University of Missouri study: changing eligibility age for WIC recipients will help fight hunger

According to a University of Missouri study, families who rely on assistance through the WIC nutritional program experience a 5 to 11% increase in hunger when a child turns five. Dr. Colleen Heflin with the Truman School of Public Affairs says eligibility ends at age five.

“There’s a very straightforward policy solution here and that’s for the federal government to extend eligibility for the WIC program to the point when children actually enter kindergarten,” says Heflin.

The study does not cover what the cost would be to implement this change, but Heflin says the investment would be worth it.

“The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is not a very expensive program. The value of the basket of food that the children receive during by the time they are in their final years is much smaller than say the SNAP program. It’s a basket of nutrition-dense food and I think it’s widely considered to be one of the most successful programs that mutes any benefit cost analysis,” says Heflin.

Another MU study says the percentage of Missouri families experiencing hunger has more than doubled in the last decade.
A USDA report ranks Missouri second highest in the nation for people lacking food. The most recent figures say about 840,000 Missourians receive food stamps.

**Gap leads to more hungry children, study from MU finds**


**COLUMBIA - A study conducted by researchers at the University of Missouri found a gap in program coverage for young children living in hunger. Researchers found five percent of the estimated 900,000 children that use WIC are vulnerable. These children are in a gray zone without food because they turn 5 years old before going into kindergarten.**

"It means that more children are going to be more food insecure," co-author Irma Artega said. "Food insecurity actually has effects on the cognitive developmental of children. Many studies show it can deteriorate their development if they are food insecure, especially for long periods of time."

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is run nationally by the USDA. Its website said children are eligible for assistance until they are five-years-old. According to Artega, MU's research found many children turn five before school starts.

A solution would be for policy makers to expand WIC to include protection until children enter kindergarten, she said.
Jon Barry, the director of No Kid Hungry Missouri, said in an email that he supports any efforts to expand coverage.

"I feel that any program that increases the availability of nutritious food to vulnerable children can be money well spent," he said.

Various studies have supported that theory.

“Research among school-age children has found associations between household food insecurity and low scores on measures of health, behavioral functioning and academic performance," Maureen Black said in a 2012 article on the American Psychological Association website.

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Communications Director Ryan Hobart said in an email the age requirements for WIC is set by the USDA because it is a federal program. Any expansion at the state level would need to come from the Missouri legislature.

It would require an act of Congress to get the requirements changed. The U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry passed a bill in January on the topic. Section 204 would provide the necessary expansion, having the program end at 6 years old instead of 5.

"I really think that now that the study's out, now that people are going to get to know that there is a gap for some children, I am hopeful that now policy makers are going to do something," Artega said.

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website said students need to be 5-years-old by August 1st to be eligible to enroll in a Missouri kindergarten class.

Boone Hospital trustees review lease options

At least four companies are vying for an operating lease with Boone Hospital, but the Board of Trustees is remaining quiet as the proposals are reviewed.
Chairman Fred Parry said the Boone Hospital Board of Trustees has interviewed four companies interested in the lease, which is operating under St. Louis-based BJC Health Care. After its regular meeting Monday, the trustees went into closed session to discuss the lease options, said Tom Schneider, the board’s attorney.

“The options are good,” Parry said. “We’re pleasantly surprised.”

The lease agreement with BJC Health Care was formed in 2006, amended in 2012 and is scheduled to end in 2020. Lease terms require either party to notify the other by December 2018 if the lease will be terminated or renegotiated. The board issued a request for proposal in March and submissions were due by June 30.

The hospital is the county’s largest asset with nearly 2,000 employees and about $300 million in annual revenue. The county receives about $2.3 million annually from the lease with $500,000 being dedicated to the Community Health Fund, which funds 10 health and social service agencies.

Boone County Presiding Commissioner Dan Atwill recently replaced outgoing Southern District Commissioner Karen Miller as the county representative on the board of trustees. Miller is turning over her liaison roles to the other two commissioners as she looks to finish her term at the end of this year.

Parry, who also is the Republican candidate for Southern District Commissioner, would not specify any information about the companies being considered, including whether BJC Health Care is in the running, as the board is in negotiations.

**Parry also wouldn’t say if University of Missouri Health Care is an option, but said he would like the two hospitals to collaborate. In April, the board invited MU Health Care, along with 20 other health systems, to submit lease proposals. Specifically, Parry said he would like the hospital to work together on mental health care.**

The board plans to reveal the top contenders to the public and hold informational sessions in late October or early November. Schneider said the group will hold public hearings and allow citizens to ask questions or make comments. Trustees also will meet with hospital employees and medical staff for feedback.

Schneider said the trustees started the process earlier than it had previously.
“They felt like the clock ran out last time and they didn’t have enough time to consider all alternatives,” he said.

Parry said he anticipates a board decision by January.

**Search committee leaders say little after second round of University of Missouri president interviews**

ST. LOUIS — The University of Missouri presidential search committee concluded two days of candidate interviews and discussion Monday afternoon, but leaders said little about where the effort stands.

Two candidates met with the committee before noon at the Renaissance St. Louis Airport Hotel, and the committee adjourned about 3 p.m.

“It is going good,” said Pam Henrickson, chair of the UM Board of Curators, as she prepared to leave. Committee co-chairs Cheryl Walker and Jim Whitaker left the meeting without speaking about the search.

The interviews with as many as 11 semifinalists for the university’s top job consumed four days overall, including two 10-hour sessions Sept. 6 and 7.

The 16-member committee includes the nine curators and the student representative on the board along with two faculty representatives, a staff representative and a second student member. Walker and Whitaker represent alumni on the search committee.

Committee members have agreed to maintain strict confidentiality regarding the search. Walker, Whitaker and Henrickson have declined to reveal any details, such as how many semifinalists are being considered, the gender or ethnicity of the candidates.
Internal university emails for the hiring of a car service for visiting candidates, obtained by the Tribune through an open records request, indicate as many as eight candidates were interviewed Sept. 6 and 7.

A reporter observed one candidate leaving Sunday and two candidates departing the hotel Monday.

The committee will narrow the field to a group of finalists for additional interviews before making a recommendation to the curators, who will select the next president of the four-campus system.

The committee is seeking a permanent replacement for Tim Wolfe, who resigned Nov. 9 amid protests over racial issues on the Columbia campus. Interim President Mike Middleton has said he would not seek the post on a permanent basis.

The administrative shake-up also included the resignation of campus Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin. Since Wolfe's resignation, the university has sought to meet demands of the Concerned Student 1950 group by hiring a chief diversity officer for the system for the first time, elevating the role of campus diversity officers and investing in programs to attract and retain minority faculty and students.

University of Missouri Continues President Search, Narrows Field

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=ec3f3e29-a81a-4d52-9beb-4dd94353ef1a
MU School of Law creates pro bono estate planning program


COLUMBIA – MU’s School of Law is partnering with the Family Impact Center to offer free estate planning services to residents of Boone County.

The partnership is part of a new program at the law school, called the Mizzou Law Pro Bono Estate Planning Program, which intends to provide ten students an opportunity to gain legal skills and introduce them to the importance of pro bono work.

The students were chosen this fall by the program’s supervising attorney, Adjunct Associate Professor Cynthia Barchet. Barchet has a law firm in Columbia which also provides estate planning services.

The law school’s Director of Public Interest Programs, Jennifer Riedy Clark, said the students will be providing a variety of services to community members.

“The services that they are going to be providing are going to be drafting durable powers of attorney for health care, and health care directives,” Clark said. “They’re going to be drafting general durable powers of attorney for finances, as well as simple wills.”

Recipients of these services will be chosen based on an application process open to anyone.
Clark encourages anyone who is interested to apply as soon as possible.

The first meetings between students and clients are scheduled for the middle of October.

The program is currently unsure how many clients will be served because it is new to the school. However, there have been similar programs in the past.

Clark said another group of students was chosen for a similar program in the spring.

“We’ve actually done a similar program down in Salem and in Rolla the past couple of years, where we’ve taken students and gone down with legal services of southern Missouri over spring break, and done these same services,” she said.

Those involved with the program hope this session goes well, so that the program can continue to future semester.

“I really hope that we can do some good, really provide a lot of services for the members of our local community and I know the students are really excited to be able to give back to the community and to learn more about this area of the law,” said Clark.

MISSOURIAN

Craft Studio at MU prepares for December closure
MYLYNDA STUBBLEFIELD, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — “We’re the weird kids. This is where the weird kids come to play,” Amy Hay, the adviser of the Craft Studio said. “This isn’t a place where all the student leaders gather.”

The MSA/GPC Craft Studio, located in the lower level of MU’s Memorial Student Union, has only known one other home in the 43 years it's been open. But the studio may be
closing its doors in December, unless it finds another location for the spring semester, Hay said.

The studio is being forced to relocate while a deteriorating pipe is renovated, but Hay isn't sure they will be able to find a location within such short notice.

Since 1973, the studio has evolved from one room in MU’s Brady Commons, to four different rooms at Memorial Student Union, with each room dedicated to a different art medium. The studio has already gone through one closing, when Brady Commons went through renovations in 2008, but students successfully saved the space.

By that time, there was no room for the studio in the MU Student Center. But having a year's notice, they were able to find their current location in the basement of Memorial Student Union, Hay said.

Hay believes this possible closing will affect more than just students majoring in art.

“We’re a place for students who don’t really fit in a lot of other places,” Hay said. “People who have a really intense academic program come here as a place to relax.”

Some students like Grace Doran, who’s majoring in civil engineering, have schedules that don’t allow them to take art courses. Doran started off attending Crafternoons, where the studio teaches small art activities, and is now teaching a class that combines the principles of engineering with the creativity of art, called Makerspace.

“It’s like combining DIY with technology,” Doran said. “It’s a way for the Craft Studio to attract a new type of audience.”

Doran and Hay said they feel that art and STEM education — education emphasizing science, technology, engineering and math — go hand-in-hand, extending it to STEAM to include art.
“Without art, technology is just a piece of copper wire,” Hay said. "I can teach you how to coil a piece of copper wire, but art teaches you what to do with that. Technology teaches you how to use the tools, but art teaches you why to use the tools."

Christian Basi, the associate director of the MU News Bureau, said the university is working with the Missouri Students Association to find short and long-term solutions for the Craft Studio.

Basi also said potential closing of the studio is due to the aging building.

“There’s a sewer line that’s deteriorating with age that meets the studio,” Basi said. "It’s been there since the building was built in the 1950s. Repairs will take several months to complete, so because of space and budget, the studio would have to either relocate or close.”

Jessica Bueneman, a junior at MU, said she feels because of the small deadline given to the studio, there’s not enough time to inform everyone about the possible closing, but people with other interests should still care. Bueneman started school majoring in elementary education, but eventually switched to graphic design. She compared losing the Craft Studio to athletes losing one of their spaces.

“Imagine if you didn’t have the 'rec' or the fields,” Bueneman said. “If they take away the 'rec,' you still have other options, but we only have one.”

Bueneman said she isn’t sure of other affordable options near campus where art enthusiasts can go to be visually creative.

The Craft Studio offers spaces for paint, design, woodshop, ceramics and photography. The studio is also home to the only public dark room in mid-Missouri. It also experiments with other types of visual art classes such as makeup and arm knitting classes.

While the studio won’t officially close its doors until December, they have canceled scheduled events after Oct. 28, according to a public announcement released on its website.
If the studio closes indefinitely, MU will hold an auction for its equipment at the Surplus Property warehouse, Hay said.

Basi said they do not have a set timeline for the renovations, or what their plans are for the space once it’s renovated.

Those who treat the Craft Studio as their second home recommend contacting the MSA and Student Affair representatives and posting about the closing on social media.

Some have already taken to Facebook to express their dismay with the closing of the Craft Studio.

Gender-neutral bathrooms one step toward gender-inclusive campus, advocates say

MSA Senator Sterling Waldman: “It’s been needed for so long that we’re just kind of like, ‘Okay, this is great, and we need more. It’s almost halfway to basic necessities.’

By Ayesha Vishnani
Sept. 21, 2016

Sophomore Rio Chacon stands outside the door, their hand hovering. It is a smaller bathroom — the two-stall kind — but instead of entering, Chacon pauses to listen for a flush, the noise of the sink, chattering, anything to indicate a person is inside. If Chacon hears a noise, they wait. For Chacon, who identifies as transgender and gender fluid, using bathrooms at MU has not been a smooth experience.

“I’ll just kind of stand there for a second to hear if anyone’s in there before I go in,” Chacon said. “I hate doing that, but I just don’t want to be there while someone else’s in there, just because I don’t want to make anyone else uncomfortable.”
Last spring, the Student Fee Capital Improvement Committee granted $4,000 to the Missouri Students Association to change signs on single-stall bathrooms on campus to make them gender-inclusive.

MSA Senator Sterling Waldman, a sophomore member of the social justice committee, proposed the legislation, which passed unanimously. Waldman, who identifies as queer and transgender, said they saw the need to increase the number of gender-neutral bathrooms on campus based on their own experiences.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said in an email that Campus Facilities and the Department of Residential Life were both involved in the process.

Residence Halls Association President Matt Bourke said signs for single-stall bathrooms and showers in older residence halls that read “Women” and “Men” have now been changed to read “Toilet” or “Toilet and Shower” accordingly. Bourke said $1,000 was used to convert these signs.

Basi said the remaining $3,000 was allocated to change signs in other campus buildings based on an MSA priority list. Despite the availability of these funds, changes have not been made.

“The MU Sign Shop on campus currently only has one person, so the university is a bit behind in work orders,” Basi said in an email. “Work orders for the bathroom signs have been initiated.”

However, Basi did not know when this will be completed.

Story continues:  
Pulitzer Prize-winning author to speak in Columbia Wednesday night

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=6cb0a682-1850-4f13-a115-071230b71e4b

COLUMBIA - A former Pulitzer Prize winner will speak tonight at the University of Missouri.

Leonard Pitts Jr. will be speaking at the Missouri School of Journalism in Fisher Auditorium located in Gannet Hall.

Executive Director of the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute, Randy Picht, said the event drew a lot of attention early.

“We put an ad in the Columbia Tribune to just, you know, let people know he was coming, and the next day, so that was a Sunday, the next day we had 140 people that had RSVP’d and we had to move it to a bigger venue,” Picht said.

The talk is all a part of the Institute's Politics and Press Responsibility Series - and there should be a lot of talking points, especially in an election year.

“I suspect he’s going to talk a fair amount about that, and also have some hefty doses of talking about Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton,” Picht said.

Pitts Jr.’s home paper is the Miami Herald, and he also has a column which runs nationwide twice a week, allowing people to read his writing from all over the country.
“I think it’s really cool since the journalism school is so big here that we get to hear from someone that’s accomplished so much in the journalism world and maybe learn something from what he’s done out in the real world,” MU Student, Lexi Larson, said.

Pitts Jr. is also someone the Institute has been hoping would come for awhile.

“I’m sure there’s lots of folks in Columbia that read his column and say, you know, that’s exactly what I was thinkin', and so I’ve been hoping to have home come and talk in some capacity,” Picht said.

Event attendees can park for free at Hitt St. garage.

Though the event has sold out, those who did not register can still attend both a reception before the talk, and a book signing after. The talk will also be streamed live online on RJI’s website.

---

Zero Correlation Between Evaluations and Learning

New study adds to evidence that student reviews of professors have limited validity.

September 21, 2016
By Colleen Flaherty

No MU Mention

A number of studies suggest that student evaluations of teaching are unreliable due to various kinds of biases against instructors. (Here’s one addressing gender.) Yet conventional wisdom remains that students learn best from highly rated instructors; tenure cases have even hinged on it.
What if the data backing up conventional wisdom were off? A new study suggests that past analyses linking student achievement to high student teaching evaluation ratings are flawed, a mere “artifact of small sample sized studies and publication bias.”

“Whereas the small sample sized studies showed large and moderate correlation, the large sample sized studies showed no or only minimal correlation between [student evaluations of teaching, or SET] ratings and learning,” reads the study, in press with Studies in Educational Evaluation. “Our up-to-date meta-analysis of all multisection studies revealed no significant correlations between [evaluation] ratings and learning.”

These findings “suggest that institutions focused on student learning and career success may want to abandon SET ratings as a measure of faculty's teaching effectiveness,” the study says.

The paper considered end-of-course evaluations, not arguably more subjective ratings found on ratings websites.

Authors of the new paper scrutinized data taken from seven studies that have been cited over time as evidence of the effectiveness of student evaluations. Some of the data, for example, come from a 1981 meta-analysis of multisection validity studies. That analysis, based on 41 studies reporting on 68 multisection courses, found a significant link between overall instructor course rating and student achievement, especially on measures of skill and structure. It endorsed student ratings as valid measures of teacher effectiveness. Yet, according to the new analysis, that paper and others like it “suffer from multiple critical methodological flaws that render their conclusions unwarranted.” Namely, the studies fail to do some or all of the following: provide basic information about the primary-level data, such as effect and sample size; ensure the data’s accuracy, such as by checking how they’re coded; or, perhaps most importantly, consider small sample size bias. The latter occurs when statistical results that may not be representative of the sample as a whole are gathered or reported in such a way that shows significant -- and therefore more likely to be published -- results.

The 1981 study, for example, did briefly consider sample size, in terms of course sections, but reported it was not a significant factor. A few pages later, the same study
dismissed reviewers “concerned that rating/achievement correlations vary according to the number of sections used in the study,” but then somewhat inexplicably said a “number of sections correlated significantly with the absolute value of effect size.” Correlation size was not reported.

A rerunning of that study’s original, available data found that the number of sections included in multisection studies was generally small, with the number of multisection studies based on as few as five sections, and that “many impossibly high correlations (r > 0.90) were obtained in multisection studies with a small number of sections.” It also found that the majority of reported rating-achievement correlations were not statistically significant, and that the magnitude of evaluation-achievement correlations decreased for larger-sized studies in a predictable pattern.

The study says that the best evidence -- its own meta-analysis of SET-learning correlations when prior learning and ability are taken into account -- indicates that the SET-learning correlation is actually zero, and that it’s “astonishing” that poor data have driven the conversation around evaluations for some 30 years. The paper advises universities to begin giving teaching evaluations appropriate “weight” in personnel and other decisions.

“The entire notion that we could measure professors' teaching effectiveness by simple ways such as asking students to answer a few questions about their perceptions of their course experiences, instructors' knowledge and the like seems unrealistic given well-established findings from cognitive sciences such as strong associations between learning and individual differences including prior knowledge, intelligence, motivation and interest,” the paper says. “Individual differences in knowledge and intelligence are likely to influence how much students learn in the same course taught by the same professor.”

Small sample size bias concerns aren’t unique to student evaluations of teaching -- it’s a concern in neuroscience, for example, and many other fields. But the new analysis is one more reason for critics to question the validity of student evaluations of teaching as effective measures of quality. A recent Stanford University investigation of meta-analyses also found them to be problematic. "Currently, there is massive production of unnecessary, misleading, and conflicted systematic reviews and meta-analyses," that paper says. "Instead of promoting evidence-based medicine and health care, these
instruments often serve mostly as easily produced publishable units or marketing tools."

“Meta-analysis of faculty’s teaching effectiveness: Student evaluation of teaching ratings and student learning are not related” was written by Bob Uttl, professor of psychology at Mount Royal University; Carmela A. White, a graduate student in psychology at the University of British Columbia; and Daniela Wong Gonzalez, a graduate student at the University of Windsor, all in Canada. Most of the studies analyzed were based on U.S. data.

Philip B. Stark, associate dean of the Division of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and a professor of statistics at Stanford, is a vocal critic of teaching evaluations used as high-stakes measures of teaching effectiveness (he did not write the recent study on meta-analysis). He said Uttl's and his colleagues' paper "pays much more attention than usual to the quality of the underlying studies, and gives a circumspect review of previous meta-analyses."

Given what "the best randomized, controlled experiments have shown, it is not surprising that this study finds no meaningful correlation between SET and learning," he said. And given the "strong association between SET and instructor gender, this adds evidence to the argument that institutions that care about learning should abandon SET as a measure of teaching effectiveness."

Uttl said that contrary to popular belief, "the multisection studies do not support validity of SET ratings as measure of faculty’s teaching effectiveness. They indicate that students do not learn more from professors with higher SET ratings."