MU internal audit highly critical of CAFNR

COLUMBIA — The scale is one to five. One means the institution has the lowest possible financial risk. Five means it has the highest.

MU’s College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources just received a four.

Two weeks after MU released an internal audit detailing how CAFNR employee Carla Rathmann was able to steal more than $700,000 from the Southwest Research Center in Mt. Vernon, the university released another internal audit of the entire college.

It found that fiscal oversight was “inadequate” for the 17 agricultural research centers scattered across Missouri. It also found that responsibility for handling of federal and state funds between CAFNR and MU Extension was “not always clearly understood” and noted that the college repeatedly violated university policies.

The audit was distributed to 15 CAFNR, UM System and MU administrators.

Rathmann worked as an office support assistant while she was employed with MU from January 2000 to September 2015. She used university credit cards to steal $146,144 while also manipulating her and her husband’s payroll hours. Rathmann stole the rest of the more than $700,000 by faking invoices and bills to pay herself through five shell companies.

She pleaded guilty on June 6. MU released its audit of the Southwest Research Center the same day.
The newest audit presents a larger snapshot of CAFNR. Auditors evaluated a variety of departments and operations within the college for fiscal years 2015 and 2016 to date.

Similar to the Southwest Research Center audit, the CAFNR audit found that the centers' remote locations contributed to an environment where one person could have too much control. For example, the centers’ office support assistants were responsible for nearly all aspects of the finances, including entering payroll, accepting cash and check payments, purchasing with a university credit card and completing a monthly review of all financial activity.

During the last fiscal year, CAFNR’s revenue was about $108.2 million.

Problems were found both with employees and how the centers conduct business overall.

Regarding the use of university credit cards, the audit found that some people never used their cards. Others had card limits that were "excessive" for what their job required.

Additionally, CAFNR employees did not properly document their credit card purchases. The audit said office support assistants didn’t always submit receipts, and the fiscal officer in charge of approving purchases didn’t always ask for them.

Fiscal officers were sometimes not even fully aware of what kinds of purchases should be made with the cards.

On a larger scale, when different centers would conduct business, payments were sometimes not logged or documented.

Similar issues were found within the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station Fields Operations, which provides maintenance and repair services to the research centers.

In particular, the department did not properly separate financial work between employees. One employee was often responsible for all money going in and out. The audit noted two purchases between "related parties," totaling $4,695, that created “an appearance of a conflict of interest.”
CAFNR administrators were asked to make several changes in the immediate future, including:

- Defining who does what in regards to the state and federal grants.
- Beginning new fiscal training for research center superintendents and CAFNR administrators.
- Completing quarterly reviews of the CAFNR Business Office.
- Hosting on-site visits of the research centers by the Business Services Office.

The audit did note that, as of this spring, CAFNR Business Services has already implemented “more robust training” in fiscal management for agricultural research center superintendents and office support staff.

JUNE 20, 2016 1:53 PM

University won't adopt speech policies until at least fall

Watch the story on WDAF-KC (Fox) – Kansas City, Mo.: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=09b3abc8-8518-450f-89ef-2c0f0603467e
COLUMBIA, MO. - **The University of Missouri won't adopt policies on free speech and protests until at least the fall to allow enough time to gather public comment.**

A committee issued a draft in late May of policies designed to regulate public spaces on campus while also respecting free-speech rights. The committee, composed of 13 faculty, staff and students also was asked to determine how the university can best resolve conflicts over use of public spaces.

The committee was formed after protests rocked the Columbia campus last fall.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports (http://j.mp/1sLMBOO ) suggestions on the policy can be emailed to the university's website. A public meeting will be held in the fall. Faculty Council Chairman Ben Trachtenberg says he expects the draft policies to change before they are implemented.

**MISSOURIAN**

**CARL KENNEY: MU censure may ruin its ability to recruit a diverse faculty**

CARL KENNEY, 1 hr ago

More bad news for MU.

It’s beginning to feel like MU is stuck underneath a pile of rocks after an avalanche. The most recent bad news involves the unanimous vote of the American Association of University Professors to place MU on its censure list for violating standards of academic freedom and tenure.

Although some faculty members will hype the ruling as an “I-told-you-so” moment and payback that comes with mistreating faculty members, there’s nothing good in the decision.

The censure list serves as a red-flag detector to potential faculty members that university administration may not guarantee an environment of academic freedom.
Administrators at MU are applying situational ethics to justify their decision. They say they had to do what they had to do because things were so bad.

The unanimous vote of the AAUP clearly affirms a system that protects the rights of faculty over any situation that hints at justifying the forfeiture of those rights.

The ruling strengthens the claim of some members of the faculty at MU. They believe the aftermath of Melissa Click’s termination has established a culture that undermines the protection and celebration of academic freedom.

“It means that untenured faculty will now quite rightly become averse to taking risks in their intellectual work — the kinds of risks that sometimes challenges common sense but are also necessary for producing new knowledge,” said Andrew Hoberek, professor of English at MU.

“The university’s leadership has sent a signal that they see the school as something — a hospital complex, a football team, what have you — other than an institution whose purpose is producing and disseminating new knowledge.”

Responses from administrators at MU is rife with the type of pushback that exposes what happens when a posse shows up with a rope in hand and a willingness to lynch a person by any means necessary.

MU officials argue members of the AAUP weren’t on campus to witness what happened. They contend that the lack of valid context makes it difficult for them to rule based on a series of interviews and the inability to fully comprehend the challenges administrators faced.

The administration discloses the extreme pressure to remove Click. It relates the damages regarding MU’s image after the video surfaced with Click calling for some muscle to remove a student photographer.

The decision to remove Click renewed a national conversation involving freedom of space and press. It began deeper conversations about the protection of space.
All of that is true. Notwithstanding the pressures administrators at MU faced, the protection of procedures designed to protect academic freedom should never be compromised. MU made a decision based on the perception of Click’s guilt.

The perception of guilt is not enough to waive the rights of a member of the faculty. No matter how weighty the evidence against Click, you can’t compromise the rules to placate high-dollar donors.

Academic freedom is essential in maintaining a democratic society. More than the violation of the rights of one professor, what’s at stake are the rights of all professors who challenge universities pressured to make decisions that compromise the rules.

Stephanie Uku Shonekan, chair of the Department of Black Studies and associate professor of ethnomusicology and black studies at MU, said she grew up in Nigeria admiring the notion of academic freedom that was attainable in America.

“During my undergraduate years in Nigeria, the military dictators would often step in using martial authority to silence the voices and thoughts of students or the faculty who spoke up for social justice or labor issues,” Shonekan said.

“My young mind thought then that this could never happen in America. Cases like this have proven my younger mind wrong.”

MU is on the censure list for yielding to the pressure of state legislators. It’s the type of drama found in movies.

“Give me Click, and I’ll set your budget free,” state legislators argued as if it were a Turner Classic Movie.

"But, we have a process,” MU administrators might have said. “We can’t rule until we follow our own guidelines.”

“You have 24 hours to give me Click.”
Those committed to academic freedom feel the move to terminate Click was the beginning of a hostile takeover. The takeover has the potential of ruining MU’s ability to recruit a diverse faculty.

“I learned firsthand of the consequences that take place when we share our honest and very candid thoughts about race relations,” said Cyndi Frisby, associate professor at MU’s School of Journalism.

“There seems to be an implicit norm to stay positive, assimilate into the white culture and transcend race, and whatever you do, do not act like you care about underserved populations.”

The attack on academic freedom is not limited to MU. The University of Illinois-Urbana was placed on the censure list last year, and the University of Iowa was placed on a sanctioned list this year.

“This shows that public universities in general are facing challenges to the very things that made them great over the last century and a half,” Hoberek said.

There’s nothing to celebrate when MU is placed on a list that states it isn’t a safe place to work if you’re interested in academic freedom.

I sure hope we get four strikes before we’re out.

Unlike the Mafia-like tendencies of state legislators, you only get four strikes in the movies.

You’re out, screams the umpire. Next batter up.
University of Missouri argues against union rights for graduate assistants

By Rudi Keller

Monday, June 20, 2016 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri’s first line of defense in a lawsuit over graduate assistants’ efforts to unionize is asserting students have no right to collective bargaining.

But if they do have that right, they are doing it wrong, attorney Michael Kaemmerer wrote in a brief filed last week in Boone County Circuit Court.

Kaemmerer’s filing was the university’s official response to a lawsuit filed May 11 by the Coalition of Graduate Workers asking the court to order UM to recognize that graduate assistants are workers with bargaining rights protected by the Missouri Constitution and to honor a vote held in April selecting the coalition as their union.

In the defenses raised to the lawsuit, Kaemmerer wrote that graduate assistants are students, not employees. If they are employees as defined by the constitution, he wrote, a representation election must be conducted under procedures set by the university.

And if they are employees, they are subject to the Missouri Public Sector Labor Law and must address their grievances to the state Board of Mediation, Kaemmerer wrote.

Finally, if the Board of Mediation does not have jurisdiction, Kaemmerer wrote in the brief filed Wednesday, “then their proposed bargaining unit is not appropriate.”

The filing has nothing new in it, said Joseph Moore, outreach coordinator for the coalition.

“We expected all of that,” Moore said. “We expected them to challenge the election and the makeup of the bargaining unit.”

Interim President Mike Middleton, at a news conference Friday, was asked whether he thinks graduate assistants are employees.
“I think I would rather leave that to the courts,” he said. “Currently they are not. I have a lot of respect for the legal system, being a lawyer, so I would rather let a judge make that determination.”

Graduate assistants have been organizing since MU said in August that it would not continue subsidizing the full cost of health insurance for the school year that was about to begin. Graduate assistants in the past received fully paid individual plans, but the university had determined that paying the cost created a potentially large financial liability under the 2010 Affordable Care Act.

Graduate teaching and research assistants typically receive a cash stipend, health insurance and a tuition waiver in exchange for their services.

The insurance decision was quickly reversed, and, under new guidelines from the IRS, the insurance subsidy can continue through the upcoming academic year. To quiet unrest among graduate assistants, the university also promised increased stipends and to increase the value of tuition waivers.

When those steps did not end agitation for a union, the university on March 10 hired Kaemmerer, a leading management attorney from St. Louis.

Kaemmerer, of McCarthy, Leonard and Kaemmerer LC, will be paid $330 an hour and other attorneys in his firm $175 to $285 per hour for handling the university’s business.

On Thursday at the UM Board of Curators’ meeting, MU interim Chancellor Hank Foley said the university has committed $6.3 million to increase stipends and waivers and to cover health insurance costs.

“Graduate students was another big issue on campus this past year,” Foley said. “We’re taking that off the table. We’re basically saying we are going to give you an increase in graduate student stipends, we’re going to do it this year, we will do it again next year.”

The increased stipends, to a minimum of $15,000 for most doctoral students in the fall and $18,000 for the 2017-18 school year, will put MU graduate student compensation in the top 10 percent among schools in the American Association of Universities, Foley said. The association includes many of the largest public and private research universities in the nation.

In an election held over two days in April and supervised by the League of Women Voters, about 30 percent of the 2,600 graduate assistants on the Columbia campus cast ballots and 84 percent of voters supported a union.

The coalition appreciates promises of better pay and assurances that health insurance will continue, but the promises aren’t enough, Moore said.

Graduate assistants believed the promise they would have health insurance until the university took it away 24 hours before it took effect, he said.
“We are fighting for a contract so these promises that are being made are in a legally binding contract so the university can’t renege on their promise,” Moore said.

MISSOURIAN

NORML chapter clashes with MU over proposed T-shirt designs
ZACH BAKER, 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — A student group that advocates for reforms to marijuana laws is considering whether to sue MU for alleged censorship of its T-shirt designs.

The MU chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Law, or NORML, pitched two designs for shirts in September. MU rejected both, citing its trademark policy.

“No use of the University’s name or logo may be approved in connection with promotion of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs,” MU said in its response.

MU policy also states that any student organization seeking to use its name or logo must apply at the Licensing and Trademark office. MU NORML Executive Director Benton Berigan in October received an email from that office denying the request to use the logo.

Both T-shirt designs featured a marijuana leaf, which is what MU is asking that the group remove. MU NORML, however, has used the marijuana leaf in its designs since it formed in 2000. It wasn’t until last year that MU prohibited it from using the MU symbol along with it.

Dan Viets, a Columbia attorney and NORML state coordinator, believes MU is directly violating the First Amendment.

“The First Amendment is interpreted by the United States courts to give the highest degree of protection to political speech, and that is clearly what this is,” Viets said.
Viets argued that NORML does not promote the use of marijuana but instead promotes a political viewpoint that supports the reform of marijuana laws.

“The policy I think, as written, is too broad,” Viets said. “What if an anti-drug organization wants to use images of drugs on a T-shirt? Are they going to prohibit that?”

MU NORML has enlisted the help of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, or FIRE, which helps student organizations fighting for First Amendment rights.

“The mission of FIRE is to defend and sustain individual rights at America’s colleges and universities,” the organization states on its website.

FIRE has taken a special interest in NORML’s situation because it pertains to its Stand Up for Speech Litigation Project, which aims to abolish campus speech codes that prohibit free speech and promote viewpoint discrimination.

FIRE helped the Iowa State chapter of NORML win a 2014 lawsuit against ISU over precisely the same issue, and the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, which also covers Missouri, upheld the ruling.

In a 45-page ruling, ISU was permanently barred from enforcing its trademark license policies in a discriminatory manner against NORML. Viets hopes that precedent will sway MU officials.

“There’s no doubt about it. A federal judge in Iowa has already said so. There is no reason to believe a judge in Missouri would rule differently,” Viets said.

MU has said very little on the topic. Advocating for MU NORML, FIRE sent letters on April 22 and May 20 warning MU of its alleged violations.

MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley released a very brief response to the first letter. "Thank you for interest, and for your letter," it said.
The Licensing and Trademark Office declined to comment and referred the Missourian to the MU News Bureau. The bureau did not respond to Missourian phone calls.

FIRE is encouraging supporters of NORML and students' rights to contact Foley. Its website provides a form to help them do so.

Catherine Sevcenko, an author on FIRE’s website, reflected on the controversy in a June 15 post: "Mizzou’s Control Over Its Trademarks Does Not Extend to Control Over Student Speech.”

“MU NORML’s use of the university’s name does not send any message about Mizzou’s endorsement of their goals,” Sevcenko wrote. "It simply reflects that Mizzou has created a forum within which their expression occurs.”

Sevcenko suggested that MU might be misinterpreting NORML's goals.

“Mizzou has failed to keep in mind that MU NORML is not advocating illegal drug use,” she wrote. "It is advocating for a change in the law that would make marijuana use legal. The core purpose of the First Amendment is to protect that kind of advocacy.”

NORML and FIRE are waiting for an official response to the letters before taking legal action. Viets is confident NORML will prevail.

“What we’re saying at this point is that we hope they will change their minds,” Viets said.
A year to forget for MU, if only that were possible

By Joe Walljasper

Sunday, June 19, 2016 at 12:00 am

A year in which the football and men’s basketball teams both struggle would normally be forgettable for the Missouri athletic department. **There are a lot of adjectives to describe the 2015-16 year in athletics at MU, but “forgettable” isn’t one of them.**

In a year of upheaval, athletes openly rebelled against the university and its athletic administration, longtime coaches left their posts, the NCAA investigated the men’s basketball program and the school conducted a Title IX investigation of the softball team that drags on even after the last runner crossed the finish line at the national track meet, signifying the end of competition for MU’s school year.

A constant flow of problems ensured Athletic Director Mack Rhoades spent his rookie year playing defense as he took fire from fans, politicians and his own athletes.

It didn’t help that in the revenue sports, there was little to cheer. The Missouri football team went 5-7 in a season that was even more frustrating than the record indicated. The Tigers failed to score a touchdown in five of the 12 games. The men’s basketball program continued to be plagued by player defections, finished with a 10-21 overall record and placed last in the Southeastern Conference for the second straight year with a 3-15 mark.

In the more than 100 years Missouri has competed in both football and men’s basketball, this was only the ninth time the Tigers posted losing records in both sports in the same school year. The combined SEC records of the football and basketball teams this year was 4-22.

In wasn’t all bad news, of course. The women’s basketball team, led by charismatic homegrown star Sophie Cunningham, made the NCAA Tournament for the first time in a decade. Fans rallied to the cause of men’s basketball assistant coach Brad Loos’ cancer-stricken daughter, Rhyan, and willed the Tigers to an emotional victory over Tennessee. The men’s and women’s swim teams posted their best finishes ever — eighth and 11th — at the NCAA Championships and crowned the men’s program’s first national champion in Fabian Schwingenschlogl. And Columbia’s own J’den Cox won his second NCAA title, helping the Tigers place sixth as a team, before he went on to qualify for the Olympics.
Here is a look back at the good, bad and ugly of Missouri athletics in 2015-16.

In May 2015, Gary Pinkel was enjoying — to borrow one of his favorite words — a remarkable run. The man who won the most football games in school history at Toledo and Missouri had proved skeptics wrong by leading the Tigers to two consecutive SEC East titles, and he was getting ready for his summer wedding.

Then he received dreadful news. Pinkel was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma. He told his new boss and a handful of confidantes, but his players and assistant coaches were not aware of the illness. Even Pinkel didn’t realize at the time that the next season would be his last.

The 2015 season was star-crossed from the start. Two key offensive players — center Evan Boehm and tailback Russell Hansbrough — suffered significant ankle injuries in the first quarter of the opening game and were hampered for most of the season. After pulling the redshirt of freshman Drew Lock, Pinkel couldn’t tamp down a quarterback controversy until incumbent starter Maty Mauk ended the debate by getting himself suspended twice and ultimately kicked off the team for self-destructive off-field behavior.

Although the Tigers were competent enough to win all four of their nonconference games against modest competition, the SEC games were, almost literally, pointless exercises. Missouri ranked 124th out of 127 FBS teams in total offense. That was a shame, because the Tigers’ sixth-ranked defense, led by All-American linebacker Kentrell Brothers, was championship-caliber.

The team was draining to watch, much less coach. By late October, Pinkel decided he’d had enough and informed Rhoades he planned to retire. Unbeknownst to either man, some football players were about to take an interest in a student group protesting racism at MU.

The Concerned Student 1950 group generated local news when it blocked University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe’s car during the homecoming parade on Oct. 10 and three weeks later when it set up camp on Traditions Plaza. The group was furious at Wolfe for not doing more in response to recent racist incidents. It vowed to continue its protest until he left office. Graduate student Jonathan Butler upped the ante by starting a hunger strike on Nov. 2.

Football players J’Mon Moore, Charles Harris, Ian Simon and Anthony Sherrills met with the protesters and on Nov. 7 posed with a group of 32 black players for the tweet that shook the university.

It said, in part, “We will no longer participate in any football related activities until President Tim Wolfe resigns or is removed due to his negligence toward marginalized students’ experiences. WE ARE UNITED!!!”

The boycott caught Pinkel and Rhoades off-guard. To keep control of the situation, they would have needed to realize the seriousness of the players’ intentions and come up with an alternative solution before the fateful tweet was sent. Perhaps earlier in Pinkel’s tenure he would have been
more on top of things. Once the players took their stand, Pinkel and Rhoades were in a no-win situation. They were put in the uncomfortable position of either supporting their boss or their players.

If they sided with their boss, the Tigers likely would have forfeited at least the upcoming game with BYU — at a cost of $1 million — and the program’s reputation with black recruits could have been jeopardized.

They chose to side with the players.

On Nov. 8, after a team meeting, Pinkel’s Twitter account posted a photo of players and coaches arm-in-arm with the following message: “The Mizzou Family stands as one. We are united. We are behind our players. #ConcernedStudent1950 GP.”

The next day, Wolfe resigned.

It was the biggest story in the country, with most national media outlets marveling that athletes were willing to sacrifice their careers for a worthy cause and praising Pinkel for taking a stand with his team.

The football team will be honored at next month’s ESPN Sports Humanitarian of the Year Awards in Los Angeles. The Tigers will receive the Stuart Scott ENSPIRE Award in honor of the late ESPN broadcaster who died of cancer last year. The award “celebrates someone that has taken risk and used an innovative approach to helping the disadvantaged through the power of sports.”

The closer you got to the situation, though, the more shades of gray were apparent in a story about black and white.

Concerned Student 1950’s frustration was understandable, but some of its demands were impractical at best. The targeting of Wolfe seemed odd because the group’s complaints were mostly related to racist incidents on the MU campus, so why not take it up with Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin — who pulled the ripcord on his golden parachute on the same day Wolfe resigned — rather than the guy in charge of four campuses and more than 70,000 students?

At a press conference Nov. 9, Pinkel and Rhoades distanced themselves from their role in Wolfe’s ouster, saying they were concerned about Butler’s health because of his hunger strike.

“I got involved because I support my players and a young man’s life was on the line,” Pinkel said. “Basically, that’s what it came down to. My support of my players had nothing to do with anyone losing their job.”

Added Rhoades: “Jonathan Butler, his life was at stake. That was real for our student-athletes. That was real for our young men who compete on the football field who maybe have never, ever dealt with that.”
In a contentious interview with Kansas City radio station 810 WHB a few days later, Pinkel said it was a personal assistant who sent his famous tweet and that it shouldn’t have included the “ConcernedStudent1950” hashtag.

The fine-tuned position statements did little to calm those who disapproved of the boycott. The hard feelings lasted long after the satellite trucks left town and, in fact, continue to this day. Largely because of the protests, donations to the university and athletic department cratered in December, projected enrollment for the fall semester dropped by 23 percent — leading to two dormitories closing — and the ensuing 5 percent budget cut resulted in 50 jobs in campus operations being eliminated.

But before all that played out, the most tumultuous week in MU history had one more bombshell. On Nov. 13, word leaked out that Pinkel planned to retire at the end of the season, forcing him to reveal the news to his shocked players and assistant coaches right before they boarded buses to Kansas City for the BYU game. Pinkel called it “the most emotional 15 minutes of my life.”

In one of the few feel-good moments of the season, the Tigers beat the Cougars 20-16 and mobbed Pinkel afterward on the field. The coach even broke out “The Pinkel Dance,” his routine that went viral after Missouri’s Cotton Bowl victory over Oklahoma State two years before.

The era of good feelings didn’t last. With the temperature 28 degrees at kickoff, Pinkel’s final home game, a 19-8 loss to Tennessee, was uncomfortable on all counts, never more so than when senior offensive linemen Boehm and Connor McGovern scooped up the frowning and droopy coach and carried him on their shoulders to the locker room afterward. The season’s last game, at Arkansas, was even more miserable, as the Razorbacks clobbered the Tigers 28-3 in a driving rainstorm.

Although Missouri could have played in a bowl game — the lack of qualified teams meant the 5-7 teams with the best Academic Progress Rate were eligible — it declined. Pinkel ended his tenure at Missouri with a 118-73 record, with his status as one of the three best football coaches in school history — along with Don Faurot and Dan Devine — secure.

His reputation with Republican politicians in Jefferson City was not so rosy, though. Many of them blamed him for the outcome of the November revolution. Several lawmakers on the Joint Committee on Education were upset that Pinkel was given a three-year contract worth a total of $950,000 after he resigned as football coach.

On Feb. 18, Sen. Paul Wieland, R-Imperial, told interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley: “My constituents were kind of concerned that in their minds he had held the university hostage and as a reward the university gave him a contract for a million dollars.”

For 15 years, the Missouri football program was an island of stasis in a sea of volatility. Year after year, the Tigers had the same head coach with mostly the same staff. Pinkel’s mantra was
“We do what we do,” and it worked out well for a school that was bad at football for most of the 16 years before he arrived.

When Pinkel hired former Missouri linebacker Barry Odom as his defensive coordinator on Dec. 23, 2014, a popular sentiment was that Odom might one day replace Pinkel as head coach. That one day came sooner than anyone expected.

On the evening of Dec. 3, 2015, Rhoades introduced Odom to Missouri’s players as their new head coach, and the room went bonkers. The players mobbed Odom and chanted, “Bar-ry! Bar-ry!”

Rhoades is believed to have also interviewed Temple Coach Matt Rhule, California Coach Sonny Dykes and Bowling Green Coach Dino Babers, who later accepted the Syracuse job. Rhoades made his interviews with Odom as grueling as possible.

“We intentionally tried to wear him out. We tried,” Rhoades said. “He even got a little ticked off about it, which I like.”

“He wasn’t lying when he said they put me through the wringer,” Odom said. “I got tired of hearing about the process, because I got to a point through the process where I was ready and said, ‘Let’s make a decision and go to work.’”

Odom, who had worked in a variety of roles under Pinkel, showed early on that he would be doing things his way as the head coach. Odom retained only three assistants — Andy Hill, Cornell Ford and Ryan Walters — and assigned Hill and Ford to coach different positions. Among those cut loose were Craig Kuligowski, who had helped develop a long line of Missouri defensive linemen into NFL players, and popular strength coach Pat Ivey.

It didn’t take long for Odom to get his first taste of the sour side of being the boss. He took a risk by giving Mauk one more chance to rejoin the team. That decision blew up in his face on Jan. 25 when a video was posted online of Mauk snorting white powder. The video was determined to be several months old, but Mauk was dismissed from the team three days later, with Odom saying the quarterback had failed to follow the guidelines of his reinstatement.

As if the present weren’t uncomfortable enough for the Missouri men’s basketball team, the past conspired against the Tigers, too.

In Coach Kim Anderson’s second season, player defections continued to decimate a roster that wasn’t good enough in the first place. Martavian Payne, Wes Clark, D’Angelo Allen, Namon Wright, Tramaine Isabell and Jakeenan Gant left the team before, during or after the 2015-16 season. The entire five-man class of 2014 was gone after two years.

The Tigers, who often started three freshmen, were usually overmatched on the court. But that was only half the bad news. Former Coach Frank Haith left behind more than just a depleted
roster. On Jan. 13, Missouri announced that it had spent the last 19 months collaborating with the NCAA on an investigation of rules violations committed during Haith’s three-year tenure from 2011-14.

The school vacated all its wins from Haith’s last season and self-imposed sanctions, including a postseason ban and the loss of two scholarships. The NCAA’s Committee on Infractions has yet to deliver its judgment on the case and could either accept MU’s self-imposed penalties or add more.

Among the surprising details to emerge was that Anderson was not informed by former Athletic Director Mike Alden that the basketball program was under NCAA investigation before he agreed to take the job on April 28, 2014. The NCAA sent MU a verbal notice of inquiry on April 14, 2014, which was four days before Haith left to take the Tulsa job. Haith told reporters he was not aware of the NCAA investigation before he left. Mary Ann Austin, MU’s executive AD for compliance, said Anderson was not told of the investigation because the NCAA had not given the university authority to share any information at that time.

The postseason ban meant the team’s lone senior, Ryan Rosburg, wouldn’t get a chance to finish his career at the SEC Tournament — or, theoretically, the NCAA Tournament. But Rosburg did end with a bang. After averaging 4.4 points in the first 22 games of his senior year, he scored in double figures in eight of his last nine, including a 24-point, 11-rebound effort on Feb. 10 at Vanderbilt.

The team’s best player over the course of the entire season was freshman forward Kevin Puryear, who averaged 11.5 points and 4.6 rebounds. Anderson hopes last season’s four-man freshman class — Puryear, Terrence Phillips, K.J. Walton and Cullen VanLeer — will stick together and form the core of a winning team before they’re done. Whether Anderson would be around to see their sophomore years was hotly debated as last season ended.

Rhoades provided no vote of confidence and spent four silent days after the season — perhaps gauging interest in the job from other candidates — before announcing Anderson would remain. Rhoades has since said that he needs to see more from the basketball program in Anderson’s third year.

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

There was some excitement at Mizzou Arena provided by the Missouri women’s basketball team, a mostly homegrown squad that blossomed into an NCAA Tournament team in Robin Pingeton’s sixth season. Fans took notice, as average attendance jumped to 3,990. That more than doubled the average attendance of 1,656 at Mizzou Arena from the previous year. The SEC home opener against Tennessee drew 7,989 fans.
They came to see a team that went 22-10. The player who seemed to elevate a team that had been stuck in a WNIT rut into the NCAA Tournament was Cunningham, a former four-time state champion at Rock Bridge High School.

Cunningham announced her presence by tying the school record with 42 points in her fourth game against Wake Forest. She went on to average 14.0 points, 6.8 rebounds and 3.0 assists, earning SEC Freshman of the Year honors.

It certainly wasn’t a one-woman team, as forward Jordan Frericks averaged 12.1 points and 7.7 rebounds. The Tigers probably benefited from the chemistry of having three sets of sisters — Sophie and Lindsey Cunningham, Cierra and Bri Porter, Morgan and Maddie Stock — on the roster. The Cunninghams and Porters had played together previously at Rock Bridge.

Missouri seems built to last, too, as six of the top seven scorers from last season will return.

“A lot of great things were accomplished, and there’s still a lot of room to continue to grow and get better,” Pingeton said. “But it’s been another giant step in the right direction for us.”

In the spring, Missouri’s baseball and softball teams began the season with a lot of answers and ended with a lot of questions.

The baseball team, coming off a year in which it went 15-15 in SEC play and returning its top two starting pitchers and five starting position players, struggled in every phase. The Tigers lost their first seven SEC games and never recovered, finishing with a 26-31 record and a 9-21 mark in conference play.

One year after receiving a three-year extension, Coach Tim Jamieson was forced out, although it was called a resignation. Jamieson coached the Tigers for 22 years and led them to nine NCAA Tournaments, including seven straight appearances from 2003-09. But the program began to slip after that, and it was swallowed whole by the SEC, which takes its baseball very seriously. Aside from finding a new coach, Rhoades will have to decide whether it’s worthwhile for Missouri to spend money on the sport like the league’s other schools do.

Results were not a problem for Ehren Earleywine’s softball team, which did what it usually does. Although the Tigers ended the season with a crushing NCAA super regional loss to Michigan in which they blew a three-run lead in the seventh inning, they finished 42-16 and ranked 15th nationally in the final coaches’ poll.

The problem — and the final messy entanglement in a year full of them — was that complaints about Earleywine’s treatment of players spawned a Title IX investigation that could cost him his job. Because this is MU, the investigation wasn’t a quiet internal review but rather a nasty public spat.
The investigation began on April 5 after Rhoades received complaints about Earleywine “from inside and outside the program.” If some players were upset about their treatment from Earleywine, others strongly supported the coach, and, after the investigation dragged on for more than a month, they began fighting back through the media.

Before the penultimate regular-season home game, a letter was delivered to the press box saying the softball team was playing under protest of its own athletic director.

“We wonder why this black cloud is being put over our program intentionally by Mizzou AD Mack Rhoades,” the letter said.

Members of the team’s five-player unity council later sent out more letters to media outlets critical of Rhoades before Earleywine asked the players to stop protesting, and they complied. Earleywine acknowledged that he had used “inappropriate language” with players but didn’t think that was a fireable offense.

“I’m a little bit of a throwback into a millennial culture of people,” Earleywine said. “It forces you to evaluate how you coach. It’s not easy changing who you are and your instincts. I know there are things I can do better, but, at the same time, I’m very proud of all that we’ve built and accomplished and achieved here and my staff, as well. I’m not ashamed of anything.”

For his part, Rhoades noted in a few interviews that he wouldn’t be investigating one of his most successful coaches unless there were serious allegations against Earleywine. But Rhoades was in no position to win a public-relations battle with the popular coach, who has guided the Tigers to the NCAA Tournament in each of his 10 seasons.

Rhoades drew a smattering of boos when he showed up at the final regular-season home game. Fans waved fliers, wore customized T-shirts and even used a hot-air balloon to advocate for Earleywine during Missouri’s NCAA regional games.

It remains to be seen, though, whether Earleywine won the PR battle at the expense of losing the war. There have been no updates offered about when the Title IX investigators will complete their work, and Earleywine doesn’t know if he will be retained.

Even though a very bad year for Missouri has ended, it’s not really over.
Opinion: Our helpers the pollinators need our help

By Bill Clark

Monday, June 20, 2016 at 2:00 pm

In our fast-moving lifestyle, we hardly have time to stop at the supermarket to pick up the food essentials that keep us healthy and happy.

Most of us never stop to consider how those essentials happen to be waiting for us to take them for granted. Almost none of us are aware they are the product of pollinators. Pollinators?

Mr. Webster says a pollinator is one that pollinates. Pollination occurs when microspores of one plant are transferred to another, allowing for the propagation of the species. The pollinator is the carrier of that pollen.

Certain pollinators carry certain pollen, and when that transfer doesn’t happen, that plant species becomes extinct and so do the things that depend on it.

Life, it seems, is very much entwined. Man is a long way up the food chain, but not really. As Kitty Kallen once sang to us: “Little Things Mean a Lot.”

Hard to believe that the lack of a pollinator can affect your omelet for breakfast, salad for lunch, steak for dinner and the chocolate ice cream for dessert — even your coffee wake-up and your iced tea.

These are but a few of the foods aided by pollinators. Not to mention most of the fruit and veggies that keep us healthy and all the flower gardens we cherish.

So who are the pollinators and what is their problem?

You need to set aside Thursday to meet Doug Tallamy, a professor of entomology from the University of Delaware. Tallamy winds up National Pollinator Week activities at the University of Missouri, leading a daylong symposium — “Bringing Nature Home” — at Monsanto Auditorium in the Bond Life Science Center on the MU campus.
He will be joined by a number of pollination experts for panel discussions and lectures aimed at specific problems and their solutions.

Thursday’s session will open at 8 a.m. with registration and a native plant sale, followed by an introduction by Pete Millier, director of the MU Botanic Garden, the week’s sponsor.

By the final remarks at 3:30 p.m., you will have met all the pollinators and become familiar with the problems facing these vital, almost invisible, masters of pollination — and the future of the world in which we live, mostly oblivious of what that future will be without a full cast of pollinators, these seemingly insignificant flying, crawling and hopping pests.

National Pollinator Week actually began Sunday with a dinner of pollinated food prepared from local ingredients. The dinner speaker was Gary Nabhan, an ecologist and ethnobiologist from the University of Arizona, who spoke on the food chain collapse and how to improve pollinator habitat.

He explained in a recent Tribune interview that 75 percent of the world’s food is the direct product of pollination and, in the past 50 years, the world of the pollinators — birds, bats, bees, butterflies, mammals — has been attacked by fragmentation, habitat loss, floods, drought, heat waves, deep cold, severe weather and overpopulation.

Nabhan pointed out that monarch butterflies are a valuable pollinator and, that in the past 20 years, the number of monarchs has fallen 80 percent and still is dropping. They are the canary in the coal mine for entomologists.

’Tis a bit scary to consider a future without pollination — but we are moving in that direction rapidly.

If you cannot make Thursday’s session, you can meet Doug Tallamy and Roy Diblik, one of the Thursday panelists, at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Columbia Public Library. Dublik is a landscape design specialist from Wisconsin who will relate pollinators to your lawn and garden.

There is no charge for either Wednesday evening or the entire day on Thursday.

**What Matters Most**

*New book urges colleges to exercise not-so-common sense when it comes to optimizing the undergraduate experience and otherwise striving toward institutional excellence.*

There’s good news and bad for colleges wanting to enhance undergraduate education, based on a new book on the subject: you’ve already got everything you need and you’ve already got everything you
need. *The Undergraduate Experience: Focusing Institutions on What Matters Most* (Jossey-Bass) contains no quick fixes, no gimmicks and, well, nothing really new. But its five authors draw upon their decades of experience studying successful undergraduate programs to distill their common features into six themes -- themes that the book argues can be applied across all manner of institutions working toward excellence.

All it takes is optimism, patience and teamwork -- and muscle. (In case you’re wondering, the authors acknowledge they may sound Pollyannaish. But they say naysaying is too easy, and they’re waiting to prove you wrong.)

“People get very, very caught up in the latest and greatest trends and will make these mammoth purchases without attending to whether whatever we just spent $200,000 on aligns with our mission,” said Betsy Barefoot, one of the book’s co-authors and co-founder of the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education. “We are defining an approach that says, ‘These are the basic or essential characteristics of [institutional excellence with regard to undergraduate education],’ and they are definitely not sexy or fancy.”

So what matters most? Real learning, relationships, clear expectations, alignment of resource policies and practices with educational mission and student characteristics, improvement and leadership. (More on all those later.)

*The Undergraduate Experience* was inspired in part by George Keller’s 2004 book about Elon University, *Transforming a College: The Story of a Little-Known College’s Strategic Climb to National Distinction*. Indeed, all the new book’s authors have ties to Elon: Peter Felten is assistant provost for teaching and learning and a professor of history there, and Leo M. Lambert is its longtime president. Barefoot is married to John M. Gardner, professor emeritus of library and information science at the University of South Carolina and president of the Gardner Institute, whose son attended Elon. And Charles C. Schroeder, former vice chancellor of student affairs and professor of educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Missouri at Columbia, has advised the institution.

Yet *The Undergraduate Experience* doesn’t focus on Elon over any of the other dozens of examples of successful undergraduate initiatives that fill its pages. The authors take care to include examples of what they define as excellence at small, private institutions -- wealthy and not -- as well as large public and private institutions (including community colleges) and even online programs. Existing research on undergraduate education -- which the book argues is strong, voluminous and largely ignored -- is infused throughout. Chapters are organized around the six tenets of what matters most, and each discussion includes action principles and questions for reflection. Despite -- or maybe because of -- their many combined years studying undergraduate initiatives and institutional excellence, the authors developed their list of traits with relative ease. They admit, however, that certain terms, such as “alignment,” weren’t as obvious as some of the others. The list isn’t meant to
be exclusive, and Felten described it as a heuristic -- an imperfect but useful guide to the puzzle of undergraduate education.

“What’s were saying is that there are a handful of things that are important, and this is how we might wrap our hands and heads around the complicated discussions surrounding institutional change and growth,” Felten said. “The more we talked, the more we kept circling back to these sorts of themes that resonate at different levels of the institution.”

Diversity, technology and assessment also came up, he added, but turned out to “cut across” each of the six other themes.

The six characteristics are meant to be familiar and simple. But discussions of each are far from simplistic. Regarding learning -- the most important tenet -- the authors urge institutions to push beyond significant but ultimately crude measures of success, such as retention. They reject the argument that students are solely responsible for their own educations by saying that institutions “create the environment for learning.” That means, in part, adopting the high-impact practices articulated by George D. Kuh, such as first-year seminars and experiences, learning communities, and undergraduate research -- even in settings where it might not seem immediately possible.

Not all students can study abroad, for example, the book says, but “all institutions can enhance student learning by focusing more on the qualities that make any experience or pedagogy high impact rather than concentrating solely on a circumscribed list of practices. … All high-impact pedagogies or experiences should prompt students to engage in challenging work, interact with peers and mentors in meaningful ways, and reflect on what is being learned. When these elements are prioritized in the design and implementation of an educational activity, they allow many experiences in and out of the classroom to have positive impacts on student learning.”

That idea leads the authors to another argument about learning: that it really only happens when students integrate what they’re studying across their courses and extracurricular experiences. Yet too often institutions leave this integration to chance, they argue, and never explicitly ask students to consider how what they’re learning fits together and might help them in their future endeavors.

The book praises Mount Holyoke College for its Making the Lynk program, a faculty-driven career-to-curriculum initiative, along with the University of Iowa’s Guided Reflection on Work. That program requires supervisors and student workers to meet twice per semester for a conversation framed around questions such as, “How is this job fitting in with your academics?” or “Can you give me a couple examples of things that you are learning here at work that you will be using in your future profession?” A discussion on the complexity of meaningful learning also urges colleges to embrace students’ mistakes as well as their successes. If a Spanish teacher doesn’t align her grading system with her goal of making conversant, confident speakers, and deducts points for even minor errors, for example, she might inadvertently encourage her students to take fewer risks -- and ultimately learn less. The book cites
Northern Arizona University’s First Year Learning Initiative as a successful counterexample, saying that its “small-bites approach” to assessment offers students regular feedback, often online.

Finally, the authors say that everyone should be motivated to learn on campus -- not just students. Faculties, for example, either operate under a “narrative of constraint” -- in which professional development is often “done to” them rather than with their cooperation, leading to a “culture of compliance.” In the latter narrative, faculty development initiatives emerge “from the professional goals and habits of a busy faculty who willingly seek the expertise and perspectives of peers.”

As for the other tenets, here’s a brief summary:

• Relationships of all kinds matter. Student-faculty, student-staff and student-student, yes, but also those between academic affairs and student affairs, student success initiatives and the faculty, governing boards and administrators, and alumni and the college. A “vibrant and inclusive” community emerges from the quality of the relationships that the underlie it, so they must be nurtured.
• Clear and high expectations make a difference -- and they must be intentionally set and communicated to all campus groups.
• Alignment of resources, policies and practices with educational purposes and student characteristics matters, too, “just as well-designed courses align goals and assessments.” Too often institutions operate as “collections of strong but separate programs,” but that can be resolved by transforming departmental silos into systems through cross-unit coordination and “by paying more attention to the student experience than how the organizational chart divides up the campus.”
• Improvement counts, and excellent institutions “critically assess student progress and their own effectiveness on specific, relevant measures.” Those data are then used to help students deepen their learning and faculty improve their teaching, and all such efforts are connected to the institution’s mission and students’ goals.
• Leadership matters, and leaders at all levels share a common vision and purpose. Those at the top are “crucial actors,” but they can’t shoulder the burden alone. Collaboration is key, and that happens when all campus constituencies feel heard and involved in the process of institutional progress.

_The Undergraduate Experience_ is designed to appeal to faculty and administrators alike; the original concept is that it could be used in a workshop setting, but individual readers may benefit, as well. The project also has its own website.

“We really encourage readers to take a leap of faith and learn from other institutions that may be very unlike their own,” Barefoot said.