Locally enforced deportation program linked to food insecurity risk among Mexican families

Generated from News Bureau press release: Deportation Risk Increases Food Insecurity

Nearly 3.5 million children of Mexican descent live with an unauthorized immigrant parent; the vast majority of these children are U.S. born citizens, according to data from the Pew Hispanic Center. Researchers from the University of Missouri have found that local immigration enforcement policies that seek to apprehend and deport adults, can increase food insecurity risks for Mexican non-citizen households with children. Stephanie Potochnick, assistant professor in the Truman School of Public Affairs, says that any immigration policy that seeks to deport adults must have support systems, such as access to food stamps, in place to help improve outcomes for the children left behind.

"This research provides the first national-level evidence that local immigration laws negatively influence the health and well-being of immigrant families, specifically Mexican non-citizen families," Potochnick said. "Evidence suggests that local-level immigration enforcement can generate fear and reduce social service use among Hispanic immigrant families who often live in the shadows, making it difficult to understand the health impacts of such policies."

Potochnick and her team analyzed data from a nationally representative dataset, which included Mexican non-citizen households with children. They found that a locally enforced deportation program was positively associated with food insecurity risk among Mexican non-citizen households with children; those households were 10 percentage points more likely to experience food insecurity than their peers living in communities without the deportation program.

"Approximately 30 percent of Mexican non-citizen households in our sample already experience high levels of food insecurity, so an increase of 10 percentage points is a
significant change to their health," Potochnick said. "As long as immigration policies aim to deport adults, policymakers need to understand that there are consequences for the citizen children left behind."

Kappa Alpha leader failed to protect pledge hospitalized after hazing incident, mother says

Last Wednesday, Lynn Zingale received a call in Chicago to hurry to Columbia because her 18-year-old son, a pledge at Kappa Alpha fraternity, was undergoing treatment for alcohol poisoning at Boone Hospital Center.

“I begged her to tell me what was going on,” Zingale said in an interview with the Tribune. “She said, ‘It doesn’t look good. Get here ASAP.’”

Within an hour she was on a plane. When Zingale arrived in Columbia, she learned her son was brought in with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.45 percent — the legal limit to drive is 0.08 — and a low blood oxygen reading.

Her son was in a medication-induced coma for two days to allow the alcohol to exit his system.

“They are shocked he survived,” Zingale said. “They are shocked he has no brain damage. This kid is a miracle, I don’t know how he is alive.”

The Tribune agreed to withhold her son’s name in exchange for an interview with Zingale. The incident is under investigation by the Columbia Police Department as an assault, MU and the national Kappa Alpha Order put the fraternity chapter on temporary suspension while the investigation is underway.

The university Office of Student Conduct also is investigating the incident. So far, Zingale said, she is pleased with the way MU has handled the incident but has harsh words for the Kappa Alpha order and its campus leadership.

Chapter President Jacob Lee picked her up from the airport and told her no active fraternity members were present when her son was drinking, she said.
She since has learned that was a lie, Zingale said. She also said she has learned that Lee ordered members and pledges not to communicate with her son. Before she left town, she said, she encountered Lee again.

“I told him he failed drastically as a leader,” Zingale said. “I told him, ‘what you are doing is massive damage control. You don’t care about my son, you are protecting the fraternity.’ It is all about the good old boys club.”

Lee on Tuesday referred the Tribune to the national office, which said Monday that it was investigating the incident.

Jesse Lyons, Kappa Alpha Order assistant executive director for advancement, was not available to respond Tuesday to an email seeking comment on Zingale’s statements.

Lee wrote in a report provided to the Tribune by the pledge’s father, Mike Zingale, that the pledge became involved in a challenge to see who could chug the most vodka continuously.

Two fraternity members “explicitly told them that they did not have to take a drink if they did not want to,” Lee wrote.

Zingale’s son was drunk at 2 a.m. Wednesday and was put to bed. “For safety concerns, they put a backpack on” the pledge to ensure “that while he was sleeping he did not roll over on his back, vomit, and proceed to choke on his own vomit and auto-asphyxiate himself,” Lee wrote.

When Lee was called to check on the pledge at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, he called 911 when the pledge would not wake up.

Zingale said she was told that if her son had been left alone for another hour, he would be dead or have severe brain damage. The hospital told her he had been in respiratory arrest and was inhaling three breaths per minute when paramedics arrived.

Underage drinking is prohibited by law and MU and fraternity policies. Mike Zingale demanded a copy of the fraternity’s alcohol protocols.

The fraternity rules prohibit hard alcohol in the house, require a security guard to be on duty late at night and for two regular members and a leadership member to be awake and sober as well. “There were so many violations it is not even funny,” he said. “We want the story out because we want to put as much pressure on them as possible.”

Her son is back in class, and whether he remains enrolled at MU will depend on the outcome of the investigation, Lynn Zingale said.

“We are deciding this on how this whole thing is being handled,” she said. “At this time we are just letting the school or the police do their job. If they find any guilt, we want them prosecuted.”
Kappa Alpha hazing incident was vodka-chugging contest, report says

KATIE POHLMAN, 15 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — A newly released incident report about a hazing incident at an MU fraternity reveals that the assault reported to Columbia Police on Thursday involved binge drinking.

The Kappa Alpha Order risk management report, obtained by the Columbia Daily Tribune, says the 18-year-old subject of the assault was involved in a vodka-chugging contest with other fraternity members and fellow pledges at Kappa Alpha's fraternity house, 1301 University Ave.

The fraternity has been suspended by MU, but is still listed as an active chapter on the national organization's website.

At around 12:30 a.m. on Sept. 28, one member challenged the other to see who could chug vodka the longest. Another member agreed to join in, claiming he could out-do both members.

The report states that contest participants were told by active members that they did not have to participate if they didn't want to. However, all agreed to the "challenge," as it is called in the report, on their own accord.

Around 2 a.m. Sept. 28, the other new members noticed that the 18 year old was drunk. In the report, Chapter President Jacob Lee wrote that he was told the victim "looked drunk but not overly drunk."

The new members helped the 18 year old to bed and put a backpack on him "to insure that while he was sleeping he did not roll over on his back, vomit, and proceed to choke on his own vomit and auto-asphyxiate himself," the report states.
At around 10:30 a.m. Sept. 28, Lee was called to wake the man up once fellow new members were unable to do so.

"After coming to his room, I noticed that other than a slightly slowed breathing rate … (it) simply looked like he was sleeping off a hangover," Lee wrote.

Lee tried to wake the man himself but couldn't. At that point he called the house mother, and together they decided to call an ambulance.

The 18 year old was taken to Boone County Hospital Center. His mother was contacted and she flew into Columbia Regional Airport where Lee and the chapter's vice president, Cole Valenti, picked her up.

At 12:30 a.m. Sept. 29, the 18 year old awoke from a medically-induced coma and has been awake ever since.

The chapter's risk management statement explicitly states that "the possession, sale, use and/or consumption of alcoholic beverages while on chapter premises by a minor are strictly prohibited."

The statement also mentions that hazing is strictly prohibited. Hazing is defined as "any action taken or situation created, intentionally, whether on or off fraternity premises, to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment or ridicule." The use of alcohol can be considered hazing.

The investigation of the incident is ongoing.

Jesse Lyons, the Kappa Alpha Order's assistant executive director for advancement, said in an emailed statement to the Missourian last week: "Misuse of alcohol, and hazing, are each contrary to our values and are strictly and expressly prohibited by Kappa Alpha Order. We are in close cooperation with the University in this situation."

When asked to comment, Lee deferred to the fraternity's national organization.
University of Missouri presidential search continues in Kansas City

KANSAS CITY — The chances for appointing a new University of Missouri president this week are uncertain, but stacking two days of University of Missouri Presidential Search Committee meetings just ahead of a Board of Curators regular meeting indicate it possible.

“We’ll know more tomorrow afternoon,” Maurice Graham, a curator from Clayton, said as committee members moved to the room where they were meeting in private Tuesday morning. The 16-member committee includes all nine curators as well as faculty, alumni, student and staff representatives.

The committee conducted four days of candidate interviews last month in St. Louis. As described by consultants earlier in the year, the interview process would conclude with meetings with semifinalists, follow-up interviews with finalists and a recommendation to curators.

Attorney Cheryl Walker of St. Louis, co-chair of the search committee and a former curator, wrote in an email Tuesday that she could not divulge where the search stood.

“We recognize many are interested in knowing more, however we must not get too far ahead of ourselves,” Walker said. “The committee continues to engage well-qualified candidates from a national audience, and we are making good progress.”

The Tuesday morning session at the Kansas City Airport Marriott Hotel began with a brief open session with one item on the agenda — voting to go into closed session. The meeting is scheduled to continue Wednesday.

The curators are scheduled to hold their quarterly meeting beginning Thursday morning at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

“This hiring decision is critical for our institution and our state, and the committee is determined to keep working until the process is complete,” Walker wrote in the email. “Eventually, we will complete our work and leave the ultimate selection to the Board of Curators; however, I am unable to tell you when that will occur at this point.”

The four-campus university system has been without a permanent president since Nov. 9, when Tim Wolfe resigned under mounting pressure from student protests over racial issues on the
Columbia campus. Mike Middleton, former deputy chancellor of the Columbia campus, is serving as interim president but has said he would not seek the job on a permanent basis.

The Concerned Student 1950 protests brought a national spotlight to the university at a time when administrative turmoil already had weakened both the campus and system administration. Wolfe had tried unsuccessfully to get the curators to fire R. Bowen Loftin as chancellor, but Loftin did not survive in his job when Wolfe was forced out. Hank Foley is interim chancellor of the Columbia campus.

Wolfe was named president in December 2011 to replace Gary Forsee. An advisory panel was created by the curators for that search, but members were kept in the dark until two finalists were chosen. Before the committee could be told of the choices, one of the candidates withdrew, leaving Wolfe as the only candidate.

Since the University of Missouri expanded to four campuses in the 1960s, the average tenure of a permanent president has been about five years. Wolfe and Forsee were the first presidents since the expansion who did not have an academic background.

Committee interviews University of Missouri presidential finalists

KANSAS CITY — The University of Missouri Presidential Search Committee met for more than 12 hours Tuesday, meeting with several candidates for the second time but revealing little about where things stand on making a decision about a leader for the four-campus system.

Committee co-chairs Cheryl Walker and Jim Whitaker left the closed meeting room through an exit unobservable to a waiting reporter. Curator Maurice Graham said only that the committee would likely not meet for as long as it did on Tuesday when it reconvenes at 8 a.m. Wednesday.

The search committee was created in February to provide a broad-based panel to screen candidates to replace Tim Wolfe, who resigned Nov. 9 under mounting pressure from protests over racial issues on the Columbia campus. Walker and Whitaker represent alumni on the panel, which has 16 members including the Board of Curators.

Columbia campus interim Chancellor Hank Foley and University of Missouri-St. Louis Chancellor Thomas George were at the meeting. Foley said he was there to assist the committee in any way he could.
The committee has not revealed the number of candidates on the shortened list of finalists or how many semifinalist candidates were interviewed over four days at a St. Louis hotel. The search led by the consulting firm Isaacson Miller Inc. has prized secrecy over public vetting of candidates, intending to make no names public until one — the person selected — is revealed.

The two-day meeting precedes a two-day meeting of the curators on the UMKC campus. The curators have set aside all of Thursday morning for a closed session.

Curators Meet in Kansas City to Continue UM System President Search

Watch the story: http://mms.tveys.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=3f95e3f5-ca75-48da-b953-d05441000003

Mizzou to present football facility plans to curators

By Dave Matter St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 15 hrs ago

COLUMBIA, MO. • The University of Missouri System Board of Curators is meeting Thursday and Friday in Kansas City and will be presented with MU's master plans for athletics facilities, including the new football team facility planned for the south of Memorial Stadium.

Here is the master plan image of the proposed additions, including the team facility, a new 100-yard indoor practice facility and two new video boards in the south end zone.
The master plan for Mizzou's new proposed football facilities includes a new team building south of Memorial Stadium, a new 100-yard indoor practice facility and new video boards for the south end zone.

According to the meeting's agenda, Mizzou is scheduled to present the plans on Thursday.

The Intercollegiate Athletics Master Plan Update reads as follows:

"The University of Missouri-Columbia presents an informational update of the Intercollegiate Athletics’ (ICA) Master Plan focusing on immediate needs on campus and associated projects to support ICA. The ICA Master Plan is a multi-year vision which focuses on the facility needs of Mizzou student-athletes as well as Tiger Fans, students, alumni, staff and donors. Student-athletes are valued as learners, citizens and competitors – from MU’s coaching staff to the state-of-the art facilities, the goal of the athletic department is to encourage every Mizzou student athlete to become a champion. The ICA Master Plan addresses possible areas of improvement for all 20 varsity sports teams and ensures the athletic department always offers its student-athletes the highest quality facilities that encourage academic integrity, social responsibility and competitive athletic excellence. The ICA Master Plan is included within the MU Campus Master Plan, which is presented to the Board of Curators for approval every three years. The next formal presentation of the Campus Master Plan for approval by the Curators is scheduled for June 2017."
Curators to see MU football facility renovation plans this week

RICK MORGAN, 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Numerous renovations to the south end of Memorial Stadium have been included in changes to the Intercollegiate Athletics Master Plan, which will be presented to the Board of Curators Thursday and Friday.

Proposed renovations include stabilizing and improving the south endzone, new video boards and a new football building directly adjacent to the south end of the stadium, according to the updated master plan.

While the plan didn’t specify what the new football building would include, artist renderings show a new weight room and athletic training room. There would also be a 100-yard indoor practice facility located across Providence Road from the football stadium.

“The ICA Master Plan addresses possible areas of improvement for all 20 varsity sports teams and ensures the athletic department always offers its student-athletes the highest quality facilities that encourage academic integrity, social responsibility and competitive athletic excellence,” according to the update.

The plan specifies that the ICA Master Plan is part of the larger MU Campus Master Plan, which will be presented again to the curators in June 2017.
First female MU Engineering Dean to speak at Women in Business event

Dr. Elizabeth Loboa received her B.S. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of California, Davis and her M.S. and Ph.D. in Biomechanical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering, respectively, from Stanford University. In 2003, she became an assistant professor in the newly formed Joint Department of Biomedical Engineering at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University. Eventually, she became a full professor and the associate chair.

During those years, she was also a full professor in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at NC State University and held adjunct faculty positions there in the Departments of Fiber, Polymer Science, Physiology and Biotechnology.

On Oct. 15, 2015, she became the 11th dean and first female dean of the College of Engineering at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Dr. Loboa serves on several distinguished boards and committees, including the Board of Directors for the Orthopaedic Research Society. She is the 2016 president of the Biomedical Engineering Society (BMES) Special Interest Group in Cellular and Molecular Bioengineering and serves on multiple editorial boards for various journals in her field. She has authored more than 275 peer-reviewed materials and is a recipient of numerous awards, including the Stanford University Distinguished Alumni Scholar Award. She is a Fellow of both the Biomedical Engineering Society and the American Institute of Medical and Biological Engineering.

Dean Loboa moved to Columbia at almost this exact time just one year ago along with her husband and two (of their five) children.
False clown sightings result in Callaway County arrest

ANN MARION, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Police in mid-Missouri have not found any evidence of people dressing as clowns in the area, despite several civilians' claims.

Police arrested Ronald J. Pace, 21, of Auxvasse, Missouri, on Monday for filing a false report of clown sightings on two different occasions.

On Sept. 30, Pace told the Callaway County Sheriff’s Department he had seen two clowns with shotguns walking on a road near Kingdom City, Missouri. Police searched the area and found no signs of people dressed as clowns or suspicious activity.

Lt. Clay Chism said the sheriff's office did not post a press release about the incident, but social media created concern among the community.

On Monday morning, Pace told another individual he had seen a person in a clown suit beating a dog with a baseball bat on private property. The individual notified Pace that he would be reporting the incident to police.

Later that same day, Pace admitted to fabricating both stories and said the dog had been injured in a car accident. Pace was arrested for filing a false report.

People across the country have increasingly reported suspicious clown sightings in recent weeks, since it was reported in August that people dressed as clowns were luring children into the woods of Greenville County, South Carolina. The initial reports sparked paranoia, resulting in false sightings in multiple states.
As of Thursday, 12 people in multiple states had been arrested for making false reports or threats, according to the New York Times. Social media has been rampant with unfounded sightings of suspicious clowns.

In Columbia, a security guard at Missouri Auto Auction on Rangeline Road reported seeing two people in clown costumes behind a fence on Thursday. Boone County detective Tom O’Sullivan said that responding officers found no signs of clowns or suspicious activity.

**On Monday night, MUPD responded to a complaint that a clown was spotted near the MU campus.** Brian Weimer, spokesman for the department, said MUPD received calls from concerned parents of MU students regarding social media threats involving clowns near Greek houses.

Police found no evidence of individuals in clown costumes or unusual activity in the area. They ask that people only report suspicious activity they have personally witnessed.

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**Night of the Clowns**

Colleges are victims of a social media hoax, prompting concern that people dressed as clowns were stalking students and challenging campus security leaders.

A rash of purported clown sightings on campuses Monday left college officials in the unenviable position of ensuring the safety of their students while not overreacting to a bizarre social media prank.

The reports were the most recent in a string of clown sightings that began in August, when six people in Greenville, S.C., told police that clowns were trying to lure children into a nearby woods. Since then, similar reports have surfaced across the country, though few of the incidents have resulted in arrests or evidence that the clowns actually exist.

Police believe that most of the sightings are likely hoaxes, with the reports either being outright false or stemming from pranksters dressed in clown costumes.
Reports of people dressed in creepy-looking clown costumes stalking college campuses have now occurred at dozens of institutions. Students have reported seeing clowns at the Universities of Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Miami, Missouri at Columbia and Texas at Austin. Students have claimed to also see clowns at Bloomsburg, Butler, Sacred Heart, Texas A&M and Syracuse Universities, as well as at Mississippi and York Colleges.

Some institutions have chosen to not address the reports publicly, other than to send police to investigate the claims. Other institutions -- including several that experienced alleged clown sightings on Monday -- have responded to the reports more directly. At Western Carolina University on Monday, a rumor began spreading through social media that a student had been stabbed by a clown. The university released a statement saying that campus police were “attempting to run down a huge number of social media rumors regarding a clown on campus,” and that no students had been injured.

In that statement and a subsequent Facebook post, Western Carolina urged students to stop sharing social media posts about the sightings. “Snapchat, tweets and Facebook postings by others typically do not have firsthand accurate information regarding emergencies or threats,” the university said.

Also on Monday, the University of New Hampshire informed students that police were unable to substantiate any clown sightings on campus and that the university was not on lockdown, despite rumors to the contrary. That same evening, reports of clowns at Auburn University prompted officials to send a campuswide email instructing students to resist the urge to track down clowns on their own and to avoid wearing clown attire.

“We had a report of students walking around looking for people dressed as clowns,” the university’s Department of Public Safety said in the email. “For your safety, we strongly encourage you to leave this job to Auburn Police. Please use good judgment and avoid wearing clown masks, as it could be perceived as a hazard or threat to others.”

At Pennsylvania State University on Monday, rumors of a clown sighting appeared on the anonymous messaging app Yik Yak. By 11 p.m., hundreds of students had gathered outside residence halls in response to the alleged sighting. Penn State police estimated that between 500 and 1,000 students were involved in the incident, but no injuries or property damage was reported.

The mob, screaming and running through the streets, moved across campus in response to other social media posts, with students saying they were trying to hunt the clown down. At one point, a large image of a clown was projected onto the side of a building. “Some people run away from clowns,” one student tweeted. “Penn State runs towards them.”

Police -- and the hundreds of students -- did not locate anyone dressed as a clown. Armed with golf clubs, students at Belmont University also searched for a clown Monday, after a student posted an image on social media that depicted a clown hiding
near a building on campus. The student later admitted to creating the image with Photoshop.

William Taylor, former president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators and chief of police at Collin College in Texas, said no matter how absurd a safety concern may seem, college officials must avoid quickly dismissing it as a hoax, even if that has been the case at other campuses.

“Each incident must be judged on its own circumstances,” Taylor said. “Just because it is one thing in one location does not mean another location will have the same thing.”

A series of clown reports on Monday at Merrimack College in Massachusetts ended with police declaring that the sightings were a hoax, but not before the campus was placed on lockdown for an hour and a residence hall evacuated. Posts on social media claimed that students had seen clowns in a nearby woods and, alarmingly, on the third floor of a dorm.

The clown was allegedly armed with a pitchfork and a rifle.

Christopher Hopey, Merrimack’s president, released a statement on Tuesday praising the police department and saying that the college must take seriously every threat to campus safety, even those seemingly stolen from a Stephen King novel.

“We now know this was a hoax perpetrated through social media, not just on our campus but on several others throughout New England last night, a hoax fed by hysteria that has, by media accounts, now affected communities in 26 states,” Hopey stated. “This is the world in which we live, with very real threats intermingled with false alarms.”
MU's RSVP Center talks 30 years of fighting sexual assault

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyses.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=9cf16ffc-d9bf-4a92-973a-0eeb52294394

COLUMBIA - MU's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center (RSVP) reviewed 30 years of working to end sexual assault Tuesday.

Representatives from MU and the Columbia community came together to celebrate RSVP's 30th birthday, but also to look back on what the group has accomplished in the past and what they hope to accomplish in the future.

"We want to get to a point where sexual assault on campus doesn't happen," MU Women's Center Sr. Coordinator Laura Hacquard said.

RSVP Education Coordinator Kim Scates said the program's expansion since its birth in the mid-80s is important to serve the campus community.

"Power-based personal violence, unfortunately, is very common on college campuses across the nation, so universities owe it to the folks who come here to get their education to provide this kind of support and education to those who are directly and indirectly affected by violence," Scates said.

Hacquard said they've come a long way in 30 years.

"That's a time when we were all pretty naive about sexual assault on campus, but we were ahead of other schools at the time," Hacquard said.

According to MUPD's 2016 Annual Fire Safety and Security Report, 18 total rapes were reported in 2014. Six of those were on campus in student housing and 12 were off-campus. In 2015, 13 total rapes were reported, nine of which occurred on campus in student housing.
Despite the drop in reported rapes to MUPD, Scates said that doesn't mean RSVP has seen a drop as well.

"We know that when an entity such as ours becomes more well known in a community, the number of people we see reporting violence increases. That's not because violence is happening more, it's because people have a safe place to go to talk about what's happened. Folks may feel more comfortable reporting," Scates said.

Representatives from RSVP, MU Athletics, the Boone County D.O.V.E. Unit, True North Women's Shelter and MU Student Health attended the luncheon.

RSVP's next event is a faculty Green Dot Training Conference in November.

MISSOURIAN

MU now offers a new minor on Middle East studies

ANN MARION, 19 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Although scores of books with Arabic and Hebrew titles line Nathan Hofer’s bookshelves, he believes an understanding of the Middle East is more than grasping a dichotomy of religions.

Hofer, who holds a doctorate in religious studies with a primary emphasis on Judaism and a secondary emphasis on Islam, directs the new minor in Middle East Studies at MU, which became available to students this fall.

“What we call the Middle East goes beyond Islam,” Hofer said. “I want them (students) to have a coherent framework to realize that the Middle East is a lot more diverse, religiously and politically, than most people understand.”

The new program allows students to choose 15 credit hours from 11 disciplines, including art, archeology, history, literature and religious studies.
Hofer’s interest in the program is as personal as it is professional. He returned to the United States after living in Syria in 2007. He visited Syria several more times until 2010, the last peaceful year before the civil war in Syria began.

Victor McFarland, assistant professor of history at MU, also teaches approved courses in the minor. McFarland said students often don’t have a chance to learn about the region beyond what they read in the headlines.

“The picture of the Middle East that students get from the news is sometimes limited to coverage of terrorists and refugees,” McFarland said. He said he hopes the minor can broaden perspective of the region by exposing students to a variety of courses.

Hofer said he also hopes the minor will encourage interest in associated courses. In the past five years, enrollment in some religious courses has fallen, according to MU’s Student Information System.

For example, an introductory course to Islam saw an enrollment decline from 47 students in 2010 to 27 students in 2015. When Hofer began teaching Introduction to Islam, his enrollment capacity was 110, but that number of students never signed up for the course. As a result, the cap was lowered.

Hofer said his colleagues at other universities report the same downward trend in religious studies courses.

But classes that include aspects of mythology or magic, or ones that center on a specific problem or topic, show increased enrollment. Hofer's course Islam and the Myth of Religious Violence, is nearly full with 27 students, while courses such as Arabic rarely reach their capacity of 30 students.

Although students overall might not be choosing to take courses that focus on the Middle East, in the fall of 2015, a group of undergraduates at MU asked Hofer to spearhead the effort to bring the minor to the university.
“There are a lot of students here that want to work in the Middle East,” he said. Most of the students enrolled his classes are aspiring global journalists, lawyers or political science majors, he said.

Senior Kate Hargis studies political science with a math minor and plans to attend law school. Hargis’ interest in the minor was inspired by her attraction to the region.

“I think understanding and learning about it is so important,” Hargis said. She spent time in Oman, which is on the Arabian Sea southeast of Saudi Arabia, and developed a deep appreciation for the culture and people in the Middle East.

Aside from gaining global perspectives, the minor allows MU to join the ranks of most other schools in the Southeastern Conference. Of the 14 SEC member schools, all but five include an academic area of study specializing in the Middle East.

“I think it’s really important that we can keep up if we’re going to be in the same league,” Hargis said. "We need to be in the same league in education as well.”

MU Women's and Children's Hospital opens imaging center

Technicians and radiologists at the University of Missouri’s Women’s and Children’s Hospital will see patients for the first time Tuesday afternoon in its new imaging center, which offers mammography, ultrasound and bone density testing services in one space.

The new imaging center opened to MU Health Care administrators, staff and reporters Tuesday morning, with the first patient appointments set for Tuesday afternoon.

Breast cancer detection services at the center include 2-D and 3-D mammography, diagnostic mammography for women with breast cancer symptoms and breast ultrasound scans.
The bone density testing service will help doctors diagnose patients with osteoporosis or tell them if they are at risk for breaking bones. Patients also can receive pelvic and other screenings for women.

The imaging center will decrease the wait between screenings and follow-up services, such as diagnostic mammography or biopsies. Radiologists working on-site will analyze images at two stations, removing the necessity of sending them offsite for review.

Decreased wait times will give patients a “quicker piece of mind,” said Keri Simon, executive director of Women’s and Children’s Hospital. The imaging center also was designed for privacy, she said.

Now, patients will know their test results on the same day as the test, said Megha Garg, chief of breast imaging at the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center.

Garg said the center offers convenience for patients already seeing physicians at the hospital.

“It’s comforting to come back to the same location,” Garg said.

Simon said the imaging center was a goal for the hospital for years. Women were sometimes diagnosed at the hospital and then sent to Ellis Fischel Cancer Center for biopsies, she said.

“It makes sense to do that where your women’s population is based, which is on this campus,” Simon said.

With the new imaging center, MU Health Care offers four locations for mammography, including Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, South Providence Medical Park and Ellis Fischel’s mammography van.

“It’s nice for us as a system to have another location that’s comparable in the experience for women, so as we get busier patients have more of a choice of where they can get in soonest or what’s more convenient for them,” Simon said.

Construction crews renovated an oral surgeon’s office to create the imaging center, which is located near the hospital’s main lobby.