FAIRWAY, KS (KCTV) - It didn’t take long for Maris, a high energy golden lab in Jefferson City, to become part of Michael and Maria Bish’s family. Maris runs around her yard, playing catch with Michael Bish as if she’s a puppy.

It’s hard to believe three years ago the Bish family was having to make a very difficult decision.

A tumor was growing in Maris’ mouth and initially, the family didn’t have many options.

Maris could have potentially lost the bottom part of her jaw and possibly be euthanized. But, a small glimmer of hope appeared with a new suggestion.

“They asked us if we would like to do this experimental treatment,” says Maria Bish.

A veterinarian pointed the Bishes to an injectable chemotherapy treatment at the University of Missouri.

The concept was developed 175 miles west at the University of Kansas Hospital.

“We think this really could be a game changer,” says Dr. Daniel Aires, the Director of Dermatology at the University of Kansas Medical Center.

Aires has been perfecting the treatment for the past five years.

“It is a targeted way of delivering chemo to cancers, instead of just putting it in the vein and hoping some if it gets where we want into the cancer,” explains Dr. Aires. “This technology enables delivery right to the cancer.”

So far, it’s been used in seven dogs.
Three dogs showed complete responses, which means their cancer is gone. Four showed partial responses, meaning their tumors shrank and stabilized.

It eradicated Maris’ tumor. She’s been cancer free for three human years, 21 dog years.

Dr. Jeffrey Bryan is working on the University of Missouri’s part of the clinical trial. He’s a board certified specialist in veterinary oncology.

“It is absolutely huge,” says Bryan. “It’s exciting because we’re helping these dogs.”

Bryan is excited for what the trial’s success means for the future. It won’t just help dogs but their owners as well.

“As we understand what contributes to this in our dogs, we can more rapidly apply that to people,” says Bryan. “This literally is helping both ends of the leash.”

Aires agrees, the results are promising for men and women who will have to battle cancer down the road.

“Within the next couple of years, we’d like to see the first couple trials in humans,” says Aires.

Maris’ owners are excited to be a part of this ground breaking treatment.

“Maybe they’re on to something here,” says Michael. “I hope they are.”

The trial is still accepting patients. If you think your dog could be a candidate call (913) 588-3640.

Mizzou gets $12 million to study technology in teacher preparation

By Koran Addo St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 14 hrs ago

The federal government has awarded the University of Missouri-Columbia $12.3 million to study how technology can be used effectively in training future teachers.

The money comes in the form of an “Investing in Innovation,” or “i3” grant from the U.S. Department of Education.
The money will be funneled through the College of Education's National Center on enhancing Missouri's Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies, also known as “eMINTS.”

Mizzou researchers have also received more than $3 million in matching funds to complement the grant money.

“Currently, eMINTS helps teachers create classrooms where they facilitate real-life learning experiences for their students by integrating technology in ways that transform learning,” said Christie Terry, associate director of eMINTS.

Recently, an eighth-grade class in one eMINTS classroom, in collaboration with the state conservation department, used technology to collect and analyze data while investigating a destroyed river wetland, Terry said. The students also created a series of kiosks that could be installed along the river to inform the public about the wetland ecosystem.

The Investing in Innovation Fund was created as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, known as the Stimulus. Mizzou has received three i3 awards since the bill was passed.

**MU College of Education gets $12 million grant to study classroom technology**

By Roger McKinney

Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 10:08 am

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded a $12.3 million grant to the University of Missouri College of Education to study integrating technology into teacher instruction.

The researchers also secured more than $3 million in matching funds for the project.
The Investing in Innovation grant is one of the largest the college has received and is through the College of Education’s Enhancing Missouri’s Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies National Center, or eMINTS.

“It’s all about quality teaching,” said Hank Foley, MU interim chancellor. “Any time we get a federal grant of this magnitude, it’s really important.”

As it’s used now, eMINTS helps teachers create real-life learning experiences by integrating technology. An example is an eighth-grade project to investigate a destroyed river wetland in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Students used technology to collect and analyze data, connect with experts in the field and create information kiosks along the river with information for the public about the wetland ecosystem.

The eMINTS expansion project will study the effectiveness of the program on teacher instruction and student achievement in math, language and science. It also will allow the eMINTS National Center to explore expanding the program to more schools around the country at a low cost.

The project will serve 56 schools in high-needs districts in Alabama, Utah and Arkansas. It will involve nearly 450 teachers and more than 24,000 students over five years.

Kathryn Chval, dean of the College of Education, said more than 2,500 teachers have been certified in the eMINTS program. She said the most frequent request from international visitors is to see classrooms that demonstrate the effective use of technology. She said when they see eMINTS classrooms, they’re impressed.

Christine Terry, associate director of the eMINTS National Center, said when she was a student, she had to determine area using pencil and paper. Now, students are given the task of painting walls, using technology to measure the walls and determine the amount of paint needed for the job, she said.

The Investing in Innovation program requires all recipients to secure private sector support. The $3,581,952 for the eMINTS project came from cash donations and in-kind contributions from contributors including KC Audio-Visual, Dropbox Inc., SMART Technologies, Google Foundation and the International Society for Technology in Education.

Foley said the university was required to raise $1.2 million from private sources, or 10 percent of the grant total.

“We’ve secured triple what was required, and that’s no small feat,” Foley said.

The Investing in Innovation Fund was established as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. This is the third grant from the fund awarded to MU.
College of Education program receives $15 million in donations, federal grant

ALLISON COLBURN, 19 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — MU’s College of Education received a $15.8 million in private donations and a federal grant Wednesday for its program that helps teachers use technology to teach.

The money will fund research on how integrating technology in the classroom affects student achievement and will expand the college’s enhancing Missouri’s Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies (eMINTS) program, which trains teachers and school district administrators to effectively use technology in k-12 classrooms.

The $12.3 million federal grant is one of the largest the college has ever received, according to a news release from the university.

Vice Chancellor of Advancement Tom Hiles said the funds are welcomed, especially after MU’s recent challenges and financial struggles. In March, Interim Chancellor Hank Foley announced that a $32 million budget gap was the result of decreased projected enrollment. Donors withdrew more than $2 million in pledged donations after protests on campus in November.

“It’s been really gratifying — and Hank and I talked a little bit about this on our recent trip to California — that when you’re met with some of those struggles, to have private support,” Hiles said.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the grant from its Investing in Innovation Fund, part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. College of Education Dean Kathryn Chval said that legislators considered discontinuing the fund in 2015, but representatives from the eMINTS program convinced congressional staffers to keep the fund last fall. This is the third Investing in Innovation Fund grant the college has received and the second for the eMINTS program.
Chval said that classroom curriculum evolves along side technology, which poses challenges for teachers wanting to learn how to best use technology in their classroom.

“So it’s not a surprise that people are looking for the expertise on how to do this well,” Chval said.

Chval said that visitors to the College of Education are frequently interested in classroom technology, especially visitors from high-needs and international schools that lacked access to technology. The visitors often want to learn how to use technology in a way that aids learning, instead of distracting from it.

The grant will expand the eMINTS program to serve 56 high-needs school districts in Alabama, Utah and Arkansas. The program’s associate director, Christine Terry, said the three states were chosen because the program previously established relationships with a school district within each of those states. Teachers and administrators from those districts will mentor other districts in their state in integrating technology, Terry said.

A 2015 study on the eMINTS program found that 60 high-poverty schools in rural Missouri participating in the program had an increase in student achievement in mathematics over a three-year period.

Terry said the $15.8 million donation was unique because it combined both government funding and private donations. The Google Foundation, Dropbox, Inc., Kansas City Audio-Visual, SMART Technologies and the International Society for Technology in Education were among the private donors.

But the grant was also unique in Terry’s mind for another reason: It isn’t about researching and creating something new, but instead expands a program that has been shown to work in the past.

“Most grants are about investigating new things,” Terry said. “Let’s take the things that work and figure out how they work and how to scale them.”
Federal grant funds MU teaching technology

Watch story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=e8a4fffd2-b653-408b-ae34-a2088529e7b9

Columbia, MO — The U.S. Department of Education awarded a federal grant worth $12.3 million to a state education center on the Mizzou campus.

Researchers at the eMINTS Center at MU's College of Education will use the money to study the integration of teaching and technology.

The researchers also received more than $3 million in matching gifts to make their grant one of the largest in their college's history.

eMINTS helps teachers create classrooms where students experience real life learning through technology.

eMINTS Associate Director Christie Terry said, "They might take raw data and organize it. See patterns and trends so that they can really understand what's going on. These are things that we do in the real world and we want to see our students doing in the classroom."

Researchers want to expand their eMINTS program throughout the nation.
MU College of Education announces $12 million grant, $3 million in gifts

COLUMBIA - The U.S. Department of Education awarded the enhancing Missouri’s Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies (eMINTS) program with a $12.3 million Investing in Innovation (i3) grant. The eMINTS program is a part of the MU College of Education.

According to a press release from the MU News Bureau, students who participate in the eMINTS program have real-life learning opportunities with technology.

The i3 grant will help researchers study how the program affects teacher practices and student achievement. Researchers will also study cost-effective strategies for expanding the program to more schools, including schools in Missouri.

“We’re thrilled these awards will empower innovative educators working to expand opportunities for students across the country,” said Senior Advisor Delegated Duties of Deputy Secretary of Education. “Through i3, educators are dramatically improving outcomes for students, and we are committed to providing teachers and school leaders with the resources they need to continue this important work.”

The new i3 grant will serve 56 high-needs schools in Alabama, Utah and Arkansas.

In addition to the $12.3 million grant, private sector members donated more than $3 million to the program collectively.
MU 4 and 6 year graduation rates highest in nearly two decades

COLUMBIA - MU's four and six year graduation rates are the highest they've been in nearly two decades, yet they're still below 50 percent.

In fact, 43.9 percent of students who entered their freshman year in 2011 graduated in 4 years. This is a 14.7 percent increase since 1994.

For students graduating within six-years, there has been an 11 percent increase over the last two decades for students.

MU Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Jim Spain said one of the main reasons students leave MU without their degree is because they can't financially afford to stay.

"It's not their academic success rate, they don't flunk out," he said. "We've developed strategies to help our students, advisors, financial aid, and cashiers office address the barriers and the hurdles students face."

Spain said last year the University had the highest freshman retention rate in MU's history.

"We think that's beginning to show the impact that our student success strategies are beginning to have," he said. "We will see that trickle into higher graduation rates in the next three to five years."

MU's rates are comparable to other schools of a similar range in population size, like KU and Iowa State.
University of Missouri estimates show enrollment decline to cost campus $36 million

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 2:00 pm

Enrollment at the University of Missouri is expected to decline by 2,600 students in the fall, aggravating a bad budget situation and making it likely the pain will extend for several years as the shrunken fall freshman class filters through to graduation.

Vice Chancellor of Finance Rhonda Gibler, in an interview ahead of a campus budget forum Wednesday, said campus divisions have been told to plan for 2 percent cuts to general fund budgets for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 in addition to 5 percent cuts ordered for the year that begins July 1.

“We won’t know for some time if 2 percent is a solid number,” Gibler said. “It is probably not; it will probably be something different from 2 percent.”

The decline in tuition revenue is now estimated to be $36.3 million, up from about $20 million. The total shortfall is more than $46 million, up from $32 million when interim Chancellor Hank Foley ordered the 5 percent cut in February.

The shortfall will be mitigated by new state funding of about $9 million, Gibler said. There is also a proposal going to the Board of Curators to increase tuition for out-of-state and professional students, raising about $5 million, she said.

The campus operations budget for the current year is $1.2 billion, with about $305 million from tuition.

Gibler, Foley and Provost Garnett Stokes were expected to lead a forum on the budget beginning at 1 p.m. in the Jesse Wrench Auditorium of the Memorial Union. A second forum will be held at 8 a.m. Friday in the Mark Twain Ballroom of the Memorial Union.

In February, Foley instituted a hiring freeze, tempered by allowances for needed personnel, and a freeze on salaries and wages. Foley’s directive was based on a $32 million shortfall from unavoidable new expenses and a decline in enrollment of about 1,500 students, including 900
first-time freshmen. It was intended to save $20 million, with the balance to come from reserves and cuts in later years if needed.

The latest enrollment figures point to a decline of 1,400 first-time freshmen, to about 4,800, and 1,200 other students, Gibler said. For every 100 fewer Missouri undergraduate students who are on campus, the university loses $1 million in tuition revenue. That rises to $2.5 million for 100 fewer undergraduates from outside the state.

The mix of incoming students will change in the fall, Gibler said. The campus has drawn about 60 percent from the state and 40 percent from outside in recent years, she said. Projections for the fall anticipate that about 67 percent of the new students will be in-state students, she said.

Past trends show that the year after a freshman class arrives, it loses members who leave school or fall behind, a trend that slows but continues in the third year. The trend for the senior class is for it to grow as students transfer, catch up or remain on campus for a fifth year.

The reduced incoming freshman class is likely to be the new normal condition for the campus, Gibler said.

“We will have several years in a row we have to do some reduction in our budget,” Gibler said. “It is impossible to predict how much we will rebound in the next fall. We can’t take this as a small bump in the road and that we will be back to business as usual.”

At commencement this week, 5,606 students will receive 6,229 degrees. That will be the largest graduating class for many years, said Neil Olson, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine.

“It will be substantially more than we will graduate four years from now and next year,” Olson said.

At an MU Council of Deans meeting Friday, Gibler laid out the budget difficulties, Olson said. The deficit in the incoming freshman class is just a part of the problem for next year, he said, but it will set the trend.

“It is not just a one-time hit,” Olson said. “It is a recurring hit for the deficit you get in one year, unless you magically get 1,500 more sophomores, and that is just not going to happen.”
Officials cite numerous factors for MU enrollment drop

By Alan Burdziak

Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 6:26 pm

**Illinois state universities accepting more students, a decline in the number of high school graduates in Missouri and a combination of other factors, including a hit the University of Missouri’s reputation took after turmoil that began last summer, are among the reasons officials cited at a forum Wednesday for a projected fall enrollment decline.**

The expected decline of 2,630 students would reduce the total number at the flagship Columbia campus to about 32,800. Previous projections of a smaller drop had already prompted interim Chancellor Hank Foley in February to order 5 percent cuts to all departments to help close a budget shortfall that is now forecast at $36 million. To remedy the situation, Foley said at a budget forum Wednesday, MU will have to make more cuts, rebrand its image, increase student recruitment and find other ways to raise revenue.

Faculty and staff also will have to pitch in more, he said. Reducing costs and increasing class sizes will happen as the university is “right-sized,” he said.

“We’ve said it’s a mess,” Foley said in a brief interview after a budget forum in the Jesse Wrench Auditorium of the Memorial Union. “We don’t want to pivot too soon, but it’s not all bad. We got really big really quickly and this is a bit of a correction and maybe it’s not the worst thing in the world to have to breathe a little bit, absorb all of this growth a little more effectively.”

The hourlong forum, mostly attended by faculty and staff members, also featured a PowerPoint presentation from Vice Chancellor for Finance Rhonda Gibler. The decline in students is expected to cost the university $36.3 million in tuition, she said, but an increase in state funding of $9 million will help in part to offset it.

Ahead of the forum Wednesday, officials told campus divisions to plan to cut 2 percent from general fund budgets for fiscal years 2018 and 2019. Gibler cautioned that one year is not going to fix the budget woes the university is experiencing.
Unrest at MU, beginning with graduate students protesting against a loss of health insurance subsidies and continuing in November with Concerned Student 1950’s protests against racism that brought international attention here, has had an effect on enrollment, but Gibler and Foley were reticent to put an exact figure on it. Concerned Student 1950’s efforts led to the resignation of former UM System President Tim Wolfe and a budget battle in the capital over how much the UM System and Columbia campus should get from the state. Many lawmakers, mostly Republicans, were critical of how the university handled the events of the fall.

Even though the General Assembly eventually restored most of its proposed cuts to state money for the university, state funding has remained flat since 2001, Gibler said. Missouri is 44th in the country in per capita state funding for higher education, she said.

“There’s a lot of things that cost more money than in 2001,” Gibler said at the forum.

During the question-and-answer session after Gibler’s presentation, Foley said of the General Assembly, “We’re a wonderful political football for them and they love to use it,” though he said some lawmakers were more willing to compromise than others.

Illinois, the Chicago area in particular, has long been a source of thousands of MU students, but Foley said that number is likely going to decrease by between 500 and 600 students. Gibler said nonresident student totals are expected to decline from every state except Hawaii. Foley blamed the change in high school graduates in Missouri for another drop of 300 and the remaining decrease on the fall’s turmoil and fallout, the job market and other factors.

Victoria Johnson, associate professor of sociology, said MU’s “downward spiral” has been years in the making and is due in large part to chronic underfunding from the state. The state is obligated to properly fund its flagship university so its residents can get a decent education, she said. Cuts have been made before, she said, and faculty members are increasingly demoralized.

“Now we’re down to some departments who have freezes in hiring,” Johnson, who has taught at MU for 15 years, said. “They don’t have qualified faculty to teach some of their courses. We have more and more students that we have to teach.”

The university’s image was damaged in the fall with the numerous protests on campus and ensuing battles over Planned Parenthood and a professor who tried to force journalists off Carnahan Quadrangle during demonstrations in November, Johnson said.

“There’s some ... negative views by some members of the population, but I think it’s a mistake to overestimate that as the cause of a major drop,” she said.
MU’s fall enrollment is projected to tumble by about 2,600 students — at least 1,000 more than previously reported.

In a March memo, MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said the expected drop would be 1,500 students. The initial estimate was largely based on a drop in the incoming freshman class, while the new estimate is a more comprehensive look at graduate students and returning undergraduates as well.

More precise data derived from mid-spring enrollment deadlines for returning students helped solidify the picture, said Christian Basi of the MU News Bureau.

The new number was released during a budget forum Wednesday led by Foley and Rhonda Gibler, MU’s vice chancellor for finance.

In fiscal year 2016, there were 30,665 students enrolled at MU. Of that number, 21,379 were in-state students and 9,286 out-of-state students.

The enrollment drop in fiscal year 2017 will come from a decrease in both in-state and out-of-state students, Gibler said. MU is expecting roughly 1,055 fewer in-state students and at least 1,573 fewer out-of-state students.

Gibler said the expected enrollment will be made up of 67 percent in-state students and 33 percent out-of-state students. For fall 2015, enrollment was about 60.5 percent in-state students and about 39.5 percent out-of-state students.
Illinois is accepting more students into its state universities than it previously did, and that accounts for part of the drop, Gibler said. But enrollment will be down for students from all states.

During the forum, Gibler emphasized that state appropriations to MU have not kept pace with inflation. MU now receives more money from tuition than from state appropriations, she said.

MU administrators are still sorting out the university's final budget, based on state appropriations, anticipated tuition and other revenue.

Two weeks ago, the Missouri legislature approved a $169 million appropriation for the MU operating budget. Lawmakers also voted to increase performance-based funding to state universities by 4 percent.

The performance-based boost, which universities can receive if they meet certain graduation and retention rates, among other factors, would allow Missouri universities to freeze in-state tuition for next year.

MU is in the process of re-branding its image to try and attract more students and revenue, Foley said.

Gibler added: "We need people to see the Mizzou we see every day."

Another budget forum will be held from 8 to 9:30 a.m. Friday in Mark Twain Ballroom in Memorial Student Union.

2,630 drop in MU enrollment to contribute to $31.4 million budget shortfall
COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri is now projecting a drop in enrollment of 2,630 students for the next school year, which will contribute to a $31.4 million revenue shortfall for MU next year.

University of Missouri leaders briefed faculty and staff Wednesday with the latest figures on enrollment and the budget for the next fiscal year. Vice Chancellor of Finance Rhonda Gibler explained the cuts necessary to right the ship at MU will not be easy.

“Sometimes when we deal with these situations there’s a tendency to hope against hope that it cannot affect any people. It will affect people, and we know that, and we take that very seriously,” Gibler said.

For the next school year, the campus is requiring a 5 percent cut across the board, which will be decided by each unit on the campus. That covers much of the shortfall, but still leaves $6.8 million dollars that Gibler says will be covered by one-time funds pulled from yet-to-be-determined sources.

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley said if the campus does not recover from the drop in enrollment in future years, it will have to consider making specific cuts from the top down rather than across the board. He says faculty will likely need to teach larger classes and teach more, and that public relations will also be key to recovery.

BenFred: Mizzou athletes look shortsighted in wake of protests
By Ben Frederickson St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 3 hrs ago

Mizzou student athletes, please hear this:

You look uninformed. You look entitled. You look like you are willing to hurt your university for reasons you can’t really explain.

These are the things your critics are saying about you.

Stop proving them right.
When the Mizzou football team boycotted in November, I wondered about a potential ripple effect. Student athletes, a vital yet so often voiceless cog in the NCAA's money-making machine, were reminded of their power. How would they use it moving forward?

So much for Mizzou players coming together to tackle the greedy NCAA. We have our answer: A softball snafu. This seems to be trending in the wrong direction, doesn't it?

Softball players on Saturday announced they were playing their game under protest of the athletics department and, specifically, athletics director Mack Rhoades.

Why?

Because Rhoades' department has been investigating complaints about longtime softball coach Ehren Earleywine. Some of those complaints came from current members of the softball team.

Yes, you read that right. Softball players protested because of an investigation that was started by softball players. Does that make sense?

Perhaps a team meeting to reunite a seemingly divided group would have done more good than exposing the team's infighting to the world. Too late now.

At the heart of this matter is how Earleywine treats his players. Mizzou's most successful active coach can be tough to play for. He has high expectations, a short temper and a mouth. Of course Rhoades had to start looking into the matter once concerns were raised. Any athletics director that doesn't risks losing his job. We'll see if Coach E crossed a line.

But on a larger scale, the damage is already done. Those looking to turn the softball team's protest into the latest chapter of unrest at Mizzou didn't need much help. The softball team connected the dots for them.

"The administration was completely incompetent in handling the fall football scandal and they are doing a worse job at this," read the release a player provided to reporters before Saturday's game.
Another swing and miss.

Translation: Hey Mizzou, you didn't handle that first student athlete protest very well doubt those behind the softball team's poorly-executed press-release protest realized this probably hurts Earleywine's chances of keeping his job more than it helps.

The number of Earleywine supporters is significant, sure. But so is the number of influential fans and boosters who face-palmed when another student-athlete disturbance made national headlines.

Rhoades, who attended Sunday's softball game and got booed, has to be frustrated by the way this has spilled over into the public sphere.

Former softball player Corrin Genovese seemed to speak for a growing number of Mizzou supporters when she posted this to Twitter: "The amount of protests at Mizzou are pathetic. Making national news for negative reasons that are again, SELF INFLECTED."

The softball team will probably wish it handled this differently. I also wonder how the football team feels now about its decision to join forces with Concerned Student 1950 six months ago.

It was the team's two-day boycott, not Jonathan Butler's hunger strike, that pushed former UM system president Tim Wolfe from office. Concerned Student 1950 targeted Wolfe for a lack of response to a series of racially motivated events on campus. The football team showed him the door.

Butler, the graduate student whose hunger strike motivated many players to boycott, has since split from Concerned Student 1950.

Concerned Student 1950 continues to make unrealistic demands. The best example is for a quota on black faculty hiring, which is illegal. The demands continue despite the university's willingness to make needed changes, such as the creation of a diversity, equity and inclusion officer position, along with a diversity task force.
And then came last Friday, when Concerned Student 1950 criticized Mizzou student athletes after two shots were fired on campus the night of a black fraternity function. Police are looking for a suspect. A person posting from the protest group's Twitter account seemed to suggest athletes were involved.

"What occurred on campus tonight is definitely a reflection of the privilege your players have on this campus," read a since-deleted message the Concerned Student 1950 Twitter account sent to the Mizzou Athletics account.

That the effects, good and bad, from the football team's cause are still becoming known would suggest student athletes should think long and hard before they take a public stand. The softball team's protest seemed like the exact opposite.

Protesting has a place. But its power should not be exploited. It should be the last resort, not a knee-jerk reaction.

When it becomes the latter, student athletes look foolish and their university looks out of control.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

At the U. of Missouri, Searching for President Everything

The University of Missouri system is looking for a new president, but given the system's recent upheaval a better title for the new leader might well be "miracle worker."

The previous president, Timothy M. Wolfe, resigned in November following widespread protests over racial problems at the flagship campus, in Columbia.
The system is still reeling from the demonstrations that led to the resignations of Mr. Wolfe and R. Bowen Loftin, the Columbia campus’s chancellor. Fallout also lingers from a host of related controversies, including the case of Melissa Click, the assistant professor of communication who was fired after being caught on camera trying to block student journalists from covering the protests.

State lawmakers have responded by subjecting university officials to intense scrutiny and threatening budget cuts. The negative press coverage is one of the factors that officials at the flagship campus blame for a steep decline in enrollment for the fall.

Now the Board of Curators, which oversees the system's four campuses, has set out a process for finding a new president, along with a list of lofty qualifications for candidates. Both are meant to respond to a range of concerns from those inside and outside the system.

The real trick, say those following the search, is to find someone who can repair the system's reputation and satisfy the demands of groups whose interests can sometimes clash.

"It turns out the job is really hard," said Ben Trachtenberg, chair of the Faculty Council at the Columbia campus and an associate professor of law. "That's why it's important that they do a really thorough search."

**More Transparent**

So far, at least, the process has largely satisfied faculty members and students.

"I am very hopeful about this search, especially since the search committee was expanded to include faculty, staff, and student representatives," Keith J. Stine, a
professor of chemistry and biochemistry and chair of the Faculty Senate at the University of Missouri at St. Louis, said in an email.

The search committee includes the six current members of the Board of Curators (there are three vacancies on the board, and the governor has yet to approve a student member), an at-large member from each of the four campuses, and two co-chairs who are not board members.

While the committee is meant only as an advisory body, many see it as a big improvement over the system's two previous presidential searches.

The board acted on its own when it named Gary D. Forsee president of the system, in 2007, said Cheryl D.S. Walker, who was vice chair of the board at the time and is now a co-chair of the search committee. A 20-member search committee was assembled to find Mr. Forsee's replacement, but the group had little or no input into the board's decision to appoint Mr. Wolfe.

For the current search, the committee is charged with evaluating and interviewing potential candidates and then recommending its preferences to the curators, who will make the final decision.

The system has sometimes been "the poster child of doing things wrong," said Peggy Ward-Smith, an associate professor of nursing and chair of the Faculty Senate at the system's Kansas City campus. But in this case, the board is being thoughtful and "way more transparent," Ms. Ward-Smith said.

'God on a Good Day'

Many have also praised the search committee for listening to a variety of perspectives in forming the list of qualifications for the president.
The board and search committee held a series of open forums, and seem to have taken seriously the feedback they solicited, Mr. Stine said.

The document that resulted from those events includes nine paragraphs describing the leadership challenges the curators will expect the new president to manage and a bulleted list of a dozen broad aspirational qualifications.

The list describes such challenges as creating "an enduring social compact with the citizens" of the state and their elected officials, and leading a statewide "conversation about the value of diversity, inclusion, equity, and respect for all of Missouri's diverse citizens through an open and equitable higher education."

It also includes being a "multiculturally competent individual with a demonstrated awareness and sensitivity for all people," and a "tireless advocate and relationship builder, attentive to many highly varied constituents."

Shelly Weiss Storbeck, a co-founder of an executive-search firm, said the attributes the committee has identified are clearly aspirational but not so different from what most institutions and systems are seeking.

"Every search committee is looking for God on a good day," she said.

As the process continues, however, there will be some trade-offs as committee members consider what qualifications they must have and those they can live without, she said.

And many search committees bank on the idea that good leaders can surround themselves with talented people to compensate for any weaknesses, Ms. Storbeck added.
David Maxwell, a former president of Drake University, said broad lists tend to set a tone of "being able to walk on water without getting your feet wet."

But such an expectation isn't necessarily inappropriate, given the extreme complexities that any leader in public higher education faces, he said.

"These are ambitious criteria," Mr. Stine said in his email, but they include some of the most important attributes that the system will need to deal with its issues. And the lengthy list gives the search committee a better basis to evaluate candidates, he said.

Mr. Trachtenberg said it's hard to be against any of the qualifications that the committee has included. The question, he said, "is whether any human alive can meet all of them."

**MISSOURIAN**

**Competition and misconceptions: challenges MU faces in diversifying its faculty**

EMMA VANDELINDER, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — In January, MU lost a black faculty member to another university.

Gregory Triplett was the first black tenured professor in the College of Engineering. He was an award-winning educator and scholar and the director of undergraduate studies in his department. He was a leader at the university.

"If I focused on excellence, I always thought that maybe the conversation about diversity would disappear. But I can tell you it didn’t," Triplett said.
He left MU for Virginia Commonwealth University where he hoped his leadership could function at a higher level, he said.

In the fall of 2015, MU had 2.8 percent, or 55, black faculty members, a figure that has seen little growth over the past decade. Administrators and faculty at MU and across the country cite the same reasons for a lack of black faculty on campuses:

"We’re cherry-picked."

"We can’t compete with the salary offers other universities make."

"It’s a pipeline problem.”

These and similar comments have for decades been considered myths and stereotypes to justify black faculty underrepresentation, according to a 2008 Journal of Education Policy study.

Last fall, student activist group Concerned Student 1950 asked for an increase in MU black faculty to 10 percent by the 2017-18 academic year. Although MU administrators promised to focus on increasing diversity, they have little control over the hiring and retention processes of faculty — processes that have a direct influence on how racially diverse a faculty is.

The challenges to diversifying faculties exist in a number of academic institutions, but some universities have taken noticeable strides in addressing this. A few are in MU’s backyard.

**Challenge No. 1: Systemic and individual biases**

Faculty hiring and retention happen at the departmental, school and college level at MU, which is the case for many universities. Faculty, department chairs and deans collaborate in deciding who is hired and how those faculty members are retained.

This department-by-department system means that coordinating efforts to attract and retain black faculty can be challenging, especially in the hiring process. Given that in 2015, three-fourths of the faculty at MU were white and all 14 deans were white, this system leaves room for biases to interfere.
To combat biases in the system, some universities have taken steps to train their search committees.

As of January, MU search committee members are required to engage in a new, comprehensive training program designed to improve applicant searches. The program includes an examination of implicit, or unconscious, biases in the search and interview processes. The training, developed by the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative, involves critical thinking about types of questions to ask in interviews and about creating good impressions.

“It was done in the past whenever it could be done or when a department wanted it,” Senior Associate Provost Ken Dean said. “But now, we’re going to have all the faculty searches and search committees go through this training module.”

Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, a STEM-focused university that has 2.7 percent, or eight, black faculty, also engages in dialogue with its search committee about ways to think about qualified applicants and how to take into account what Interim MU Vice Chancellor for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Chuck Henson called the “service penalty.”

Because of their small number, black faculty at traditionally white campuses engage in a number of service activities, such as mentoring black students and faculty and participating in committees. They often spend more time engaging in these services than their white counterparts. These service activities, however, are often seen as secondary to traditional metrics of experience such as research. This is the black faculty service penalty.

“We’re looking at fairness in process. To me that’s the elimination of that systemic bias — if I can have a process where people are fairly considered,” Missouri S&T Provost Robert Marley said.

MU’s standing in the AAU also has a direct influence on the financial resources available to the university, resources that affect hiring and retention, which also don't often contribute to diversifying the faculty body. About $237 million is spent annually on research, according to the MU website.

“MU’s strategic plan is based on bolstering its place in the AAU,” according to MU’s 2015 Strategic Plan.
To do this, MU’s priorities include “growing high impact disciplinary research” and the recruitment of 20 or more senior faculty members who have an “immediate effect on AAU indicators.” These hires are allocated by academic area, including medicine, life sciences, physical sciences, engineering, health sciences and journalism/new media.

These fields are not promising for increasing MU faculty diversity. The four areas with the largest numbers of desired faculty at MU — medicine, life sciences, physical sciences and engineering — had relatively few black doctoral graduates, according to U.S. 2014 data from the National Science Foundation. Nationally:

- Life sciences — 502 out of nearly 8,500 doctoral graduates were black (6 percent).
- Physical sciences — 178 out of more than 5,000 doctoral graduates were black (3.5 percent).
- Engineering — 167 out of more than 4,000 doctoral graduates were black (4 percent).

Medicine was not included as a category in the NSF data; however, a report by the Association of American Medical Colleges found that more black men were enrolled in medical school in 1978 than in 2014.

MU has already selected three of 20 people it plans to the life sciences, physical sciences and engineering fields, and all are white men.

**Challenge No. 2: 'We’re cherry-picked’**

“Other universities come and grab our faculty,” said Chuck Henson, interim MU vice chancellor for inclusion, diversity and equity. "We get cherry-picked."

During interviews for this article, this was one of the most commonly referenced concepts by faculty and administrators about why black faculty don’t stay at MU.

Assistant Deputy Chancellor for Diversity Noor Azizan-Gardner said Concerned Student 1950 “did not really bring any (new) light into issues that we have struggled with for a very long time, not just us at Missouri but everywhere around the country, in terms of recruitment and retention of black faculty.
"I mean, you see the same struggles whether it’s here or in North Carolina or in Michigan,” she said.

When faculty of color at MU are tapped on the shoulder by other universities with bigger offers, it is up to the department to keep them at the university, Dean said. The department is responsible for finding funds to match or raise the offer or providing other incentives for the faculty member to stay, such as the arrangement of spousal accommodations.

The Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative, which is being subsumed by the Division of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, can also provide funds for departments to hire or retain faculty of color. But those funds are limited. Long-term financial dedications are the responsibilities of the departments, deans and provost.

Michael O’Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science, said getting black faculty to 10 percent won’t happen at MU or any peer institution because “... We’re just robbing people from each other, and then they’ll just rob somebody else.

"It’s an arms race for the best faculty,” O’Brien said.

Although competition does exist among academic institutions, problems with campus climate and the community have frequently been cited as reasons black faculty leave universities. In Columbia and at MU, that translates to a lack of a young, black community members.

Henson acknowledged there was a problem within the faculty climate at MU that affected black faculty retention, but, he said, “My belief is and I have evidence of, from talking to department chairs of many departments, that they’re focused on these issues.”

Marley said Missouri S&T is focused on addressing retention efforts in terms of campus climate so that when their black faculty are courted by other universities, they say, "No thanks, I am happy here."

“We’re trying to focus more on (retention) in terms of not just reacting to someone who’s being cherry-picked,” Marley said. "Obviously, that’s important; you can’t ignore that. But to me that’s kind of the end point or a point that might be too late — you might lose somebody.

"Let’s work a little earlier in that cycle to see how can we make folks want to be here more.”
Challenge No. 3: Academic pipeline

The academic pipeline problem is a frequently cited explanation for why black faculty aren’t present in academic departments or institutions.

“We need a pipeline creating qualified people of color for faculty positions, that’s what’s got to change,” O’Brien said.

The premise of the academic pipeline problem is that some black faculty fall off track at each stage of their academic career, so few graduate with doctoral degrees and, therefore, the pool of black doctoral graduates to hire for faculty positions is small.

The truth is, from 2000 to 2010, the number of doctorates awarded to black students increased by 47 percent, or by nearly 3,500 degrees, according to a National Center for Education Statistics report. Over the same decade, however, traditionally white institutions had a 1.3 percent increase in black faculty appointments, according to a Washington Post article.

“I think that if you have an effective search committee and you have people who are very focused on excellence, then I think certain things (like race) don’t matter,” Triplett said. “Now, if people claim that they can’t find good quality people (of color), that is insulting.”

To see, not to see race

Another issue that actively influences the hiring and retention efforts by MU faculty and administrators is the difficulty of focusing on race. Should race be taken into account when hiring, or is that discrimination?

As a federal contractor, MU must enforce an Affirmative Action policy, which mandates that the university “recruit and advance qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities and covered veterans.” This can happen through training programs and outreach efforts. That being said, it is illegal to make hiring decisions based on race, according to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It’s a balancing act on the basis of fairness.
At MU, some departments have included a section on applications for candidates to provide a diversity statement. This could include why that candidate would bring a diverse perspective to the university, according to Azizan-Gardner. Other departments are unwilling to look at race at all.

O’Brien said hiring and retention efforts in the College of Arts and Science, the largest college at MU, are the same for all faculty, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

“White, black, pink, purple or whatever. If we have good faculty, we want them, and we want to keep them,” he said. "It goes across the board.”

Triplett said his participation in campus matters, to some, was perceived as participation on behalf of a minority to talk about issues of diversity, despite that he was always focused on improving the university generally.

“I wanted to be a contributor," he said. "I wanted to be a respected colleague, and I think, for many faculty, sometimes they don’t have to do that much work to do that — because they don’t carry the burden of being looked at as the one diverse person.”

Increasing black faculty at MU will require examining what the challenges to retaining them are — if any. Despite the challenges that are unique to black faculty retention, some administrators believe the difficulty in faculty retention is the same across races.

“We’re having a tough time recruiting and retaining black faculty, but the issues that arise with the retention of black faculty are not significantly different than retaining non-black faculty,” Dean said.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City created a Diversity Strategic Plan that is the result of convening key stakeholders to draft a plan, based on focus groups and surveys with faculty, students and staff, said Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion Susan Wilson. The plan includes hiring more than 10 faculty of color by 2018.
UMKC's Division of Diversity and Inclusion also created a “diversity dashboard” that is distributed to school and college deans. The dashboard includes racial profiles and data on retention and turnover rates to help administrators and faculty understand and improve the diversity of their departments.

“Diverse faculty encounter some unique issues compared to majority faculty,” Wilson said. "Listening to and responding to these issues is the key to recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty."

Federal judge rules in favor of Missouri Planned Parenthood

By SUMMER BALLENTINE, 7 hrs ago

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — A federal judge on Wednesday ruled in favor of a Columbia, Missouri, Planned Parenthood clinic after the state last year tried to revoke its abortion license, a move the judge found likely was due in part to "political pressure."

U.S. District Judge Nanette Laughrey in a Wednesday ruling said the Department of Health and Senior Services treated the clinic "more harshly" than other ambulatory surgical centers.

The agency's actions "likely were the result of political pressure being exerted by Missouri legislators and the Department's perception that if it did not act in accordance with the legislature's desires, its budget would be cut," Laughrey said in the ruling.

She went on to say that "disparate treatment" of the clinic "cannot be justified by political pressure or public opposition." She ordered that the license cannot be revoked before its expiration in June.
The clinic had already stopped performing abortions because it could not meet a separate state requirement. But it did not want to lose the license because of the expense and hassle to reapply.

Laughrey cited the only other time the department tried to revoke a license for an ambulatory surgical center, during which the clinic had time to submit a plan of action and attempt to come back into compliance before the state finally took action.

The attorney general's office, which represents the state, did not immediately comment Wednesday.

**The legal fight over the Columbia clinic came after the department warned it would revoke its license when its only doctor performing medication-induced abortions lost needed privileges with University of Missouri Health Care in December. Without a physician with those privileges, the clinic stopped performing abortions.**

DHSS said it would take away the license the same day the doctor lost privileges.

Lawyers for the state had argued that Planned Parenthood knew in advance that employing a physician with certain hospital privileges is necessary to be in compliance with state regulations and that the clinic had time to remedy the situation.

Planned Parenthood of Kansas and Mid-Missouri President and CEO Laura McQuade said in a statement that the judgment confirms that the state "unfairly targeted Planned Parenthood and its staff for providing safe, legal abortion."

Republican Sen. Kurt Schaefer, who is the Senate Appropriations chairman and oversees how much state money goes to those agencies, led the committee investigating. He's also running for attorney general.

Schaefer in a statement said he makes "no apology for my role in uncovering that tax dollars were being used to enable abortions in Missouri." He had argued that the University of Missouri
wrongly helped facilitate abortions by giving the Planned Parenthood doctor privileges needed for the clinic to get a license.

MU Health Care facing lawsuit claiming it overcharged patients

COLUMBIA - MU Health Care is facing a lawsuit for the second time in just over a week.

The A.W. Smith Law Firm in Columbia filed a class action lawsuit against MU Health Care, University Hospital and University Physicians Wednesday. The lawsuit alleges the hospital overcharged patients without health insurance.

The lawsuit claims the health care system didn't consistently apply it's "Automatic No Health Insurance Reduction" to patients without health insurance.

Court documents show show the health system's "Automatic No Health Insurance Reduction" states that patients without health insurance will automatically receive a 60 percent discount on University Hospital charges and a 35 percent discount from University Physicians charges.

The lawsuit states an example would be "charging an uninsured patient $400 for the exact same x-ray for which the hospital charges an insured's health insurance company $200."

MU Health's spokesperson Mary Jenkins said, "We believe that the claims in this lawsuit are without merit."

The law firm said it believes its claim is well-founded.
"This is not the first time patients without health insurance have been charged more than patients with health insurance," the law firm said. "We are confident there are others and we are confident our allegations have merit."

Grad students' union efforts rebuffed by university

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri says legal clarity is needed to determine if graduate students can organize a union.

In a statement, the university said that graduate students are fundamentally students and are at the university to learn. The statement said that the graduate students had told them they would seek a declaratory judgement from the courts regarding the issue, but as of Wednesday, that had not been done. So, the statement concluded, "the University of Missouri will not consider the graduate students' vote [to unionize] binding...."

The statement pointed out that the university has, at no small expense, taken several actions to address graduate students' concerns, including increasing the minimum stipend, committing to providing health insurance, developing graduate student housing, and changing the due date of the first bills of a semester so they do not come before the students' first stipend check.

No one representing the graduate students' union efforts could be reached for comment.
University of Missouri backs proposed lodging tax increase

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri and Shelter Insurance came out in support of the city's proposed lodging tax hike at Wednesday's REDI board meeting.

This comes just one day after the Columbia Hospitality Association panned the proposal for its lack of transparency, namely that the city hasn't presented a business plan for the use of the tax money.

Third Ward Councilman Karl Skala said he's sat in on meetings with all of the key players in the decision and he's come to his own opinion, one that supports the proposal.

He said he agrees there should be a business plan, but first the city should get their financial resources in order to make sure they have the money for any sort of plan.

"What we really need to do is to prove to the FAA that we're serious about wanting to improve air traffic and capacity," he said.

Despite a budget shortfall for the university, it's still willing to back the tax even though it'll stand to pay thousands of dollars extra for their out of town guests if it passes. Skala said he believes its because the university depends on the airport as much as the city depends on the university.

"The university is an economic driver in this town there's no question about it," he said. "They are solidly in back of airport expansion because when people come here from companies or associated with the university, almost universally you hear how difficult it is to get here."

Hoteliers also worried about the return on their investment. They said they're putting up the only source of funds at this point without any real guarantee it'll pay off, especially in attraction new airlines or flights.

Skala said he isn't worried.

"If we had a new facility that has the capacity for security, general aviation, for passenger travel, and enables this kind of air traffic capacity, I think they will come," he said.
The Columbia Chamber of Commerce has voted unanimously to support the tax. The Government Affairs committee also voted 19-4 to support the tax.

City leaders believe there is a general support for the tax, but the council will have the ultimate decision on Monday when it is scheduled to vote on the ballot language.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Backer of Student Loans Pivots in Push to Reshape Higher Education

No MU Mention

A $1-billion nonprofit with a familiar name but a new and unusual strategy has begun putting its financial clout into projects and companies that want to reshape higher education.

The organization is USA Funds, once primarily a student-loan guarantee agency but now increasingly a player — to some, still a suspect one — in efforts aimed at helping students make strong connections between their college education and their career.

With its involvement in student loans winding down, USA Funds is re-creating itself into an organization that is part grant maker, part business, using its sizable resources to acquire and invest in companies that can fund its future philanthropy.

"We really don’t see our future in the student-loan world," says Mark L. Pelesh, who, as executive vice president for corporate and business development at USA Funds, heads the team that is "out hunting" for new businesses.

The latest of those deals was announced on Monday, the purchase of Roadtrip Nation. That company provides career-exploration options, including courses, online materials, and excursions in which participants travel in its trademark green motor
homes to interview prominent people about their careers. Roadtrip Nation, which will continue to be run by its co-founders, is one of five companies USA Funds has directly invested in or bought outright.

USA Funds has also allocated $200 million to Sterling Partners, a private-equity fund, which is investing in education-oriented businesses on the organization’s behalf.

The group is also awarding grants to make a splash with state and federal policy makers, becoming what one well-placed observer calls "the loosest purse strings in D.C." Along with making numerous grants to projects that are also backed by established education funders like the Lumina and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundations, USA Funds has shown a readiness to put its dollars behind ideas that feature a career-minded orientation.

Both in its expanded grant making and in its heightening investment activity, USA Funds says its goal is to support projects that fit with its new "completion with a purpose" mission, adopted in 2013. The group is particularly interested, says Mr. Pelesh, in for-profit and nonprofit companies that use data to help students and institutions, and in companies that focus on getting students through college and connected to careers. "If we can’t relate it to that mission alignment, we don’t do it," he says. The same is true for its philanthropy.

But the group’s two-pronged approach, combined with its practice of generously compensating its trustees, has raised questions about whether the organization is betraying its mission as a tax-exempt nonprofit and is using its philanthropy to advance its business interests. A USA Funds spokesman says that such characterizations misrepresent the organization and that the goal of its corporate activities is "to generate revenue to support — and hopefully expand — our
philanthropic efforts to improve student success in college and subsequently in their careers."

Ambitious Efforts

The largest project backed by USA Funds so far is an ambitious partnership with Gallup to create a continuing survey of public attitudes toward education issues to inform higher-education consumers and policy makers.

The first results of the poll, which will survey 500 different adults each night, could become public by early fall, says Carol D’Amico, executive vice president for national engagement and philanthropy at USA Funds. She says the scope and scale of the project — it will eventually have responses from some 360,000 people — will allow for analysis of data based on the demographics of the respondents, as well as the kind of education they received and from where.

Ms. D’Amico says the polling data and Gallup’s planned follow-ups could, for example, help identify what students have found useful, or not, in career advising, an area that she says is "ripe for reinvention."

Neither Gallup nor USA Funds would disclose the cost of the polling venture. but three sources outside the organizations with knowledge of the project said it was in the neighborhood of $20 million to $23 million. USA Funds considers the arrangement a "contract for services," not a grant.

USA Funds is also supporting two other projects that involve Gallup. One is in Indiana, where public and private colleges are taking part in a poll of alumni, called the Indiana College Value Index, "to better measure the value of the college degree beyond economic return." USA Funds agreed to pay nearly half of the $63,000 that Gallup is charging each college to participate over three years. The colleges, which
were encouraged to sign up by the Indiana Commission on Higher Education, are paying $24,730 each.

The second is a four-state project that will put together polling data on alumni well-being from Gallup with information on their employment and income status gathered by College Measures, an effort that runs under the auspices of the American Institutes for Research. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation is also on board, to help promote it.

The projects are two of four that Ms. D’Amico calls the "College Value" portfolio, involving 12 states in total. As early as this summer, she says, USA Funds hopes to develop a smartphone app and other tools based on the data so students and others can use the findings to help them make better college choices.

The group has also shown a readiness to use its grants to support projects with a private-sector focus. It has, for example, backed a $4.5-million multiyear project by the Chamber of Commerce Foundation, called the Talent Pipeline Management initiative, to help reshape educational content at colleges so that more students graduate with the skills employers say they want.

On a smaller scale, the group is also funding a project to generate "thought leadership" research on the merits of income-share agreements, a burgeoning movement in which private investors pay a student’s costs for education in exchange for a percentage of his or her future income.

The group is also working directly with colleges in several states, including Missouri, where it has given $1 million to help create competency-based degree programs at four institutions and another $1 million to expand the University of Central Missouri’s "innovation campus" model to two additional public institutions.
Under the model, students begin taking college-level courses in high school and can receive a bachelor’s degree leading to a job within two years of completing 12th grade. "They’ve been interested in more than just metrics" — also the methodologies and the rationales, says Margaret Onken, executive director of the Hawthorn Foundation, which is helping to coordinate the project. Grant makers at USA Funds approached Missouri about the project initially, she says. "I think they’d like to see the model expand to other places."

USA Funds now spends about $25 million a year on grant making, up from about $10 million in 2013.

**Billion-Dollar Coffers**

USA Funds is the legacy operation that remained after Sallie Mae acquired its parent company, the USA Group. The proceeds from that sale, in 2000, financed the eventual creation of Lumina, now an independent foundation that has no involvement with student loans.

Sallie Mae, as a loan originator and loan servicer, was not allowed to purchase the guarantee-agency arm of that company. That left USA Funds as a stand-alone company, although, under an unusual arrangement, a spinoff of Sallie Mae called Navient now conducts most of USA Funds’ loan-guarantee functions under a contract between the two.

That loan-guarantee business, which involves collecting on the defaulted student debt in its portfolio, helped USA Funds amass its current asset base of $1.04 billion. But only student loans that were issued by banks are covered by the loan-guarantee system, and in 2010 the Obama administration and Congress eliminated the role of banks in originating federal student loans.
The 30-plus state and nonprofit guarantee agencies still work with existing loans, but as loans are paid off and portfolios shrink, some guarantee agencies have begun pursuing other lines of business. The guarantee agency ECMC, for example, acquired 56 of the former Corinthian campuses and now operates them under Zenith Education; it also bought a company called College Abacus.

And while some of its investments have come alongside those of traditional venture-capital funds, which invest in companies with the intention of raising their value and then selling the stakes at a profit, Mr. Pelesh says USA Funds is prepared to remain involved with the companies in which it is investing. "We’re not necessarily in it to sell," he says. "We’re in it for the long term."

The Gates and Lumina foundations have also invested in companies, as minority shareholders. Gates has invested in Acrobatiq, an adaptive-learning company created by Carnegie Mellon University, while Lumina has recently put money into Credly, a company that maintains a platform for displaying and managing digital credentials; BridgeEdU, which provides a gap-year-like experience for first-generation college students; and New Profit, which helps promote social entrepreneurship.

Lumina has also previously committed to investing 2 percent of its $1-billion-plus endowment in private-equity funds that focus on education companies. But neither foundation is so publicly committed to owning controlling stakes in businesses while also making grants.

Robert Murray, a spokesman for USA Funds, says the organization has an internal "set of firewalls" to ensure that its philanthropic activities don’t serve as a stalking horse for its business ventures.

But at least one prominent critic says the nonprofit, which pays its nonemployee trustees as much as $93,000 a year, is acting in its own interest and not the public’s.
Its assets "come from the borrowers who defaulted on students loans and are being charged collection fees," says Robert M. Shireman, who’s been researching USA Funds and dozens of other guarantee agencies for a forthcoming report by the Century Foundation, where he is a senior fellow. "The trustees are supposed to be the ones thinking about the public purpose," he says. But USA Funds trustees "are just thinking of the continuation of the business that keeps paying them and their executives."

When he worked for the Education Department, early in the Obama administration, Mr. Shireman was the chief architect of the plan to eliminate banks from the federal student-loan system. Mr. Murray says Mr. Shireman is not a credible critic. He "knows little to nothing" about the new direction of USA Funds and "has a more than 20-year history of hostility toward, and misrepresentation of, the activities of student-loan guarantors," Mr. Murray said in a written statement.

Mr. Murray also said that it was not uncommon for nonprofit organizations to pay their trustees.

In 2014 a Council on Foundations survey found that just over one in five grant makers paid their board members. At foundations with assets of $1 billion to $2 billion, the median aggregate compensation was $290,500. At USA Funds, the aggregate for the year ending in September 2014 was $778,000.

Among guarantee agencies, says Mr. Shireman, that was second only to the aggregate of more than $1 million that ECMC paid. Lumina, with assets of comparable value to those two guarantee agencies, paid an aggregate of $320,000 to its trustees, according to Mr. Shireman. Lumina gives out about $58 million in grants annually.

Officials at several other education-policy organizations have said privately that they would hesitate before seeking out or accepting philanthropy from USA Funds because
of its continuing ties to the student-loan industry — at least at this point in the organization’s evolution — but they declined to say so publicly.

Some are also uneasy with the pedigrees of the organization’s key players — "a Bush-administration Education Department in waiting," as one put it. The new approach at USA Funds is being led by William D. Hansen, who was deputy secretary of education from 2001 to 2003. Ms. D’Amico was an assistant secretary of education during the same period. Mr. Pelesh was for 10 years the head lobbyist for Corinthian Colleges Inc. but left before the company imploded.

The student-loan ties were also a consideration for Roadtrip Nation, but Mike Marriner, one of its three founders, says the new direction at USA Funds overrode any concerns they had about being acquired by it.

USA Funds initially bought 40 percent of the company in late 2015. The deal announced on Monday completes the purchase of the 58-person company.

Roadtrip Nation was created to emulate the experience of the cross-country trip the three founders took right after they graduated, in 2001. As a part of the USA Funds portfolio, Mr. Marriner says, it can help that organization "align with a youth-culture aesthetic" and help to push the higher-education system to be more student-centric.

"What we’ve bought into is where they’re going," he says, "not where they’ve been."