ... then making sure our student-athletes are graduating with meaningful degrees.”

While the litany of fires that Rhoades’ administration was forced to put out stalled progress in some areas — for example, he’s still working to connect with donors, fans and alumni outside Columbia, Kansas City and St. Louis — there has been progress on things like the “south end-zone project.”

“We’re in the process of reviewing five different concepts, and none of them are in the south end zone, so I don’t know that we can call it the ‘south end-zone project’ anymore,” Rhoades said.

The new concepts involve renovating or rebuilding the Mizzou Athletics Training Complex and Devine Pavilion. The football program and wider athletic department already have outgrown the 101,000-square foot, $16 million training complex, which opened in July 2008.

The new facility would include new offices and meeting rooms for football along with a weight room, training facility, locker room and team lounge (perhaps including a barbershop) along with similar facilities for the Olympic sports housed there. It also would house a dining hall and academic services center for all student-athletes.

As soon as next month, Rhoades said a concept will be adopted and presented to donors.

Options for the Hearnes Center include preserving the historic building with a drop-ceiling to create a smaller venue, but it’s still likely slated for demolition.

Memorial Stadium may see additional premium seating, including a recruiting suite on the south end, and a new facade on the north end, but those projects remain in very preliminary phases.

Missouri also expects to receive the final report for the NCAA Committee on Infractions regarding the men’s basketball investigation soon.
The Tigers self-imposed a one-year postseason ban, two scholarship reductions and recruiting restrictions in January after an 18-month joint investigation, and Rhoades doesn’t anticipate additional major sanctions.

“I would be extremely disappointed, because we did a lot of due diligence, looked at a lot of case precedent, talked to the experts,” Rhoades said. “The way we handled the investigation, the NCAA said it was exemplary, so I feel like we’ve done all the right things. I’d be very disappointed.”

Rhoades reflects on a year under fire

By Joe Walljasper

Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 9:47 pm

On Tuesday, Mack Rhoades compared his first year as Missouri’s athletic director to drinking from a firehose. It was an apt comparison, considering the number of fires that needed to be put out in the athletic department — and the university — in the last year.

It has been one of the worst competitive school years in MU history, with the football, men’s basketball and baseball programs combining for an 8-36 record in Southeastern Conference games. The basketball program is involved in a major NCAA investigation. And the football team’s boycott during November racial protests created an administrative nightmare, leaving the new AD trying to support his athletes, appease angry fans and fight the perception that MU is an unfriendly place for black students.

“The fact you had to deal with a boycott, the fact you had to deal with a major NCAA investigation, the fact you had to deal with all of that in your first six months and your first year, and you’re trying to establish culture, you’re trying to establish vision and future and where we’re headed, trying to get out and establish relationships in the community, taking time to connect with your donors, your fans, your alums, it’s been a real challenge to balance it and make sure you touch on all areas,” Rhoades said.

It hasn’t all been bad news. Swimmer Fabian Schwingenschlogl and wrestler J’den Cox won national titles, and Cox just earned an Olympic berth. The women’s basketball team under Coach Robin Pingeton had its best season in 15 years, advancing to the second round of the NCAA Tournament.
But the topic of the November unrest — which reached critical mass when the football team joined forces with the Concerned Student 1950 protesters and threatened a boycott on Nov. 7 — has dominated the news for the last six months. Rhoades was asked if he would have handled the situation differently in hindsight. At the time, former football Coach Gary Pinkel and Rhoades supported the players, who vowed they would not play or practice until University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe left office. Wolfe resigned on Nov. 9.

“As I look back, did I candidly need to have a better understanding of what was going on on campus and how some of those things were handled and how they might filter down to our football program?” Rhoades asked rhetorically. “But when you have 20 minutes to react, I think you do the best you can. But I also think since that time has happened, we’ve done a lot of great things. That’s where our focus has been. How do we move forward? How do we make sure that we create an environment within our athletics program where that never happens again?”

To that end, Rhoades said the athletic department is planning a wide-ranging new initiative called Mizzou Made: Preparing Champions For Life. He called it a “dynamic, outside-the-box, fun curriculum mandatory for all our student-athletes.” He said a part of that initiative will be a program called Career Development Services, which will start working with athletes as freshmen to make sure they get on the right academic track to graduate with “meaningful degrees, not just so they can say they have a degree.”

Rhoades said he is encouraging coaches to spend more time with athletes talking about life issues rather than athletic matters. He noted the creation of a position filled by former football player Will Franklin, whose job title is coordinator of football player engagement.

As for the feelings about the MU athletic department from the outside, Rhoades said football season ticket sales are about 75 percent of what they were at this point last year, when the Tigers were coming off consecutive SEC East titles. But ticket sales are ahead of where they were in 2013, the last time Missouri was coming off a 5-7 season. Athletic donations took a serious dip in December, but Rhoades said donations are up since Jan. 1 compared to the same time period last year.

In a month or so, Rhoades hopes to approach major donors with a plan for a new football-centric facility. In December 2014, when Mike Alden and Pinkel were the athletic director and football coach, MU was proceeding with a plan for a project that would house the football offices in a new facility attached to the south end zone of Memorial Stadium. That idea has been scrapped in favor of a more multipurpose approach.

“We’re in the process of really reviewing five different concepts, and none of them are in the south end zone, so I don’t know that we can call it the south end zone project anymore,” Rhoades said.

The new facility will be located across Providence Road around what is now the Mizzou Athletic Training Complex.
“We’re looking at a brand new MATC, something that would incorporate brand new coaches’ offices — I’m talking about football here — and meeting rooms, weight room, sports medicine, the locker room, the team lounge, which may or may not have a barber shop in it, all of those things that really give us a chance to compete, perform, recruit at the highest level,” Rhoades said. … “The facility would encompass some of the same types of things — weight room, sports medicine — for some of our Olympic sports.”

Rhoades said the hub of the new facility would be a “spectacular” dining hall and new academic center that will allow all of MU’s athletes, staff, coaches and administration to mingle. Rhoades said one of the design concepts includes a new indoor football practice facility with coaches’ offices overlooking the practice field.

The 44-year-old Hearnes Center, whose demise has been discussed for several years, is still on the chopping block, although it sounds like the building is growing on Rhoades.

“Initially, we really felt like with the studies done, it’s just a very inefficient building, and we were going to knock it down and replace it with a 5,000-seat arena that would host volleyball, gymnastics, wrestling,” Rhoades said. “I think that’s probably where we’re still headed.”

But Rhoades said he has given some thought to installing a false ceiling inside the Hearnes Center to give it a more intimate feel and to renovate it to have it resemble a “nostalgic, old-time place, much like some of the baseball parks.”

Here are some other topics Rhoades discussed with reporters:

-- The men’s basketball program has finished last in the SEC in each of Kim Anderson’s two seasons as coach, but Rhoades decided after the season to stick with Anderson for a third year. Since then, three more players — sophomores Namon Wright, Tramaine Isabell and Jakeenan Gant — have announced they are transferring, continuing a trend of roster turnover.

“Kim and I have had a lot of very frank conversations, and I’ll tell you what I told him: ‘At the end of next year, we can’t feel like we’re still three or four years away from having real progress,’ ” Rhoades said.

He noted the difficulty of the situation Anderson inherited from previous Coach Frank Haith.

“It’s not an excuse. Kim didn’t have to take the job. He decided to take the job,” Rhoades said. “But the reality is, he inherited a really, really tough situation. Unless you walk these halls and understand what that entails every day, it’s hard to put your arms around it. He has inherited an incredibly difficult situation, and we’re going to work like heck to help him.”

Rhoades said he expects the NCAA infractions report could arrive any day and that he would be “extremely disappointed” if the NCAA hit Missouri with penalties beyond what the school self-imposed.
On his decision to give baseball coach Tim Jamieson a three-year extension after last season, Rhoades noted Jamieson’s history of success in the Big 12, the difficulty of competing in the ultra-competitive SEC with numerous institutional disadvantages and the quality of young players returning this season.

After being ranked in the Top 25 early in the season, the Tigers have struggled to 21-21 record, including 4-14 in the SEC. As for Jamieson’s job security now, Rhoades said, “I’ll sit down at the end of the year and evaluate it. I’ll sit down with Coach, and we’ll see where we head from there.”

Rhoades acknowledged that Missouri, which has the smallest baseball budget in the SEC, isn’t giving the baseball program all the resources it needs to succeed.

“Probably not,” Rhoades said. “Last year, we made a commitment in terms of assistant coaching salaries, the way we travel, but probably not all the way there.”

MISSOURIAN

Missouri AD Mack Rhoades reflects on first year, looks toward the future

With a football boycott and basketball sanctions, it was an eventful first year

ANDREW HODGSON, 2 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Mack Rhoades thinks the before-and-after pictures would look bad.

Stress tends to wear on people. And the past year has been stressful for Rhoades, who celebrates his one-year anniversary as Missouri’s athletic director on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, when Rhoades met with media at the Stalcup Room in Mizzou Arena, he opened with the positives of his first year in charge.

J'den Cox won a wrestling national championship. Men's and women's swimming and diving finished eighth and 11th, respectively, nationally. Women's basketball made it to the second round of the NCAA tournament. Fall semester athletes achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.03, the school's highest ever.
But he did not address the football team's boycott in his opening statement. The boycott was the athletic program's biggest headline maker of the past year. Maybe ever.

"I hope people understand that what happened in November wasn't just about our football team," Rhoades said. "There were issues on campus that filtered down to our football team."

Just two days after a group of black football players announced they would not participate in any team activities, former University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe resigned. The athletic department branded the boycott, which eventually came to include the entire football program, as a way of standing in solidarity with graduate student Jonathan Butler, who refused to eat until Wolfe resigned.

Looking back, Rhoades questions if he needed to have a better understanding of what was happening on campus — where student activist group Concerned Student 1950 camped out on Mel Carnahan Quadrangle after submitting a list of demands to university administration — and how those issues affected student athletes.

"Since that event I think we've done a lot of great things, and that's where our focus has been," Rhoades said. "How do we move forward, and how do we make sure that we create an environment just within our athletics where that never happens again?"

"We're certainly not there yet but I think we've done a lot of really good things for us to move forward."

Since the boycott, Rhoades has been encouraging coaches and administrators to talk to Missouri athletes more about what is going on in the athletes' lives. Coaches have also had to talk to potential recruits about the climate on campus more than they previously did, Rhoades said.

Rhoades specifically praised new football coach Barry Odom for embracing being more open with players and recruits. Odom has brought back former Missouri wide receiver Will Franklin, an honorable mention All-Big 12 performer in 2006 and 2007, to specialize in player engagement.
"Now we have somebody like a Will Franklin back in our program that is closer to our student athletes' age and has walked in their shoes," Rhoades said, "not 20 years ago, but maybe five to 10 years ago, and (he) understands what they're going through."

The football team ended up finishing 5-7 and did not go to a bowl game for the first time since 2012. The men's basketball team did worse. Those Tigers went 10-21 and finished last in the Southeastern Conference.

"We expect our football program to be nationally relevant," Rhoades said. "We expect our men's basketball team to be nationally relevant."

In January, the basketball team announced it committed multiple NCAA violations under former coach Frank Haith from 2011-2013. The team's self-imposed sanctions included vacating 23 wins from the 2013-14 season, paying the NCAA a $5,000 fine, losing one scholarship in one of the next two seasons and not participating in the postseason this past season.

Rhoades said the NCAA called Missouri's handling of the investigation "exemplary," and he added he would be extremely disappointed if they came back with more sanctions.

The results on the field have not been any better for the program. The Tigers are 19-44 in coach Kim Anderson's two seasons.

"Kim didn't have to take the job; he decided to take the job," Rhoades said. "But the reality is he inherited a really, really tough situation."

Eight players have either transferred or been dismissed from the team in Rhoades' first year. No player remains on the team from Anderson's first recruiting class.

Despite the team's troubles, Rhoades said he is sticking with Anderson. For now. The athletic director said by the end of next basketball season the team can't still be "three or four years away from having real progress."

"This is a special place, there is no reason why this place can't be great. No reason why."
JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri Ethics Commission has declined to investigate allegations that state Sen. Kurt Schaefer has used his elected office for personal political gain.

Schaefer is running for the Republican nomination for state attorney general.

In declining to investigate, the commission said the allegations brought by The Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust appeared to be criminal in nature, and thus were not under the commission's jurisdiction.

The Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit submitted its allegations Wednesday to the Missouri Ethics Commission, the Cole County Prosecuting Attorney's Office, the Boone County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the United States Attorney's Office for the Western District of Missouri, Kendra Arnold, general counsel for the group, said.

The allegations range from misdemeanor official misconduct to bribery related to programs receiving federal funds, an offense which can trigger a fine or a prison sentence lasting as long as 10 years.

Arnold said by phone Tuesday afternoon that if Schaefer were found to be guilty of the allegations, the penalties written into law would be appropriate to impose.

According to the foundation's complaint, Schaefer, R-Columbia, used his elected office for "the benefit of his personal political ambitions, rather than for the benefit of the citizens of Missouri." The document suggests that Schaefer used his power as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee over the University of Missouri's funding to pressure former
UM System President Tim Wolfe and Board of Curators member David Steelman to modify university policy to make it more difficult for MU associate law professor Josh Hawley to run against Schaefer for attorney general.

Steelman said Tuesday afternoon that bringing the allegations was a “political move,” designed to bring Schaefer “bad press.”

Arnold said the group has no contact or connection with Hawley.

The document says that Schaefer may have committed the following crimes:

- Public servant acceding to corruption, a class E felony in Missouri
- Official misconduct, a class A misdemeanor in Missouri
- Using his office for personal financial gain, a state offense
- Honest services fraud, a federal offense
- Bribery concerning programs receiving federal funds, a federal offense

The foundation's document relied upon local media reports, Wolfe's leaked email and emails obtained through public records requests.

Don Ledford, public affairs officer for the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Western District of Missouri, cited Department of Justice policy in declining to comment on or confirm the existence of any ongoing investigation.

An employee at the Cole County Prosecuting Attorney's Office declined to comment or provide her name in response to questions regarding the possibility of an investigation of Schaefer.

"This complaint is nothing more than a campaign stunt put forward by a DC insider who is working for my opponent to generate negative press about me, while hiding the funding source," Schaefer campaign spokesman Scott Dieckhaus said in an emailed statement. "This is typical DC gutter politics."
The Foundation for Accountability and Civic Trust is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit, whose website describes the organization as being "dedicated to promoting accountability, ethics, and transparency in government and civic arenas by hanging a lantern over public officials who put their own interests over the interests of the public good."

Arnold said Monday evening that the group focuses on politicians throughout the country and has filed complaints against politicians in states such as Illinois and Florida.

The group is headed by Matthew Whitaker, a U.S. attorney who held office under George W. Bush. Whitaker ran for an Iowa seat in the U.S. Senate as a Republican in 2014.

Schaefer's Facebook page indicates that he is scheduled to hold a "Meet 'n Greet" at the Heidelberg on Friday evening.

**MISSOURIAN**

**DAVID ROSMAN: Misplaced legislative action will only to fuel political ambition**

DAVID ROSMAN, 2 hrs ago

Ellis Smith is one of my most prolific readers and seems to be a fan of the Missourian. His comments about my columns are sometimes insightful and sometimes confusing. Much like my commentaries.

Last week he wrote this about two state Senate committees, one active and one proposed:

"Commissions, committees, study groups, etc. are no substitute for LEADERSHIP, which seems conspicuously absent, whether we are talking about Missouri state government (legislative AND executive) or about higher public education's prize bad joke, officially known as the University of Missouri System."
What Smith could be referring to is yet another committee proposed by, you guessed it, Columbia's own state senator, Kurt Schaefer. The University of Missouri System Review Commission, proposed under Senate Concurrent Resolution 66, would review the "failed leadership" of the UM System.

The scope of the committee is quite broad. It would be focused on, "but not limited to the system's collected rules and regulations, administrative structure, campus structure, auxiliary enterprises structure, degree programs, research activities, and diversity programs…" All of this to be completed before Dec. 31.

The new committee would have an assembly of eight persons chosen by the Senate's president pro-em and the speaker of the House. There is nothing in the proposed resolution that gives the committee any real power, nor does the resolution require any diversity for the committee itself.

In other words, though the notion is denied by Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, the committee could very well consist of "friends" of the state's conservative persuasion — a persuasion that has already shown contempt for public education, post-secondary and K-12.

This has as much to do with another unnecessary committee as it does with Schaefer seeking statewide name recognition for his August run as a Republican primary candidate for attorney general.

Schaefer's proposals have one thing in common: They are an attempt to gather support from the conservative right wing of the GOP for Schaefer's nomination. It is a page straight out of the Donald Trump campaign book: Say or do enough outrageous things to gain as much free publicity as possible.

It seems to be working. Schaefer's attacks on both women and the UM System have found their way into the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, the Kansas City Star and a number of local papers across the state. He is getting his name out as a "protector of the realm," a predecessor to becoming the state's highest law enforcement officer.
These tactics are also nothing more than flogging political hot-potato issues to court conservative voters, i.e.: abortion, women's health and public education.

Here is the rub. While the newest state budget does eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, it does "increase" the budget for education — mostly. The Missourian reported that "state funding [will be] about $439 million short of what's called for under the legal formula for school [K-12] funding."

The proposed budget for higher education has also been increased by some 4 percent, just enough to defray any increase in tuition for the students of our state colleges and universities. And it does include money for MU, perhaps because of "support" for the University of Missouri System Review Commission by the system's current administration.

However, Schaefer's committee would use $750,000 from the Department of Higher Education's budget to fund the commission. That is a substantial amount of money for a committee that has limited powers and would have a problem setting its own goals for diversity and transparency.

Yes, former UM President Tom Wolfe did not handle the diversity issues on the MU campus with the most expedient hand and was forced out of office. Yes, there is racism on and off campus. Yes, the UM System does have management problems. But oversight by a committee with little if any enforcement power would not be a good thing.

All of this is coming from a politician who has stayed out of the limelight for much of his political career until the chance to advance to a statewide office became available.

Smith is right in his assessment: there is little leadership in the state's legislative branch. The political energy spent by Schaefer these days is only to advance his own political aspirations.
EDITORIAL: MU, Schaefer win dubious awards for muzzling free speech

KANSAS CITY STAR, 2 hrs ago

The Thomas Jefferson Center every year hands out its Jefferson Muzzle awards, recognizing the worst affronts to free speech. We doubt many winners display them on the mantle or in the trophy case with pride.

Maybe the University of Missouri should start looking for a dark, dusty corner with some empty space because a 2016 "award" is headed its way from the Virginia-based, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization.

In addition, Missouri state Sen. Kurt Schaefer, a Columbia Republican, won a dishonorable mention for his attempt to block a University of Missouri student's dissertation about the effect of a state law mandating a 72-hour waiting period for women seeking abortions.

MU was hardly alone in being cited, because campuses across the nation earned dubious recognitions this year.

"Never in our 25 years of awarding Jefferson Muzzles have we observed such an alarming concentration of anti-speech activity as we saw last year on college campuses across the country," the Jefferson Center announced.

Instead of the usual rogues' gallery of about 10 individuals or institutions worthy of recognition, this year the center is giving Muzzles to 50 colleges and universities across the nation where free speech took it on the chin in 2015.

For instance, Emporia State University in Kansas was recognized for ejecting reporters from a public forum on race relations,
The event that won the University of Missouri such unwanted attention shouldn't be hard to guess.

In a video that ended up being replayed endlessly last November, an assistant professor of mass media studies was captured asking for "some muscle" to help get a reporter removed from the site of a public protest during last year's Concerned Student 1950 controversy.

Melissa Click, who was fired by the university system Board of Curators, became the face — fairly or unfairly — of the unwise attempt to shield student protesters from the media, even when they were in public places.

That wasn't the only incident that won the school notice from the Jefferson Center. The center also cited a short-lived social media policy adopted by the School of Law Student Body Association and an email from campus police asking students to report "incidents of hateful and/or hurtful speech."

Ironically, Thomas Jefferson's original tombstone is on the Francis Quadrangle on the Columbia campus just west of the chancellor's residence.

When heirs of the nation's third president replaced his tombstone at Jefferson's Monticello estate, they decided to give the original one to the University of Missouri, the first public university in the Louisiana Purchase Territory, which Jefferson is credited with acquiring from France in 1803. The monument arrived at MU in July 1883.

Missourians should demand better from one of their flagship institutions of higher education than succumbing to the "epidemic of anti-speech activity" at American colleges and universities that compelled the academic focus of this year's Muzzles.

Indeed, the greatest shame of all is that so many schools went so far to suppress free speech. College should offer a time when students are exposed to a wide variety of ideas and expression, learning both to navigate their own thoughts and opinions, and how to respond to countering notions.
On second thought, perhaps MU should display its Muzzle so it remembers that lesson and doesn't win another.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

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**Two-time interim University of Missouri president Mel George dies at 80**

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 2:00 pm

*Mel George, twice interim president of the University of Missouri, leader of the 1997 task force that developed the MU values statement and a devotee of penguins, died Monday at his Columbia home.*

He was 80.

Longtime friend Bill Bondeson, a professor emeritus of philosophy, called George an administrator without peer who put the academic interests of the university first. The two men met in the 1960s and shared a love of music, Bondeson said.

Bondeson ran the University Concert Series from 1976 to 1992. For almost 20 years, he said, they traveled to New York every December to book artists.

“We share a love of music that goes back a long, long, long, long time,” Bondeson said. “Many an ice cube was drowned in scotch while we discussed the problems of the world.”

George was interim president from 1984 to 1985, bridging the period from James Olson to C. Peter Magrath, and again from 1996 to 1997 between George Russell and Manuel Pacheco.

George came to the university in 1960 as a mathematics professor after receiving his doctorate from Princeton. He left in 1970 to become dean of arts and sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, returning to Missouri in 1975 to become vice president for academic affairs.

In 1984, while serving as interim president, George was appointed president of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn. He retired from that post and was planning to move back to Columbia when he was chosen as interim president for a second time.
“An interim president is obligated to keep the institution moving, but not so vigorously as to make it difficult to change direction when a new president comes in,” George said in 1996.

Interim President Mike Middleton, like George called out of retirement as a transitional leader, praised George’s legacy in a statement issued late Monday.

“His passion for higher education was strong as he provided a constant reminder of the importance of having a respectful campus environment through his ‘Statement of Values’ read at the start of MU Faculty Council meetings during his time as a professor,” Middleton said.

The 1997 Values Task Force decided on respect, responsibility, discovery and excellence as the four words that summarized MU’s values.

Former Chancellor Brady Deaton, who first met George when he was provost and George was interim president for the second time, said the statement of values is George’s lasting legacy.

“We all felt that they were so important that we would hold all the decisions we made to that test,” Deaton said.

In retirement, George and Meta George, his wife of 58 years, traveled extensively as he pursued his goal of visiting all 17 species of penguins in the wild, Bondeson said. They succeeded despite Meta’s dislike of sea voyages, he said.

It was appropriate that George died on World Penguin Day, Bondeson said.

“It is a terrible hole in the lives of many, many people,” Bondeson said.

Information on funeral arrangements was not available at press time.

ASUM pushes for confirmation of curators’ student representative

Incoming ASUM Executive Director Steven Chaffin: “We’re undergoing the process of selecting a new UM System president, and we’re seeing that students aren’t going to stand to not have their voices heard at the administrative level.”

Nearly two months after Gov. Jay Nixon appointed the new student representative to the UM System Board of Curators on March 10, the position is still vacant and the appointee still awaits Missouri Senate confirmation.
The Associated Students of the University of Missouri released a statement Tuesday expressing discontent over the delay in MU junior Patrick Graham’s confirmation.

ASUM said in the statement that it has “heard numerous concerns from students about the prospect that the current nominee for student representative … will not be confirmed this session,” which ends May 13.

In the statement, ASUM asked Gov. Jay Nixon to make a recess appointment, which would allow Graham to serve on the board until January 2017, when the Senate would have 30 days to confirm or deny his nomination. The Gubernatorial Appointments Committee is in charge of scheduling confirmations and has yet to schedule Graham’s confirmation hearing. Ron Richard, chairman of the committee, could not be reached for comment.

Other Missouri schools have not had the same problem; Truman State University’s student representative was appointed in April and has already been confirmed.

Incoming ASUM Executive Director Steven Chaffin said ASUM wanted to emphasize that there are processes in place to ensure that a student representative can still serve in the interim even if not confirmed.

“We’re undergoing a time of great change on our campus,” Chaffin said. “We’re undergoing the process of selecting a new UM System president, and we’re seeing that students aren’t going to stand to not have their voices heard at the administrative level.”

In a statement to KOMU, UM System spokesman John Fougere said that the presidential search committee allows student voices to be heard.

“The two students on the committee are two more than were on the committee during the last presidential search,” Fougere said.

Chaffin said ASUM had spent time gathering information and discussing the situation with Graham to make sure their statement represented the situation accurately. Graham could not be reached for comment.

“This is a situation unlike any we’ve had in recent years, and it’s just extra scrutiny on the university,” Chaffin said. “Pretty much every process that normally would just slide by has been a little more contentious and watched a little more closely.”

ASUM has historically advocated for a voting role for the student representative, but Chaffin said this year it “hasn’t gotten very far” because of the “volatile environment” on campus. He said he is currently developing a mental health legislative platform and is beginning one addressing sexual assault.

“I certainly support the idea of having a student voting curator, and the majority of ASUM feels the same way, but I want to make sure it’s something that is viable,” he said. “I do think there
might be a benefit to setting it aside temporarily to let some of the current lawmakers get out of office, to allow us to establish our credibility through other means.”

**Forbes**

**As Enrollment Drops At Univ Of Missouri, Professor Melissa Click Blames 'Racial Politics' For Firing**

**Last fall, campus protests roiled the University of Missouri in Columbia.** In November, Professor Melissa Click put her hands on a student journalist trying to cover the protests and was fired. Not surprisingly, enrollment has plummeted at Mizzou as would-be students look elsewhere.

The university expects to come up $32 million short as enrollment for 2016-17 appears to be down about 1,500 students after a decade of what Mizzou calls “record enrollments.” Current undergraduate enrollment is 27,812. The downsizing will mean a 5% budget cut and a hiring freeze. Four dorms will be closed.

In the meantime, Click, 44, has been going on the offensive. She hired a public relations firm and sat for an interview with the Chronicle of Higher Education. “This is all about racial politics,” she told writer Robin Wilson. “I’m a white lady. I’m an easy target.”

Thud. That was the sound of Click’s earlier apologies falling on the floor like an abandoned copy of a dissertation on Martha Stewart. While the story mentions her public and private apologies to Mark Schierbecker, the history major who recorded his threatening encounter with Click, she never backs away from her performance that day. A reminder: “Hey, who wants to help me get this reporter out of here,” she is heard yelling to a group of protesting students. “I need some muscle over here.”

Click, a communications professor then in the homestretch of earning tenure, wants to be portrayed as a protective mother hen to the black students protesting what they perceived as racism’s grip on the entire campus.

“I am a woman who made some mistakes trying to do what she thought was right,” she says. Yes, indeed, she uses the “mistakes were made” defense. Further in the story she tells the reporter, “Black people love me.”

The university isn’t blaming its enrollment drop on Click. It notes that the baby bust of the late 1990s is cutting into college application numbers around the country. But the upheaval and bad publicity certainly didn’t help.
“While we do not think that the campus unrest was the only factor, we certainly believe that it was a factor in our decreased deposits,” interim Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Barbara Rupp told the school newspaper The Maneater. “This seems to be particularly true out-of-state, where many families were not able to come to campus, or return to campus, and relied only on what they were able to see in the media.”

Out-of-state students, who pay a $15,000 premium over in-state students, comprise nearly one-third of the total enrollment of 35,448.

In January, the Maneater reported that deposits from accepted students were down 23% over the previous year. Last month the university said it wouldn’t open two residence halls that were already scheduled for future demolition. This month, the university announced that two newer dorms, Respect and Excellence, would be shuttered due to lack of students.

Rupp told the Maneater that the budget cuts won’t impact recruiting efforts. “The hiring freeze and budget cuts have not affected recruitment,” she said, “as it is understood that recruitment efforts must continue.”

And the hiring freeze didn’t keep the admission department from hiring new representatives in Atlanta, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

Click is experiencing her own hiring freeze and hasn’t gotten any leads on jobs. She told the Chronicle that her claim for unemployment was denied because the university fired her for cause. She has appealed that decision. She says she is also planning a lawsuit against Mizzou for denying her due process. The university has said that it moved against her when she was charged with assault against Schierbecker and accepted community service to make the complaint go away.

There is a GoFundMe campaign, Stand With Melissa, that has raised over $13,000 to go towards her legal bills.

Afro-Cuban artists to showcase work in Columbia

BRIANA SAUNDERS, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — When Juanamaría Cordones-Cook visited Cuba, her objective was to conduct research on the arts, literature and cultural life of Afro-Cuban people.
Cordones-Cook found it wasn't enough to research the Afro-Cuban culture from afar and wanted to go to Cuba to experience the community. After 25 research trips to Cuba, Cordones-Cook, an MU professor of romance languages, was excited to see her work turn into a four-day conference in Columbia showcasing the three leading Afro-Cuban artists.

"Afro-Cuban Artists: A Renaissance" will feature not only the three artists in attendance, but also scholars, students, the community and visitors from around the globe in an open discussion and exploration of Afro-Cuban heritage. Although the Afro-Romance Institute has hosted previous panels and discussions about Afro-Diaspora and Latin American art, this is the first time MU will host this event, Cordones-Cook said.

The word "Afro-Cuban" refers to Cubans of African descent, Cordones-Cook said.

Cordones-Cook said she's always been focused on African-diaspora and Latin American arts.

Through her documentaries she wanted to record the Afro-Cuban experience. She said these artists are incredibly talented and showcase their heritage in their work.

But she didn't go to Cuba to meet every artist. Nancy Marejón, a leading Cuban poet who Cordones-Cook met 23 years ago in Columbia, is now also a writer-in-residence, author and scholar. Marejón's work and teaching in Afro-Caribbean arts at MU gave background to the conference, Cordones-Cook said.

Cordones-Cook hopes that the conference will make the Columbia community aware of the excellence and significance of the Afro-Cuban creativity.

"There is racism all over, lack of knowledge, sometimes underestimation, and (the Columbia community) needs to see the superb quality of the cultural products coming out of this wonderful group of artists," Cordones-Cook said.

The conference is scheduled to run April 27-30 and will feature three Afro-Cuban artists who show various styles and techniques in their art.
Kander uses Senate campaign to bring discussion of student debt to University of Missouri campus

By Rudi Keller

Tuesday, April 26, 2016 at 2:00 pm

Symmone Sparks entered the University of Missouri in fall 2010 and is studying music in hopes of becoming an opera singer.

She is $44,000 in debt and took time off from classes to work so she could afford to continue her education. She must figure out how to pay for the final year of her education now that she has hit the maximum in student loans.

Sparks’ mother earns too much as an employee of the St. Louis Housing Authority for her to qualify for grants and too little to help much with her education, she told Secretary of State Jason Kander on Monday when he brought his campaign for the U.S. Senate to the University of Missouri campus.

“That has really been a setback as far as finishing,” Sparks said. “I have been trying to get all the bills situated. I worked four jobs last year to make myself steady enough to break even.”

Kander expects to be the Democratic nominee to challenge U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., in the November election. Both first must defeat little-known primary challengers in August.

Kander met with students from MU, William Woods University and Columbia College to discuss how federal policies hurt students who must borrow money to attend school. The average student graduating MU in 2014 finished with $25,321 of debt, a little less than state and national averages.

After the meeting, Kander said he wants to cap interest rates on federal loans and expand the Pell Grant to provide more aid to low-income students. Students who have graduated need to be able to refinance their loans at lower rates, he said.
“It all begins with doing what we did here today, which is listening directly to students about how it affects their lives, how it affects their families and how it affects their futures, because all of that also affects the economy of Missouri,” Kander said.

Students who take out direct loans pay 4.29 percent interest. That is down from a high of 6.8 percent about a decade ago, but after graduation students are not able to consolidate their debt into one loan at current interest rates. Loans for parents to cover the gap between other aid and the cost of attending carry an interest rate of 6.84 percent.

The rules of the federal loan programs encourage heavy debt unnecessarily, said Gena Boling, associate director of financial aid at MU. Financial aid is calculated by using parental income and the average cost of attending the university, $25,514 this year for in-state students and $40,126 for out-of-state students.

Students who do not have enough money to cover that cost can borrow the difference even though many do not need that much, she said. One component is housing, and it is based on the cost of living on campus, Boling said.

The ease of obtaining student loans is fueling the construction of expensive off-campus apartments, she said. “It hurts to hear that students are paying $1,500 a month in housing and we are letting students borrow to pay for that, and we have no way to stop that.”

Kander did not use the event to criticize Blunt on student aid issues. He did, however, ask Sparks what she would do if she could pursue her dreams without having to repay her loans.

She dreams of singing at the Metropolitan Opera, she said. If she had no debt, she said, she would go to graduate school.

“Opera companies want you to have that degree,” Sparks said. “Or you could go into education, which is a little bit easier, but they are kind of looking for you to have that graduate degree as well.”

MISSOURIAN

Mizzou Hillel requests rezoning for new student apartments

CATHY WENDLANDT, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Mizzou Hillel will get its first rezoning hearing next week on a plan to tear down its current building and construct a new six-story student-housing complex.
The Jewish campus center is partnering with Trittenbach Development to replace its current building at 1107 University Ave. with a complex that features 275 beds and a space for Hillel. A public hearing to rezone the property is scheduled for 6 p.m. May 5 at the Daniel Boone City Building.

Currently, the 0.72-acre property is designated as R-3, a multifamily residential zoning district. Columbia city planner Clint Smith said that there's a request to rezone to C-P, a planned business district. He said the current R-3 zoning has certain requirements that would make it difficult for Hillel and Trittenbach to complete their planned development. Under C-P, there would be more flexibility, and they would be able to request waivers.

Smith said the city was looking at two waivers.

Hillel and Trittenbach requested a waiver to not have the required parking spaces. Six parking spots and a bicycle rack with space for eight bikes have been planned, according to the development plan submitted to the city.

Mizzou Hillel is working with the city of Columbia on a plan to tear down and rebuild its property on University Avenue. The ground plan Hillel submitted shows the new building will have six parking spots and a bike rack with eight spots. There are two public parking structures in the surrounding area.

Jeanne Snodgrass, Hillel's executive director, said the six spots would be designated as handicap, staff and visitor parking. Students with cars would be required to prove they have bought parking passes elsewhere, she said.

"Part of our evaluation is to determine if zero parking is appropriate with this site," Smith said.

The current design does not have as many parking spaces needed under R-3 zoning requirements. In a C-P district, waivers can be requested throughout the development plan process.
Smith said Hillel and Trittenbach also requested a waiver for no setbacks. Meant to be a buffer, setbacks are the number of feet from the property line that a building must be.

The Hillel property requires a 15-foot setback on its south side, which faces University Avenue. Its north, east and west sides all require a 10-foot distance. But its east side faces the University Avenue parking garage and its north and west sides border MU property.

Smith said the argument for the development is that it's unlikely that the north and west sides will be developed into residential areas, which would require a buffer between commercial properties like Hillel. So, a waiver would be appropriate. The south side facing the street is still being evaluated.

"A reduced setback could be reasonable, but we're still reviewing that corridor," Smith said. "We're looking for it to fit in the context of University Avenue."

Hillel has been in Columbia for almost 70 years and owns the property on University Avenue, Snodgrass said. The current building was constructed in 1969, but "it wasn't built to be specifically for students and the type of programming we do now."

The project had been in the works for nearly three years when the board of directors and Snodgrass got together to brainstorm the future of Hillel, she said. Almost two years ago, Hillel approached Trittenbach to create a new space. The proposed six-story building will have 70 three and four bedroom student apartments. Snodgrass said while Hillel won't manage the apartments, it will retain ownership of the property and occupy the first floor.

She said that the organization is excited because this will be "a new space that we can design."

Hillel has been working with MU architectural design senior Brennan Pfeil to plan out the space.

"She's been working so that the space can reflect our values as an organization," Snodgrass said.
They want to create a space that is more user-friendly and welcoming, Snodgrass said. Hillel is planning to build an office, sanctuary, a space for meals, two kosher kitchens, a lounge, a library, study rooms, and potentially a deli or cafe.

Snodgrass said Hillel is planning for construction to begin this summer and to be completed by fall 2017. The Columbia City Council is set to hear a first reading on the project at its June 6 meeting and potentially vote on June 20, Smith said.

Mizzou Hillel partners with local developer to build student housing

The Jewish campus center will occupy the first floor of the new building, which will have five additional floors of student housing.

A plan to tear down the current Mizzou Hillel building and rebuild a six-story student housing complex in its place will have its first rezoning hearing next week.

The new building will house the Jewish campus center on the first floor, Hillel Executive Director Jeanne Snodgrass said. The other five floors will have apartments with three or four bedrooms and a total of 275 beds in the building.

Hillel is planning for construction to begin this summer and be completed by fall 2017, according to the Columbia Missourian.

The plan is a partnership between Hillel and local builder Trittenbach Development. Trittenbach developed the Brookside apartment complexes in Columbia.

While Trittenbach will manage the apartments, Snodgrass said Hillel will retain ownership of the property at 1107 University Ave., according to the Columbia Missourian. She told The Maneater the Hillel Board of Directors approached several local developers about a potential partnership over three years ago.

The rezoning request, made on behalf of Hillel Council Inc., asks to reclassify the 0.72-acre property from R-3, a medium density multiple-family dwelling district, to C-P, a planned business district, according to the proposal.
The plan also requests no setback requirements or parking requirements. According to a ground plan submitted by Hillel, there will be six parking spots and a bike rack with eight spaces. The building is also located near two parking garages, University Avenue and Hitt Street garages.

Snodgrass said Hillel’s current building, which was built in 1969, lacks adequate space, fails to meet the most current Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines and is not “particularly energy efficient.”

“We had a desire to have a facility that was more than just adequate to serve students better,” Snodgrass said. “We’re hopeful that we’ll be able to offer even more.”

While the building is under construction, Snodgrass said Hillel will have a small temporary office at the United Methodist Church and will hold additional programs on campus.

Gabe Raskin, a campus engagement intern and student at Hillel, said that an updated building will be an opportunity to increase Jewish students’ engagement. According to the center’s website, about 800 Jewish undergraduate students attend MU.

“Hillel offers a very inclusive community where we give each other respect and give each other opportunities of leadership and opportunities to experience Judaism,” Raskin said. “Although the residents may not be Jewish, as far as any personal issues go, I hope and don’t believe there will be any. I think there will definitely be a line of respect built as we are sharing our space and as Hillel owns the property.”

Hillel currently shares its building with the International Community Church. Snodgrass said the church has not yet determined whether they will rent space in the new building.

“I just hope that people look at the project for what it is — the chance for a small nonprofit that works with students and that provides a lot of resources for the university to be updated,” Snodgrass said. “We’ve been here for over 70 years. We’re committed to this town and to this university.”

The public rezoning hearing is at 6 p.m. May 5 at the Daniel Boone City Building.