Foley to add interim AD responsibilities after North Texas hires Baker

Missouri interim Chancellor Hank Foley will take over the responsibility of leading the Missouri athletic department while continuing to oversee the rest of the MU campus, after North Texas on Friday approved the hiring of Wren Baker as the school’s new athletic director.

Baker had been serving as Missouri’s interim athletic director since the abrupt departure of Mack Rhoades to Baylor on July 13. He is to be introduced at a 10 a.m. press conference on Monday at Apogee Stadium in Denton, Texas.

“Just a short while ago, the University of North Texas officially announced that Wren Baker will serve as their new Athletic Director,” Foley wrote in a letter addressed to the university community and released by the MU News Bureau. “We’d like to extend our best wishes to Wren and his family, who have extended family close to Denton. For the past 14 months, Wren has been an instrumental part of Mizzou athletics, and we are sure he will do great things in Texas.

“An aggressive search for Mizzou’s permanent Athletic Director is a top priority for me as chancellor and is already well underway. In the meantime, I will serve in that official capacity with the assistance of our other outstanding leadership in athletics.”

KOMU reported Friday that the search is “moving quickly” and cited sources that Missouri will conduct interviews this weekend in Dallas.

The television station also reported that Southern Methodist Athletic Director Rick Hart — the grandson of former MU Athletic Director Dave Hart and son of current Tennessee Athletic Director Dave Hart Jr. — has emerged as a candidate along with Northern Illinois Athletic Director Sean Frazier and East Carolina Athletic Director Jeff Compher, whose names have been bandied about in the past two weeks.
Rick Hart, who just completed his fourth year at SMU, was previously the athletic director at Tennessee-Chattanooga and spent seven years working under former MU Athletic Director Joe Castiglione at Oklahoma.

Boston College Athletic Director Brad Bates could also be a candidate, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

A source told the Tribune on Wednesday that Baker had been viewed as a candidate, too, but the school was committed to conducting a thorough search.

It seems he decided he couldn’t wait with a job guaranteed at North Texas and no such assurances of his chances to be hired at Missouri.

MU released a statement from Baker about an hour after the University of North Texas Board of Regents met in closed sessions and unanimously signed off on his hiring as the successor to Rick Villarreal, whose more than 15-year tenure at the school in Denton, Texas, officially ended June 20.

“The today I was formally offered and accepted the role of Vice President and Director of Athletics at the University of North Texas,” Baker said. “It is a tremendous opportunity to lead a FBS Division I athletic program. While I am excited that Heather” — his wife — “and I will be able to realize a lifelong goal near our family, we will miss our friends in Missouri and at Mizzou. During our two stints living in the Show-Me state we grew to love the people and the area.

“I regret the timing of this announcement would bring any negative light to Mizzou. Chancellor Foley has been tremendous to me and I am thankful for his leadership during some challenging circumstances.

“As I’ve said many times the past couple weeks, Mizzou has much to be proud of. It is a special institution with many successes to celebrate. Whomever is named Director of Athletics, will inherit great student-athletes, coaches and staff and will be a very lucky individual. I am confident that Chancellor Foley and the search committee will find a terrific Director of Athletics.”

Baker’s name first surfaced publicly in connection to the North Texas job late Monday in a report in the Denton Record-Chronicle, and Footballscoop.com on Wednesday was the first to report he would become the school’s new athletic director, pending board approval.

Baker joined a teleconference with the Board of Regents streamed on the North Texas system website to offer thanks shortly after it approved his hiring Friday.
“Thank you very much, Chairman,” Baker said. “I really appreciate all of the regents’ confidence. Chancellor, you as well. I’m excited to be here. It’s a homecoming of sorts for the Baker family. We’ve heard nothing but great things about this community. We’ve loved what we’ve seen so far, and we can’t wait to get to work. We think the ceiling is very high and great days are ahead. I look forward to getting to know each of you and work with you to build a championship program that also is academically excellent.”

Baker grew up in Valliant, Okla., less than three hours from the school in Denton. His wife also has roots nearby.

His career in college athletics included four years as a basketball operations assistant under Eddie Sutton at Oklahoma State and a stint as athletic director at Division II Rogers State University in Claremore, Okla.

He later worked as the athletic director at Division II Northwest Missouri State and spent two years as the deputy athletic director at Memphis before Rhoades tapped him to be the deputy director of athletics for external relations on May 20, 2015.

He has reason to see potential at North Texas, which is located only an hour north of Dallas in fertile football recruiting territory. The school’s football program won four consecutive Sun Belt Conference titles under then-Coach Darrell Dickey from 2001-04 and today competes in Conference USA and recently hired 37-year-old football coach Seth Littrell. Its basketball program made NCAA Tournament appearances in 2007 and 2010 under current LSU Coach Johnny Jones.

Student loans will continue to grow for years to come

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=3ec3ab96-4e90-442e-aa8f-ef223f563f3d (note the banners for the interviews with Joe Haslag and Nick Prewett are switched)

**COLUMBIA, Mo. -**

**The University of Missouri will begin classes for the fall semester in less than thirty days.**
The cost of tuition continuously rises each year. The Federal Government says that by 2020 more than half of job openings will require some sort of higher education.

One MU economics professor, Joe Haslag said that students are borrowing more because tuition costs and fees have gone up immensely.

So much so, that since the 80's, the cost of a college degree has increased 1,000%.

The University of Missouri has recently started a campaign on social media called Free Money Fridays. The Financial Aid Office sends out links to students with a number of scholarship opportunities.

The typical Mizzou student completes a four year degree with about $21,000, which is below the national average.

While the cost of an education is the highest its ever been, those who just graduated within the past year have seen the most job opportunities in a while.

**Gov. Jay Nixon not on list for University of Missouri presidential search**

Gov. Jay Nixon is not on the list of candidates for president of the University of Missouri System selected for interviews by the Presidential Search Committee.

The 16-member panel on Monday reviewed names submitted by consulting firm Isaacson Miller Inc., choosing several who will be asked to meet for interviews in the coming weeks. After a four-hour closed session, committee co-chairs Cheryl Walker and Jim Whitaker said there was a good mix of candidates from private industry, academia and the public sector, but no elected public officials.

“I can't think of anybody who fits that bill,” Whitaker said.

Nixon leaves office in January after 30 years as an elected official. Republicans who control the General Assembly have raised the possibility that Nixon would seek the job and considered legislation to prevent it. Nixon has disavowed interest in the post.
Walker and Whitaker said the search for a permanent replacement for Tim Wolfe, who resigned Nov. 9, is on schedule. A timeline established in January set aside the period from July to September for meetings to consider the candidates developed by the consulting firm.

The pool is not closed, Walker said.

“Our search firm is still talking to people and still gathering names — and things of that nature — so we have not set an end date,” she said.

After one of the most tumultuous years in its 177-year history, the university is trying to overcome months of adverse publicity and political backlash as it searches for a new president. Wolfe resigned on under growing pressure from racial protests on the Columbia campus and after months of administrative infighting with R. Bowen Loftin, chancellor of MU. Loftin resigned the same day as Wolfe.

Interim UM System President Mike Middleton, called from retirement to take over, has said he is not interested in the job on a permanent basis.

The search committee includes nine members of the Board of Curators and representatives of faculty, student, staff and alumni chosen from the four campuses. Under the process set by the curators, the search committee will interview all of the candidates and make recommendations in November for a final selection by the board.

The search has, so far, successfully maintained the veil of secrecy surrounding candidates. Other than saying no elected officials are on the list, Walker and Whitaker would not provide any other identifying characteristics.

Members of the committee also would not say how many names they considered Monday. Pam Henrickson, chairwoman of the Board of Curators, would only say that the list has more than a dozen and less than two dozen names.

The number who will be called for interviews is flexible, Henrickson said.

“We don’t have a goal,” she said.

Curator Jon Sundvold, appointed by Nixon in June, said he does not feel handicapped in the search by coming in after the process started. The preliminary matters of fixing the goals for a new president and priorities for the screening have produced a good field of candidates, he said.

“That is done, and now the process gets harder,” he said.
Preparations for 2017 total eclipse accelerate as rare event nears

Sunday, July 31, 2016 at 12:00 am

In the Navajo tradition, an eclipse is an intimate act between the sun and the moon. The Navajo believe it is best to stay inside, giving the lovers their privacy.

The mundane explanation — that the moon is passing in front of the sun at the correct location to cast its shadow on the surface of the earth — is less romantic, but the total solar eclipse at 1:12 p.m. on Aug. 21, 2017, in Columbia should satisfy anyone’s desire for a spectacular show.

The precise time will vary slightly, but the change will be startling for anyone who never has experienced it, said Angela Speck, director of astronomy at the University of Missouri.

The intensity of the sun does not significantly change until a few minutes before the 2-minute, 38-second period of totality begins, she said.

Then, Speck said, “It gets dark to full-moon darkness almost instantly.”

In the darkness, the electrically charged corona of the sun becomes visible, one-millionth the brightness of the sun itself and observable without special glasses. It is only safe to watch the moon cover the sun wearing special eclipse glasses, cardboard spectacles fitted with a filtering agent that allows the wearer to look directly at the sun.

Speck will be busy over the next 12 months. She is co-chairwoman of the American Astronomical Society’s task force for involving professional societies, local organizations and government agencies in a coordinated effort to celebrate the eclipse.

She has been working since 2014 on national and local plans to observe the eclipse and generate excitement among the public — particularly schoolchildren.

Scientists will gather the most detailed images ever recorded of an eclipse and study how gravity bends light — as described in Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity — more precisely than ever.
before, she said. The public can learn how to participate in the science or simply enjoy the show, she said.

Speck will speak at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thursday at the Columbia Public Library as part of a program aimed at children and adults explaining why eclipses occur, how to observe the eclipse safely and the best way to enjoy it. On Aug. 15, Speck will speak to public school educators in Perryville.

Amateur astronomers are being enlisted to help, and Speck will showcase solar telescopes Aug. 21 at the Orr Street Farmers and Artisans Market at the Wabash Station bus depot in downtown Columbia.

“It is the first eclipse to be able to be only seen from the United States since the United States became a country,” Speck said.

The region has not experienced a total eclipse since July 7, 1442, and will not see another until June 3, 2505. Speck, who received her doctorate at the College of London, will fill her five-bedroom house with relatives from Britain to enjoy the rare sight. She expects Columbia to swell with scientists and eclipse tourists.

Along the 3,000-mile path of the eclipse, Speck said, 12 million people live in the path of totality and 88 million live within a two-hour drive. The centerline of the eclipse enters Missouri at St. Joseph and passes through the Three Creeks Conservation Area and Columbia Regional Airport before exiting the state just north of Perryville.

During the coming school year, Columbia Public Schools will present a science curriculum focused on the eclipse, district Science Coordinator Mike Szydlowski said. The actual date of the eclipse will be a Monday, the fifth day of classes next academic year.

“We want to do it right,” Szydlowski said.

He said he lived through an example of not doing it correctly. While he was in high school, he said, teachers closed window shades during a partial eclipse to make sure students did not look at the sun.

“This will never happen again in Columbia, especially for the only total eclipse in our lifetime,” he said. “We want to really take advantage of it. We are going to make it kind of one big celebration day.”
Perryville is preparing to host 200 airplanes at its community airport and expects the county population of 19,000 to double, tourism director Trish Erzfeld said. The schools will have a field day, and the town is planning an eclipse weekend to attract visitors to stay for a few days, she said.

“This is like taking all three of our major events and rolling them into one day,” Erzfeld said.

Speck predicts the eclipse might draw 400,000 people to the Columbia area. She’s uncertain about the exact number, but said she is certain it would far exceed any one-day event experienced previously.

She likened it to combining the crowds from Homecoming weekend at the University of Missouri, the True/False Film Fest and the Roots N Blues N BBQ festival.

“It is hard to predict because you don’t have things like this,” she said.

Universities are losing their cachet
Employers find GPA to be poor gauge of skills.

Sunday, July 31, 2016 By Bob Roper

No MU Mention

In 2014, the Gallup organization conducted two interesting surveys. In one, 96 percent of college and university chief academic officers said they were “extremely or somewhat confident” that their institutions prepared students for workforce success. In the other survey, only 11 percent of business leaders “strongly agreed” that recent graduates have the requisite skills required in their businesses. What is going on here, other than total obliviousness on the part of academic officers?

Employers no longer implicitly trust grade point averages as a proxy for skills in critical thinking, reading, analytical reasoning, writing and communication.

This concern about a lack of academic rigor has spawned a new industry: a test for graduates — and non-graduates — known as the Collegiate Learning Assessment. For a newly minted grad who
wants to prove he or she indeed has the skills to land a good job, $35 will do the trick. That is the cost of the test. Known as the CLA+, the test is a great way to prove the test-taker has those needed skills and to market himself or herself accordingly.

Of particular concern to colleges and universities is that anyone can take the test, including those who have taken advantage of open online courses. Because potential employers simply want people who can do the job, regardless of where or how they obtained the skills, higher education no longer gets to be the gatekeeper.

That challenge is among a myriad of problems facing traditional colleges and universities. Last week I wrote mainly about the cost of the delivery system, decreases in public funding and the cost-versus-value equation. Following are additional snags in the cloak of higher education.

**NO VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY NEEDED**

Polls indicate Americans identify themselves as politically conservative about twice as often as liberal. On higher education campuses, it is the opposite—in an extreme fashion. These campuses are progressive monocultures, where more than 90 percent of professors vote Democratic and make political donations accordingly. A lot of this would be fine as long as conservatives were treated well and there was no effort to turn such places into Liberal Indoctrination U. But that is not what is happening.

Late last year, conservative commentator Ben Shapiro spoke at MU. Several student attendees later said they have to conceal their conservative beliefs from certain professors and in some classes. If they are open about their conservatism, they fear their grades will suffer or that they will be ridiculed in class.

At Marquette University a tenured, conservative professor is about to be fired. His sin? He publicly defended a student who believed the ethics of same-sex marriage was an open question and worthy of a discussion in an ethics class. And to think that Marquette is a Jesuit school!

Another cheap trick some higher education institutions are engaging is to charge very high security fees to events where disfavored (conservative) speakers are on the program. The justification for this disparate treatment is that, because the speaker is “controversial” and might say something “offensive,” more police protection is needed. Well, yes, but how about some help in allowing differing viewpoints to be spoken? Isn’t that their job?
Liberal events and speakers greatly outnumber those of the conservative stripe, so why the usual efforts to suppress the latter?

In 2015, liberal to left commencement speakers outnumbered conservatives by 6 to 1. And, by the way, it is almost always conservatives who get “disinvited” after an outcry from campus leftists. Liberal to left? Not so much. The awarding of honorary degrees of course follows the same pattern.

How about hiring more conservative academics to provide more viewpoint diversity? John Hasnas, a longtime professor at Georgetown, recently wrote he has been involved in many faculty searches. “In my experience,” he wrote, “no search committee has ever been instructed to increase political or ideological diversity. … Predominately liberal faculties identify merit with positions that are consistent with theirs, see little value in conservative or libertarian scholarship, and perpetuate the left-wing stranglehold on the academy.” He cited a recent poll that indicated fully one-third of academics said they would be less likely to hire a qualified person if they discovered the individual voted Republican. He also has observed search committees changing the selection criteria when it was obvious the best candidate was a conservative. All of this is so wrong on so many levels.

DISCRIMINATION AND DUE PROCESS ISSUES

Not long ago, the Asian American Coalition and 130 other Asian-American organizations asked the U.S. Department of Education and the Justice Department to launch an investigation. The allegation was that Yale, Brown and Dartmouth consistently discriminate against well-qualified Asian-American applicants through the use of “race-based quotas.” In 2015, 64 Asian-Americans made the same complaint about Harvard to the Department of Education. Recent research by Princeton Professor Thomas Espenshade buttresses their complaint. He found Asian-American applicants, to gain an acceptance letter, must earn an SAT score 140 points higher than a white student, 270 points higher than a Hispanic student and 450 points higher than a black student, all else being equal.

Then there is the growing problem of the growing decline of due process afforded to males on campus accused of sexual offenses, spurred by federal Title IX rules. Campuses are required to impose “interim measures” on a student while the case is only an allegation. Sanctions can include bans on the use of libraries, dining halls and athletic facilities; bans on extracurricular activities; eviction from dorms; and suspension from school. All of this can happen before anyone has examined the evidence, held a hearing or examined the credibility of the witnesses.

Has it ever occurred to the rule makers that one of the great blessings of the U.S. justice system is to afford the accused due process of law?
Will the foregoing litany of problems and concerns cause high school graduates and their parents — especially those with conservative views — to rethink the wisdom of spending all that money on that college degree? Will alums and others — once again, especially those with conservative views — be as likely to keep the donation stream going at past levels? Will conservative state legislators keep the funding stream at past levels?

The great economist Herb Stein once said if something cannot go on forever, it will stop. It would appear higher education has reached that point.

Some institutions will fail, some will do very well and many will just muddle along. The outcome chiefly depends on the capability and courage of governing boards and executive leadership. It is guaranteed to be interesting.

Bob Roper is a retired bank executive who is active in local politics.

Are you smarter than a chimp? Primatologist Frans de Waal suggests not

COLUMBIA — Which is smarter: a monkey or a fish?

To animal scientist Frans de Waal, it depends.

A monkey can climb a tree quicker than a fish, but when it comes to swimming, the tables are turned, he said in making the point that one species is not superior to another because different species have different strengths.

De Waal spoke at MU on Sunday night for the Animal Behavior Conference about animal behavior and intelligence. More than 250 people came to Jesse Hall to hear de Waal discuss his book, "Are We Smart Enough to Know How Smart Animals Are?"

De Waal, known for his extensive studies on the behavior and social intelligence of primates, has examined the hazy line between the human species and other similar species for 30 years. He is the C.H. Candler professor in the psychology department at Emory University as well as the director of Living Links Center in Atlanta that specializes in behavioral studies of monkeys and apes, mostly on social behavior and intelligence.
De Waal hosted a TED Talk in 2011 about the moral behavior of animals that received more than 3 million views.

De Waal began his discussion by questioning and challenging the history, examination and presumption about animal intelligence and behavior.

Over the last century, he said, scientists have not done their best to understand animals. De Waal said animals have been simplified by humans and are highly more capable than previously thought.

To manifest his case, de Waal revealed an experiment that tested the memory of humans compared to a chimpanzee named Ayumu. In the experiment, numbers 1 through 9 appear on a screen for a fraction of a second. The numbers turn into white squares, then the player taps the squares where the numbers had been, in order from 1 to 9. De Waal said Ayumu completed the game faster and more accurately than any human competitor, including himself.

"I tried the game myself," de Waal said. "If I started at the screen for a few seconds, I could barely complete the game with just five numbers. This made many psychologists angry, that an ape could be smarter than a human."

Along with cognitive intelligence, de Waal also spoke about animals' sensitivity to fairness, joint intentionality and sense of planning ahead.

The lecture was followed by a book signing outside the auditorium.

**Medical school officials encourage incoming students to focus on patients**

When Raghav Govindarajan was younger, his brother became quite ill. Their first experience with a physician made him lose respect for doctors.

Govindarajan, now an assistant professor of neurology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, said they waited for several hours for a doctor who barely examined his brother and simply wrote a couple of prescriptions
The family found another doctor, who smiled when he spoke to his brother and spent more than an hour examining his sibling. His brother recovered completely, Govindarajan told the incoming class at the medical school, and the biggest difference between the two providers was humility.

Physicians, he said, have the power to listen to their patients.

“To use this power and use it responsibly, you must be humble,” he said.

Govindarajan was among five speakers Friday inside Jesse Hall for the school’s 20th annual white coat ceremony, when the incoming class first dons the short, white coats they will wear during their four years of studying to be doctors. MU has held the ceremony since 1997.

The overarching theme of this year’s ceremony was patient-centered care.

Fourth-year medical student Stephanie Peace said most doctors strive to focus on their patients, but it isn’t always easy.

Peace shared two anecdotes about her experiences with patients earlier this year. The first was about a woman whose ovarian cancer had spread to her brain. Peace said she spent time with the woman and talked about the woman’s new grandson. The second patient she mentioned was a woman who had bipolar disorder and was difficult to treat, admitting she and other doctors called the woman crazy and had written her off.

In the second story, Peace said she had erred. She had dehumanized her patient, something she told the incoming class of 104 students to avoid.

Everyone has a story about a bad experience with a doctor, she said, and they all love to share them with medical students.

It’s difficult to deal with people when they are tired, sick, difficult or scared, Peace said, but doctors cannot forget the service they provide is about the patients.

“Our job as physicians is not to treat diseases but to treat patients,” she said.

The School of Medicine received a record-setting 2,167 applications for the class of 2020, according to a news release. Of the 104 who made the cut, 51 percent were women and 86 percent were from Missouri.

They range in age from 21 to 48, 26 percent come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds and 18 percent are from rural areas, the release said.
Patrick Delafontaine, dean of the School of Medicine, kicked off the ceremony with some remarks, about three hours after he and other medical school officials and students celebrated the completion of vertical construction of the university’s new Patient-Centered Care Learning Center.

The $42.5 million medical education building is expected to be completed in August 2017.

Delafontaine welcomed the new students after a weeklong orientation and lauded them for their commitment to helping others.

He said they will be reunited at graduation in May 2020, when the students will get a new, longer coat as new physicians.

“Between today and that day, you will work hard,” he said. “Harder than you ever thought possible.”