After Troubled Times, Missouri System Picks an Academic as Its Leader

For the first time since 2008, the University of Missouri System will be led by someone who is steeped in the traditions of academe. But the new president’s attention will be spread far and wide as he seeks to heal the rifts between numerous constituencies.

The system’s Board of Curators announced Wednesday morning that it had chosen Mun Y. Choi, who has been provost at the University of Connecticut since 2012. He will replace Timothy M. Wolfe, a former software company executive, who was forced out last fall amid widespread protests over racial problems at the flagship campus, in Columbia. Michael A. Middleton, a former deputy chancellor of the Columbia campus, has served as the system’s interim president since then.

Mr. Choi will take office at Missouri in March.

"I’m very excited that we’ve hired someone with extensive experience in academia," said Keith J. Stine, a professor of chemistry and biochemistry and chair of the Faculty Senate at the University of Missouri at St. Louis. The choice of an academic is evidence that the search committee was responsive to faculty input, said Mr. Stine, especially since the two previous presidents had no experience in higher education beyond their undergraduate degrees.

Mr. Wolfe earned a bachelor’s degree from Mizzou but had a career in the software industry before he was appointed to lead the university system in 2011. Before that, Gary D. Forsee, who began his tenure as system president in 2007, had been chief executive of the Sprint Nextel Corporation.

The search committee and board "clearly came up with someone who looks appropriate and promising, Mr. Stine said. "They didn’t go out and choose another corporate executive."

Mr. Choi, who is 52, was Connecticut’s dean of engineering from 2008 to 2012. He previously held positions at Drexel University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. He holds master’s and doctoral degrees in engineering from Princeton University.

Appointing an academic as a campus or system president isn’t yet the exception in higher education, but it cuts against a growing trend of choosing a leader from industry or politics who may be seen as someone to usher in big changes.
New Challenges

At a news conference on Wednesday morning, Mr. Choi spoke repeatedly about promoting academic excellence at Missouri’s four campuses. That means supporting research with sufficient dollars, equipment, and facilities, and listening to input from faculty, staff and students who are "the true heart and soul" of the institutions, he said.

But he also acknowledged that he has to promote the system to the state’s residents and elected officials. The flagship in Columbia, in particular, has struggled with declining enrollment and threats of budget cuts resulting from last year’s turmoil.

"The first thing I have to do is listen," Mr. Choi said, responding to a question about how he would work with elected officials. After that, he said, he would work to find a common vision for the system’s future role in the state.

At the same time, he said, he would seek to avoid further racial unrest on campuses. "It’s important for all of us to open that line of dialogue so any group doesn’t feel their voices are not heard," he said.

Mr. Choi’s multifaceted job description was crafted by the system’s search committee, which laid out a lofty list of qualifications for their new president. Those included creating "an enduring social compact with the citizens" of the state and their elected officials and leading a statewide "conversation about the value of diversity, inclusion, equity and respect for all of Missouri’s diverse citizens through an open and equitable higher education."

Susan Herbst, UConn’s president, said Mr. Choi has been steadfast in his commitment to making his current institution more diverse and inclusive for students and faculty. And he is comfortable, she said, in having difficult conversations on racial issues.

Another area where he has succeeded, Ms. Herbst said, is in forming meaningful partnerships with multinational corporations to support and promote research. Those ventures have been "more than window dressing," she said, and are increasingly important to public higher education at a time when few expect state appropriations to increase. But there will be other challenges for Mr. Choi as he moves from a position of academic leadership at a single institution to the more diffuse job of running a system, Ms. Herbst said.

System offices have to help their universities develop and promote a coherent statewide mission, she said, but they can’t micromanage their operations. "They need to let the campuses have their own culture."

Ben Trachtenberg, chair of the Faculty Council at Missouri’s Columbia campus and an associate professor of law, said he wasn’t worried about Mr. Choi’s transition from a provost’s office to a system’s presidency.
But because the search process was entirely closed, the new president will still have to spend a lot of time making connections at the campuses.

"Nobody can dispute" that the new president is a serious academic, Mr. Trachtenberg said. "A lot of people are excited, but want to hear from the man himself."

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

U. of Missouri Taps UConn Provost as Next President

Mun Y. Choi, provost of the University of Connecticut, will be the next president of the University of Missouri system, the Columbia Daily Tribune reports.

Mr. Choi’s introduction, at an event in Jefferson City, Mo., occurred almost a year after the previous president, Timothy M. Wolfe, resigned amid protests over race relations on the flagship campus, in Columbia.

“The incidents that have occurred at the University of Missouri system and MU are not unique to the Columbia campus or Missouri,” Mr. Choi told a crowd of about 250. “I do believe these types of incidents can be avoided for the most part by having early dialogue where students, where faculty members share their concerns, to meet with them, for the most senior leaders to meet with them.”

In her introduction, Pamela Q. Henrickson, chairwoman of the system’s board, highlighted Mr. Choi’s efforts to increase research funding and minority enrollment at UConn. Mr. Choi became provost at Connecticut in 2012, and before that he was dean of engineering and a professor of mechanical engineering.

Wednesday’s announcement concluded a nine-month search. Mr. Choi will take office on March 1.
University of Missouri Names New President in Wake of Racial Protests

By Melissa Korn

Nov. 2, 2016 12:13 p.m. ET

The University of Missouri has named University of Connecticut provost Mun Y. Choi as its new president, opting for a traditional academic to fill the post atop a system that was rocked by student protests and racial tension last fall.

He will start the job March 1.

Dr. Choi’s appointment comes almost exactly a year after the former system president, Tim Wolfe, resigned. Mr. Wolfe stepped down amid widespread criticism that he didn’t respond strongly enough to several racist incidents, including a swastika scribbled with feces in a dorm, racial epithets directed at black students and the 2014 violence in Ferguson, Mo.

A number of black football players at the school’s flagship campus in Columbia, Mo., threatened to boycott games and practice unless Mr. Wolfe resigned or was fired last November, with backing from athletics administrators, and a graduate student staged a hunger strike.

The controversies also claimed Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, who led the Columbia, Mo., campus. He announced his resignation the same day as Mr. Wolfe, and has since transitioned to a research development role.

Mr. Wolfe, a former software executive, struggled to win friends among faculty during his tenure atop the university system. He struck many as an outsider unaccustomed to academic conventions, drawing fire a few months into his tenure in 2012 for pulling funding for a beloved university press. He later reinstated the subsidy, acknowledging he underestimated the publisher’s importance.

Dr. Choi has been provost at the University of Connecticut since 2012, and before that served as dean of its engineering school and a professor of mechanical engineering.

“One of the things the faculty has said repeatedly during the search process was that we wanted a president with significant academic leadership experience,” said Ben Trachtenberg, an associate professor of law and chair of the university’s faculty council.

“Running a university is a complicated business. Universities are not the same as factories or other enterprises,” said Mr. Trachtenberg, who hasn’t yet met Dr. Choi yet.
Dr. Choi will be stepping into a significantly larger role in Missouri. The University of Connecticut, with a main campus in Storrs, Conn., and four regional campuses, has about 32,000 students. Missouri’s system has about 77,000 across four locations.

The Missouri university system has been led by interim president Michael Middleton, a civil rights attorney and deputy chancellor emeritus, since last November.

The new president of the University of Missouri System says he’ll “listen and learn” to students’ concerns as he takes over in the wake of last year’s protests over racial issues at the Columbia campus.

The university announced on Wednesday that University of Connecticut Provost Mun Y. Choi would take over as the four-campus system’s new president.

Choi’s appointment comes a year after the resignation of President Tim Wolfe amid protests in Columbia. One student went on a hunger strike.
Choi told reporters on Wednesday that he has read a list of demands from the group that led protests last year. He says it’s critical to speak with students, faculty and staff to avoid “dramatic actions” and ensure that people with concerns feel that their voices are heard.

9:35 a.m.

The University of Missouri has named University of Connecticut Provost Mun Y. Choi as the new president of its four-campus system.

The chairwoman of the system’s board of curators announced Choi’s appointment Wednesday in Jefferson City. The announcement comes a year after the resignation of the previous president amid protests over racial issues at the Columbia campus.

Choi joined the University of Connecticut in 2008, as dean of engineering and professor of mechanical engineering. The 52-year-old Princeton graduate has also worked at Drexel University and the University of Illinois.

Former system President Tim Wolfe resigned on Nov. 9 last year amid student protests over what some saw as administrators’ indifference to racial issues on the Columbia campus. One student went on a hunger strike.

1 a.m.

The University of Missouri is set to announce its new president, almost exactly one year after the resignation of the previous leader of the four-campus system amid protests over racial issues at its Columbia campus.
A person familiar with the search says University of Connecticut Provost Mun Y. Choi will be named the next president during an event Wednesday in Jefferson City. The person spoke on condition of anonymity so as not to pre-empt the official announcement.

Former system President Tim Wolfe resigned on Nov. 9 last year amid student protests over what some saw as administrators’ indifference to racial issues on the Columbia campus. One student went on a hunger strike.

Choi is 52 years old. He joined the University of Connecticut in 2008 and has been provost since 2012.

The story also appeared on the following broadcast stations:

KMOV-STL (CBS) – St. Louis, Mo.
KSDK-STL (NBC) – St. Louis, Mo.
KCTV-KC (CBS) – Kansas City, Mo.
KSHB-KC (NBC) – Kansas City, Mo.
KMBC-KC (ABC) – Kansas City, Mo.
WDAF-TV (Fox) – Kansas City, Mo.
KOLR-TV (CBS) – Springfield, Mo.
KSPR-TV (ABC) – Springfield, Mo.
KYTV-TV (NBC) – Springfield, Mo.
KQTV-TV (ABC) – St. Joseph, Mo.
KHQA-TV (CBS) – Quincy, Ill.
KAIT-TV (ABC) – Jonesboro, Ark.
KFVS-TV (CBS) – Paducah, Ken.
WTVT-TB (Fox) – Tampa Bay, Flo.
KMTV-TV (CBS) – Omaha, Neb.
JEFFERSON CITY ● When asked Wednesday about issues of race and diversity, or even the hiring of the next chancellor at the flagship campus, incoming University of Missouri System President Mun Choi didn’t flinch.

When Choi was introduced formally at a news conference in Jefferson City, he spoke about ambitious hopes of an open dialogue with leaders, students and faculty from all four campuses, as well as alumni and legislators — a theme that dominated his introductory message.

“As president I will engage our diverse stakeholders and work collaboratively to make this great system even stronger,” he told the crowd gathered at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, adding that “the true heart and soul of the institution matters greatly” to him.

Choi, whose hiring was first reported Monday by the Post-Dispatch, was flanked by outgoing interim president Mike Middleton and Board of Curators chairwoman Pam Henrickson.
Henrickson highlighted Choi’s success at his current school, the University of Connecticut, where he’s the provost. She spoke of a $172 million partnership program with local industry leaders, and other multi-million dollar efforts to boost research and teacher quality, among other things.

“He has been shaped by education and experience to be the leader of a complex university system,” Henrickson said. “His sterling academic credentials as a teacher and researcher in mechanical and aerospace engineering and later as dean of engineering at UConn are preparing him to appreciate and understand the challenges facing our university.”

Choi will take the helm March 1 at the University of Missouri System. His final day at UConn is Feb. 1.

System spokesman John Fougere said Choi’s salary won’t be available until Thursday when the contract is completed. His predecessor, Timothy M. Wolfe, made a base salary of $450,000.

One of Choi’s first big tasks as president will be to hire the next chancellor at the flagship campus in Columbia. The president names the chancellor, and the curators approve the hire.

Hank Foley has served as the interim Mizzou chancellor since R. Bowen Loftin stepped down the same day as Wolfe last November. The administrators left their posts amid a slew of student protests and a hunger strike, triggered by racist incidents on and near campus.

The turmoil led to a series of decisions by university leaders to focus attention and money to hire diversity and inclusion leaders and increase the number of minority doctoral students and professors at Mizzou, in particular.
The University of Missouri System meets its new president — Mun Choi

University of Missouri Board of Curators introduced the system’s new president, Mun Choi, to faculty, students and the leaders of the four campuses during a ceremony Wednesday morning in Jefferson City.

Choi, provost at the University of Connecticut, was selected from among three finalists after a nine-month search for a new president to lead the UM System, which has campuses in Kansas City, St. Louis, Rolla and Columbia.

“Dr. Choi is a man of vision, strategic thinking and integrity, an excellent communicator who is equally effective and comfortable with faculty, staff, donors, legislators and students,” said Pam Henrickson, chairwoman of the UM System Board of Curators. She said “his leadership has been instrumental in growing UConn’s stature in the areas of research, teaching and outreach, and he is uniquely qualified to lead the UM System to greater heights as its 24th president.”

Choi will begin the job on March 1.

“I am so excited to be in Missouri and I’m honored and humbled to serve the University of Missouri System,” Choi said. “I appreciate the confidence you have put in me.”

Choi talked about developing a “collective vision,” by spending time meeting with the state elected officials, visiting with area businesses and hearing from members of the university community.

“The voices of faculty, students and staff — the heart and soul of the institution — matter greatly to me,” Choi said.

Choi, the first UM System president of Asian-American heritage, replaces Tim Wolfe, who resigned last November under a national spotlight following student protests, a student hunger strike, and claims that Wolfe failed to take action against multiple displays of racism at MU, the system’s flagship campus in Columbia.
Mizzou’s football team threatened to boycott a game. At the same time MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned under pressure from faculty and students who were dissatisfied with his leadership.

In addition to talking about furthering the university commitments to research, service and economic development in the state, Choi said in his remarks Wednesday morning that it is “critical to create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive and collegiate,” at the university.

Since November Michael Middleton has been serving as interim president of the UM System. This morning, before introducing Choi, curator Henrickson thanked Middleton for his service, saying he stepped up “at exactly the time when your university needed you most, at a most historic and challenging moment. We owe you our deepest gratitude.”

Hank Foley is serving as interim chancellor of the Columbia campus.

When the university began its presidential search in February, it went looking for a leader expected to play a major role in mending damage done to MU last year.

“I am very happy with the new president,” said curator John Phillips, a Kansas City lawyer.

“He’s very personable, direct, quite intelligent, and I think he is a good communicator,” Phillips said. “Personally that is very important to me. And he proved to be a good listener in our interview. I voted for him.”

Phillips said curators were looking for a candidate with leadership background in advancing research, in fundraising in the private sector and at the state level, and promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.

Choi, “exelled in all of these areas,” Phillips said.

Born in South Korea, Choi came to the U.S. as a child. As a young man, he worked in his family’s successful business in Chicago, and later graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a bachelor’s degree in general engineering in 1987. He later earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in mechanical and aerospace engineering from Princeton University.

Choi has served as UConn provost, overseeing academic affairs, since December 2012. He came to UConn as dean of engineering and a professor of mechanical engineering in 2008. He received his doctorate from Princeton in 1992. Choi is known for having more than 20 years of experience in developing nationally competitive innovative research programs.
In the last four years at UConn Choi has overseen a budget of $700 million while working with 1,500 full-time faculty, 31,000 students and 2,000 staff across 12 schools and colleges, including schools of medicine, dental medicine and law. Under his leadership, UConn developed several innovative new programs that have resulted in enrollment growth.

As engineering dean, Choi was credited with boosting undergraduate applications to the department by 124 percent, and the number of undergraduate degrees earned increased by 64 percent. In addition, research grants increased by 143 percent.

MU faculty said they are happy curators chose someone from academia rather than a business executive.

“From the very beginning of this search process, faculty made it very clear that we wanted a president who had significant experience in running a university,” said Ben Trachtenberg, MU Faculty Council president.

The last two presidents to lead the university system — Gary Forsee and then Wolfe — had been business executives before taking the reins.

Trachtenberg said faculty now will be eager to see what Choi does about hiring a permanent chancellor for the MU campus.

Since Foley has been interim he has focused on restoring calm after the protests and resignations, worked to salvage the university’s tarnished brand by pushing MU advancements in research into the news, and building up the bruised relationship between the university and Missouri lawmakers.

He’s had to deal with a drop in enrollment and the revenue loss that caused, and the university has been operating for some time with a significant number of administrative vacancies filled by people with interim in front of their title.

“No that we have a permanent president certain hard decisions can be made,” Trachtenberg said.

One of the new president’s duties will be to hire a permanent chancellor at MU. But Phillips said curators have not discussed what a search to fill that position will look like.

No matter how it looks though, “We would expect to include Dr. Foley in that search,” Phillips said.

The University of Missouri System with 77,700 students enrolled is more than twice the size of the University of Connecticut system. And while the UM System is a member of the Association
of American Universities — which has 62 leading public and private research universities as members — UConn is not.

**University of Missouri System announces Mun Y. Choi as new president**

COLUMBIA, Mo. – After nine months of searching, the University of Missouri system has selected a top administrator from the University of Connecticut to take over the role as president.

The Missouri Board of Curators finalized the details to hire Mun Y. Choi, a provost at UConn, during the closed portion of their meeting on Monday afternoon. A search committee had been tasked with choosing a new system president by the end of 2016.

Choi was named as the 24th president during a ceremony at Capitol Plaza in Jefferson City Wednesday morning.

The UM System has been led by interim administrators, including Interim President Mike Middleton since racially charged protests rocked the University of Missouri’s flagship campus in Columbia last November.

The hiring of Choi fills a leadership position that has been empty at the four-campus system since former president Tim Wolfe and former chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned on the same day last November. The two left their posts amid a hunger strike and student protests, having been criticized for their handling of racial and other issues on the Columbia campus.

The protests gained attention across the nation when the Mizzou football team threatened to not play a game if the administration did not respond to students’ complaints.

Several state lawmakers criticized the university before and after Wolfe and Loftin stepped down, threatening to make cuts to funding.

Everything seemed to hit a breaking point when assistant professor Melissa Click was not immediately fired for her conduct during a confrontation involving a student photographer. It was captured on video and went viral in a matter of hours. Three months later, Click was dismissed from the university.

All of those events led the UM system to focus their efforts and money into hiring diversity leaders and increase the number of minority professors at Mizzou.

Middleton, a former Mizzou Deputy Chancellor, served as interim president, while Hank Foley has served as interim chancellor.

One of Choi’s first major tasks will be hiring the next chancellor at Mizzou. Though the president names the chancellor, the curators must approve the candidate’s hire.

According to the University of Connecticut’s provost webpage, Choi had been the school’s provost since 2012. Before that, he served as the dean of the engineering school and a
professor of mechanical engineering. The 52-year-old earned his doctorate in mechanical and aerospace engineering from Princeton.

The hiring of Choi is significant in the fact that it’s the first academic to take on the role of system president in nearly a decade. The previous two presidents came from business backgrounds. Wolfe came from a software company, and previous UM System President Gary Forsee’s was a former Sprint CEO. The last president with a background in academia was Elson Floyd, who left in 2007. He passed away in 2015.

Hiring someone with an academic background was important to the faculty.

“That is something the faculty has said repeatedly: that it was important for the next president to have a deep knowledge of how a university works,” Professor Ben Trachtenberg, president of the University of Missouri faculty council said in an interview with the Associated Press.

“Obviously, someone who has been a provost and has done other academic work has gained an affinity for the academic mission. I’m looking forward to meeting him.”

Several political figures in the state welcomed Choi following the announcement.

Governor Jay Nixon released a statement, saying:
“The selection of Dr. Choi is a great choice at a key time for the University of Missouri System. He brings to the university system a record of unparalleled academic credentials with master’s and doctorate degrees from Princeton, internationally recognized research as an aerospace engineer, and impressive institutional achievement and leadership at the University of Connecticut. As an AAU institution, the University of Missouri already has a long and proud history of academic achievement and ground-breaking research, and Dr. Choi will bolster those strong credentials. I am confident he will succeed in leading this outstanding university system, and I look forward to meeting with him later this morning.”

U.S. Representative Vicky Hartzler (R, Missouri’s Fourth Congressional District) released the following statement:

“It is my honor to congratulate Dr. Mun Choi on his selection as University of Missouri System President. Dr. Choi brings an impressive wealth of experience in higher education that will serve him well as he assumes the helm. As I welcome Dr. Choi, I join Missourians across our state in extending heartfelt thanks to interim President Mike Middleton who has performed admirably since assuming that role in November, 2015.”

“I’m very excited to have Dr. Choi in Missouri. His experience and success in higher education speaks for itself. I am confident that the University of Missouri-System is headed in the right direction,” Rep. Kip Kendrick, D- Columbia, said in an email. “His success working with lawmakers in Connecticut is important to note. I look forward to working with him to increase support for the University of Missouri System and improve the Flagship University’s standing as a national leader in research, while creating the highest standard for academic quality and affordable education for all Missouri students.”

Choi is scheduled to begin on March 1, 2017.
University of Missouri president to start March 1

JEFFERSON CITY — Communication with faculty, students and political leaders will help restore the University of Missouri’s reputation and avoid a repeat of the campus disruption that brought national attention in 2015, Mun Y. Choi said Wednesday after being introduced as the next president of the UM System.

Choi, currently provost at the University of Connecticut, will take his new post March 1. His salary and contract terms will be released Thursday, UM System spokesman John Fougere said. Interim President Mike Middleton is being paid $477,540 per year, the same salary paid to Tim Wolfe, who resigned as president Nov. 9 amid the Concerned Student 1950 protests.

“The incidents that have occurred at the University of Missouri System and MU are not unique to the Columbia campus or Missouri,” Choi said. “I do believe these types of incidents can be avoided for the most part by having early dialogue where students, where faculty members share their concerns, to meet with them, for the most senior leaders to meet with them.”

Choi’s selection earlier this week ended a nine-month search process and a year without a permanent president.

Choi was introduced to a crowd of about 250 staff, university supporters and media at the Capitol Plaza Hotel. He took questions from reporters, visited a reception held on his behalf and was going to meet with Gov. Jay Nixon. In a statement, Nixon said Choi was “a great choice at a key time for the University of Missouri System.”

Choi is the first president with an academic background since the late Elson Floyd led the system. He follows Gary Forsee and Wolfe, who both had a career in business before being hired at the university.

Choi has been provost at Connecticut since 2012. Before that, he was dean of engineering and professor of mechanical engineering. Choi was a faculty member at the University of Illinois from 1994 to 2000 before joining Drexel University in 2000 as department head of mechanical engineering and associate dean for research.

As provost, Choi was paid $471,680 including benefits in fiscal year 2015, the latest year available in the state of Connecticut’s online salary database.
In her introduction, Board of Curators Chairwoman Pam Henrickson praised Choi for increasing research funding at Connecticut, developing programs to increase minority enrollment and increase participation of women students in engineering programs.

“My colleagues and I on the Board of Curators believe we have found a superb leader in Dr. Mun Choi, and we pledge our strong support to lead the University of Missouri System to even greater heights,” she said.

Former curator Woody Cozad, while he waited for the announcement to begin, said everything he had heard about Choi convinced him the curators had selected the right person.

“You either have a really good person in that position or you are in trouble,” Cozad said.

One of the first reactions was a call from the Coalition of Graduate Workers, the Columbia campus group trying to organize a union for graduate assistants, for recognition of the union by the UM System. UM has refused to recognize graduate students as employees and forced a court case over the issue. The University of Connecticut has a collective bargaining agreement with graduate assistants, but Choi would not commit to recognizing the union at MU.

“I would have to understand more about the situation at the University of Missouri before making a definitive answer,” Choi said.

Other reactions focused on Choi’s achievements and offered congratulations on his selection.

“His experience and success in higher education speaks for itself,” state Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, said in a release. “I am confident that the University of Missouri-System is headed in the right direction.”


Susan Herbst, president of the University of Connecticut, expressed regret at seeing Choi leave.

“While we are sorry to lose a terrific provost, trusted colleague, and great friend, I also know how much this advancement means to Mun and his family, and we wish them all the best,” she said.

The candidate pool for the presidency was a good one, Curator David Steelman said, but Choi stood out because of his commitment to research and improving the university.

“For me, that is what set him apart,” Steelman said.
New UM System president is details-oriented, 'born leader'

RUTH SERVEN AND KATIE KUL

JEFFERSON CITY — Mun Choi sweats the small stuff.

When, as provost at the University of Connecticut, he heard students had raised enough money to create a free or low-cost introductory chemistry textbook, his office donated $100,000 to create more.

"It showed me … and all other students that he truly cares about the outcomes for all students," UConn student body president Daniel Byrd said. "He really cares about the students’ well-being."

As a department head for mechanical engineering at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Choi paid attention when people complained that the men’s bathroom had fallen into mild disrepair. He found a little bit of money to fix it.

To this day, the bathroom is fondly called “Mun’s room” in his honor, said Gary Friedman, Choi’s former colleague and an electrical engineering professor at Drexel.

Choi — whose first name is pronounced "Moon" — was introduced Wednesday in Jefferson City as the 24th president of the University of Missouri System. He’ll still care about the details, but he also plans to tackle big challenges facing the four campuses, he said at a news conference.

His tallest order will be repairing relationships with students and the Missouri legislature after protests, strikes and campus unrest led to the resignation of Choi’s predecessor, businessman Tim Wolfe, and former MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.
Although he offered few concrete plans to repair ties within and outside the system, Choi emphasized his commitment to listening as he begins meeting Missourians.

“The voices of faculty, students and staff, the true heart of the institution, matter to me,” he said. “I will be meeting with everyone involved and, more importantly, listening to them.”

He is familiar with these types of issues. In his time as UConn provost, a position he’s held since 2012, Choi has faced both student unrest and graduate student unionization, two issues prominent at MU in the past year.

“Really, we have to create an environment that is inclusive, collegial and, above all, respectful,” Choi said. “There are obviously areas where we can improve, but that’s not unique to the University of Missouri System. But I’ll need to meet all of the stakeholders and listen.”

Last November, hours after Wolfe’s resignation, UConn President Susan Herbst sent a letter to the student body stating her intention to reorganize diversity positions at the school. Earlier this year, the university hired a chief diversity officer, according to the school’s student newspaper, The Daily Campus.

Choi said he was aware of the demands issued last year by MU student activist group Concerned Student 1950. He again emphasized the importance of communication.

“It’s also important for all of us to open that line of dialogue with students, with faculty and with staff members so that we can avoid dramatic action and so that they don’t feel that their voices are not heard. So it’s going to be a very welcoming environment where I can listen and learn.”

In October 2015, Choi was involved when the school agreed to a contract with its graduate students, who had been trying to organize with the United Auto Workers for several years.

He took a proactive role in working with the graduate students, said Sally Reis, UConn vice provost for academic affairs.
“He’s a positive, optimistic person who always looks for compromise,” Reis said. “He’s always energetic about creative solutions.”

"While the Union and the University have not always immediately agreed on every issue, we have been able to develop a constructive working relationship that we believe will last long into the future," Todd Vachon, president of the union, said in an email. "We hope Dr. Choi will bring this constructive approach from UConn to the University of Missouri in its engagement with the union there."

Choi said his goal during that process was a seamless transition for teachers and students, but he couldn’t guarantee anything for MU’s Coalition of Graduate Workers, a graduate student union seeking formal recognition from MU and the UM System.

A statement from the coalition said graduate students hope Choi will end the civil lawsuit between the group and the UM System Board of Curators and recognize the union.

Former colleagues and friends attest to Choi’s ability to reach people from different backgrounds and effectively foster communication.

Salcuk Guceri hired Choi in the early 1990s at the University of Illinois in Chicago. It became apparent quickly that Choi was an excellent communicator with an impressive academic background, Guceri said.

“He’s a people’s person. He communicates extremely well,” Guceri said. "His rhetoric is flawless."

In Guceri’s letter recommending Choi to be president of the UM System, he lauded Choi’s ability to reach different groups of people.

“He has an exceptional ability to relate to every constituent of an academic institution, from students to faculty, staff, alumni, and external bodies such as the corporate world and the legislative elements,” Guceri said in the letter.
Choi taught at the University of Illinois-Chicago with Guceri for seven years before joining the faculty at Drexel University.

In all of his endeavors, it was apparent to his colleague at Drexel, Yury Gogotsi, that Choi was a “born leader.”

“There are some people for whom administration is easy,” Gogotsi said. “For example, he took the position of department head of a department that wasn’t very easy to manage, and he pulled it to success.”

Gogotsi recalled Choi’s skill at making the department more collaborative and encouraging faculty to submit grant proposals and participate in research. He said he expects Choi’s background in academics will help him focus on improving research, visibility and rankings for the UM System.

Choi has a long career in research. After finishing his doctorate at Princeton University, he completed a post-doctoral research fellowship at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, which promotes innovation and industrial competition.

That background led to his interest in the UM System, which includes MU, a Research One school and member of the invitation-only Association of American Universities, and the science- and technology-heavy Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla.

“But more importantly, during the process, I’ve been daily discussing with the Board of Curators and senior leadership, and I felt there was just such a strong commitment for the University of Missouri to continue it’s rise as a top flagship research school,” he said.

Professors at system campuses said they were pleased with Choi’s long career at public universities.

“His academic background is something that a lot of people are excited by,” said Gerald Wyckoff, professor of biological sciences and the chair of the Faculty Senate at the University of
Missouri-Kansas City. "It injects more faculty perspective into the university ecosystem. Everyone is optimistic and they hope that someone who has been a dean, been a provost, would understand where we’re coming from."

Among faculty Wyckoff has talked to, there’s a sense that someone like Choi, who has worked his way up through academia, will be able to make sure faculty concerns are addressed.

“Given the year previous, there’s been concerns about how to make it clear to the Missouri community that what we’re doing should be something they should value," he said.

Keith Stine, a professor of chemistry at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, said he and other faculty sent the search committee some characteristics they hoped for from a new president — a deep understanding of academia, a good listener, thoughtful responses to concerns from everyone in the community. At first glance, Stine said, he believes Choi meets those requirements.

Choi, 52, was born in South Korea and moved to Chicago with his family. His parents owned a successful clothing business that is still in operation.

He and his wife, Suzanne, have three children, two of whom are studying engineering. His daughter, Cosette, named after the character in "Les Miserables," is in high school.

The Chois will live in Columbia. Their plan is to purchase a home when the school year ends and Suzanne and Cosette Choi move to town, UM spokesman John Fougere said.

Choi hasn’t been to Columbia yet, but he said he will visit each of the campuses soon. His contract will be made available to the public Thursday, and he will begin work March 1.

Mike Middleton, who has served as interim president for nearly a year, will begin sharing duties with Choi before the official handoff in the spring.

Choi’s former colleagues say the former engineering professor, dean and provost has all the right qualities to become president of a university.
“Nobody knows him more than I do, and so I’m very confident that he is absolutely the best choice,” Guceri, who has known Choi for more than 20 years, said. “He will rock the institution and bring it up to the next level.”

Missourian Reporter Taryn Parker contributed to this report.

**Mun Y. Choi named 24th UM System president**

*The announcement comes exactly a week before the one-year anniversary of former UM System President Tim Wolfe’s resignation.*

Mun Y. Choi, the University of Connecticut’s provost, is the UM System’s 24th president, **concluding a nearly yearlong search.**

Board of Curators Chairwoman Pam Henrickson’s announcement on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City came exactly a week before the one-year anniversary of former UM System President Tim Wolfe’s resignation.

“An outstanding and visionary leader, Dr. Choi understands and appreciates the value of public higher education, having devoted his impressive career to the success and inclusion of all students, progressive education scholarship and state economic development,” Henrickson said during the announcement.

In an address to those in attendance, Choi said he plans to work with the UM System community, politicians and stakeholders to “create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive,” secure more funding and improve the four campus’ competitiveness as top research institutions.

Choi will step into office on March 1. He will remain provost at UConn until Feb. 1.

The first Asian president of the UM System and third minority president, Choi has served as provost at the University of Connecticut since 2012, when he beat out Hank Foley, now the
interim MU chancellor, and another candidate for the position. Choi arrived at UConn in 2008 in the mechanical engineering department. Previously, he served as department head of mechanical engineering and associate dean for research at Drexel University and a faculty member at the University of Illinois.

MU and the UM System made national news in November 2015 after student activist group Concerned Student 1950 published a list of demands, member Jonathan Butler went on a hunger strike, and the football team boycotted and refused to play. Wolfe came under fire after some, including Concerned Student 1950, said that he didn't properly acknowledge and handle a series of racist incidents in fall 2015.

On Nov. 9, 2015, Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin both resigned.

Following Wolfe’s resignation, the Board of Curators named Mike Middleton interim president. Prior to being named interim UM System president, Middleton was deputy chancellor emeritus and a professor emeritus of law.

**AN EDUCATION BACKGROUND**

Faculty criticized Wolfe for having a business background. English professor Karen Piper told The Maneater in April that Wolfe called faculty “the lower-level.”

“[It’s] just insulting to faculty because we’re supposed to be co-governing with the administrators,” Piper said.

During a Faculty Council meeting in March, members said they wanted a president who was “not Tim Wolfe” — in other words, not someone who lacked an understanding of higher education.

With more than 24 years of experience in higher education, Choi meets that stipulation.

Choi is familiar with budget cuts, which MU has undergone this school year. As UConn’s provost, he oversaw a $40 million budget deficit and a $1.8 million cut to UConn’s libraries. MU currently has a $32 million budget shortfall with a $1.2 million cut to MU Libraries.

Having a background in higher education, Choi said, has allowed him to understand faculty, staff and students.
“Speaking for my background in academia, having the background I’ve had… has been very supportive of my development as an administrator,” Choi said.

But on the diversity and inclusion front, which has been at the forefront of discussion recently within the UM System, a UConn faculty member said Choi is lacking.

Noel A. Cazenave, a UConn sociology professor, told The Maneater that when UConn had its own racist incidents on campus last fall, Choi was “virtually invisible.”

“We had forums, we had meetings, we had protests, and he wasn't there,” Cazenave said. “And I think that if you were to call a random sample of UConn students, maybe even faculty and staff, and ask them who this person is, they wouldn't know.”

Cazenave said Choi seemed more concerned with STEM-based initiatives than moving the whole campus forward; he did little in areas of diversity and inclusion, Cazenave said, and he didn’t seem interested as interested in the humanities and other areas that do not bring as much money and prestige to the university.

Cazenave was on a provost’s commission on institutional diversity, which was created before Choi’s appointment as provost. But Cazenave resigned after Choi began serving as provost because he said Choi and the university’s president, Susan Herbst, didn't show up to the any of the commission’s meetings and “showed no real interest” in the commission’s work.

“I think that people can be misled by the fact that now-President Choi is a person of color, that he cares about the issues that affect people of color,” Cazenave said. “I haven't seen any evidence of that.”

While Choi didn’t do “terrible things” to anyone, Cazenave said, the the provost had “no real presence.”

“I would say he's not a good choice because [the University of Missouri has] had serious issues that related to racism on campus and I assume other diversity-related issues,” Cazenave said. “I think hiring him is a mistake.”

Choi said during the announcement and again during a press conference that he plans to listen to the UM System community and work to understand concerns they have. He called faculty, staff and students the “heart and soul” of the university system and said that he wants to make positive changes.
He said he read Concerned Student 1950’s demands last October when they were published and closely followed the events that made national news. The unrest on MU’s campus, he said, isn’t isolated to Missouri; campuses across the nation have problems and concerns about racism.

He also discussed free speech at MU, which has been a topic of discussion since communication professor Melissa Click made national news for “calling for muscle” to remove a student journalist from Concerned Student 1950’s camp.

“It was an incident that is not unique to University of Missouri system,” Choi said. “I think it’s critical for all of us to have a balance between free speech and academic freedom that is inclusive, collegial and respectful.”

Choi said he will work closely with the diversity and inclusion staff, but won’t solely rely on one person to create positive change.

“It’s not the responsibility of just one individual,” Choi said.

In an email sent to the UConn community announcing Choi’s appointment as president, Herbst wrote that Choi will be missed.

“He has been invaluable to me and to UConn as a whole,” Herbst wrote. “I cannot thank him enough for his service to the university and for his friendship.”

Steven Chaffin, the director of the systemwide student legislative advocacy organization The Associated Students of the University of Missouri, said in an email that ASUM looks forward to continuing its relationship with the UM System administration in the coming months.

“The role of UM System President is more important than ever before — a fact I am sure he knows all too well — and I hope meaningful steps will be taken to aid the university community as it looks to define its path forward with regard to our relationship to the legislature and social justice issues,” Chaffin said in the email.

The Coalition of Graduate Workers said in a statement that the group looks forward to working with Choi and resolving its ongoing lawsuit with the UM System for graduate worker unionization.
“We hope that in his new role, Dr. Choi will recognize the regretfully costly and wasteful nature of the University’s decision to force legal action, and will voluntarily recognize the union.” the statement read. “It is clear to us and many campus constituencies that long-term stability and institutional health can only be achieved by good faith bargaining between graduate employees and the University’s leadership.”

Choi said in a press conference following the announcement that before issuing an opinion about unionization, he must first better understand the situation.

A CLOSED SEARCH

The presidential search started in January. Since then, the committee has worked to gather community input, draft a qualifications statement and interview candidates with the assistance of the Isaacson, Miller search firm.

For the past month, the committee, comprised of the curators, alumni, faculty, staff and students, has interviewed finalists in both St. Louis and Kansas City. Because of worries about candidates’ employers discovering their status, the search was shrouded in secrecy, with no names being released.

Rumors of the presidential announcement circulated in recent weeks — toward the end of October, many believed the search would come to a close, but the curators were mum. On Monday, after the Board of Curators announced the president would be named, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that multiple sources confirmed the president would be Choi.

Henrickson said there were “outstanding candidates in the search process.”

Because of his experience with a land grant university, Henrickson said, the board decided to choose Choi.

Altogether, Isaacson, Miller reached out to 228 candidates and interviewed 12 individuals, five of those being finalists. The search committee recommended three candidates for consideration by the board, and the board officially voted in favor of Choi on Oct. 31.

Cazenave said the first 100 days in Choi’s term as president will be telling — the goals he sets and what he prioritizes will foreshadow the rest of his tenure as president.
"I think that students should light a fire in him, they should ask him questions, they should get commitments from him [in the first 100 days]," Cazenave said. "What he does then will tell who he is and what he's going to do."

Choi said that he plans to work hard as president to improve the UM System.

“You’ll always find me [in my office],” Choi said. "I'll work hard. And I’m going to have a board that'll ensure I work hard each and every day."

**University of Missouri System picks UConn provost Mun Choi as new president**

Ariel Rothfield  
9:09 AM, Nov 2, 2016  
32 mins ago

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. - After a year-long search, the University of Missouri system will soon have a new president.

During a ceremony in Jefferson City Wednesday, the university's board of curators named Mun Choi as the new president.

Choi has been the provost of the University of Connecticut since 2012. Before, he was dean of the engineering school and a professor of mechanical engineering, according to a University of Connecticut website. He was also the associate dean of research at Drexel University.

He will be the first system president in ten years to have a background in academia. He will also be the university's first Asian-American system president.

Choi will replace Tim Wolfe, who resigned last November amid a wave of student protests and a hunger strike. A student group, Concerned Student 1950, called for Wolfe’s removal and accused him of failing to act after racist incidents at MU.

The same day Wolfe resigned, Columbia’s chancellor Bowin Loftin also announced he was stepping down.

One of Choi’s first major tasks will be hiring a new chancellor.
UM Board of Curators officially announces Mun Choi as next system president


COLUMBIA, Mo. - The Board of Curators officially introduced the 24th UM System President, Mun Choi, on Wednesday morning at the Capitol Plaza Hotel.

After thanking Interim President Middleton for his leadership, Choi explained his appreciation for the position and how he plans to be an accountable president.

Choi wrapped up his address with the idea that the UM System will emphasize inclusion. "It's going to be a welcoming environment where I can listen and learn."

University of Connecticut President Susan Herbst sent out the following message to students and faculty:

"Dear Colleagues and Students,

I write to tell you that after serving as UConn’s Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs for the last four years, Mun Y. Choi has been named the next President of the University of Missouri System.

While we are sorry to lose a terrific Provost, trusted colleague, and great friend, I also know how much this advancement means to Mun and his family, and we wish them all the best. He will begin in Missouri on March 1, 2017."
The job market in higher education is a national one, and Mun is a talented and tenacious leader, so it comes as no surprise that other high quality institutions would seek him out. Any university would be lucky to have him.

Mun first came to UConn in 2008 as the Dean of the School of Engineering, and was named Provost in 2012. Since that time, we have worked closely together on countless issues that are critical to UConn and its future including a major faculty expansion, the creation of our Academic Plan, and the implementation of Next Generation Connecticut and Bioscience Connecticut, to name only a few.

He has been invaluable to me and to UConn as a whole. I cannot thank him enough for his service to the university and for his friendship.

Mun will continue to serve as our Provost until February 1, 2017. After taking the time to evaluate potential candidates, I will name an interim Provost and Executive Vice President prior to that date.

We will begin a national search for the permanent position this summer with the goal of naming a successor before the end of the calendar year. I expect to appoint a search committee in May.

We will have many opportunities to wish him well, but please join me in congratulating Mun at this exciting moment!

Sincerely,

Susan Herbst"

ABC 17 News will be following the transition from Interim President Middleton to President Choi.

Next UM system president wants to improve relationship between school and Missouri legislature, Concerned Student 1950
The University of Missouri’s next system president says he intends to build a better relationship between the school and state legislators. Dr. Mun Choi has been named the system’s next top leader.

“Elected officials are tremendous stewards of public resources and they try to do the best for the citizens of the state. I’m confident that through my interaction, I can share with the legislators in Missouri my commitment to see positive outcomes,” says Choi.

Some state legislators proposed deep budget cuts this year to the university, in response to the way school leaders handled racial protests last fall on the Columbia campus. Demonstrators called for the resignation of then-president Tim Wolfe. Mike Middleton has served as the interim president since Wolfe’s exit.

“The first thing I have to do is to listen to their point of view and also how to find out how we come to common grounds when it comes to higher education,” says Choi. “My job as a system president is to advocate for resources that are needed to continue the rise of the UM system to become one of the top research institutions in the country.”

Choi says he has read demands made by a group of students, Concerned Student 1950, who led last fall’s campus protests at Mizzou.

“It’s also very important for all of us to open that line of dialogue with students, with faculty and with staff members, so that we can avoid dramatic action so that they don’t feel, they meaning any group of students or faculty members, that their voices are not heard,” says Choi.

Several curators were at a press conference Wednesday to announce Choi as the system’s next president, including chair Pam Henrickson, David Steelman and Jon Sundvold. State Reps. David Wood (R-Versailles) and Travis Fitzwater (R-Holts Summit) were also there.

Choi will be the university system’s 24th president and the system’s first president of Asian descent. He was one of five finalists for the top post.

Choi is the provost and vice president at the University of Connecticut. He starts at the system in Columbia on March 1.
Board of Curators announce Dr. Mun Y. Choi as UM System President


JEFFERSON CITY – Almost one year after former UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned due racial tension on MU’s campus, the University of Missouri Board of Curators announced Wednesday that Dr. Mun Y. Choi will be the 24th UM System President.

“It is fitting that we begin a new era for the University of Missouri System today in our state’s capital city, as Dr. Choi is just the individual to lead the university system to new heights in achieving our statewide mission of serving all 114 of the state’s counties,” Board of Curators Chair Pam Henrickson said.

Choi has spent 24 years in higher education; a good amount of that time was spent at the University of Connecticut where he started as the Dean of the School of Engineering and then moved up to being the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

Susan Herbst, the president of the University of Connecticut, said in a news release, “He has been invaluable to me and to UConn as a whole. I cannot thank him enough for his service to the university and for his friendship.”

During Choi’s speech at the Capital Plaza Hotel he said, “As president, I’ll work with the curators, the chancellors and the senior leadership team and all of the stakeholders to shape the compelling reasons why talented and diverse students will select UM for their education; why world class faculty members will begin and continue their careers here at UM; and for government, donors and corporations to continue to make investment in this great system.”

Choi said it is very important to him to create an environment that is welcoming, inclusive, collegiate and respectful.
“During my career in academia, I’ve always developed new programs that have provided opportunities, pipeline development for underrepresented minority students, bridge program for women students in engineering and serving as the principal investigator for a number of programs that have benefited communities, like the research experience for teachers, to train teachers from inner cities in doing research and becoming more effective mentors.”

When asked about the racial incidents and protests on campus he said, “The incidents that have occurred at MU are not unique to the campus or Missouri.”

When asked about the incident involving former professor Melissa Click, he said there needs to be a balance between free speech and academic freedom, but also appropriate ways to communicate with each other respectfully.

“When it comes to creating an inclusive environment, it’s not the responsibility of just one individual. It’s our collective responsibility and we do it because that is what’s important at a university,” Choi said.

In response to the ongoing unrest among graduate workers, Choi said graduate students are the lifeblood of a research university and are very important to him.

He said he could not make a definitive answer on the issue of a graduate student union and that he needs more time to research.

In a news release, the Coalition of Graduate Workers said, “We hope that in his new role, Dr. Choi will recognize the regretfully costly and wasteful nature of the University’s decision to force legal action, and will voluntarily recognize the union. It is clear to us and many campus constituencies that long-term stability and institutional health can only be achieved by good faith bargaining between graduate employees and the University’s leadership.”

The coalition said it looks forward to working with Choi to settle the situation.

Choi said it is very important to him to listen and meet with as many students, faculty and stakeholders as possible.

He will be visiting all four campuses in the coming months, before he officially starts his time as system president on March 1, 2017.
Former UConn provost named new UM System president

JEFFERSON CITY — The UM Board of Curators announced Mun Y. Choi as its 24th Missouri System President.

The Curators held the official announcement Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City.

Choi said the UM System has world class faculty and research facilities and that the people of Missouri will prosper under his leadership.

The announcement will come almost a year after Tim Wolfe resigned amid protests on the Mizzou campus; Michael Middleton has served as Interim President.

The announcement came after a nine-month search.

Choi has most recently been the Provost at the University of Connecticut. A release stated he would begin his new position March 1, 2017.
Mun Y. Choi Announced as New UM System President

The University of Missouri System announced Wednesday its next president will be Mun Y. Choi, current provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at the University of Connecticut. The announcement was made at an event in Jefferson City.

Choi, who holds Ph.D. in mechanical and aerospace engineering from Princeton University, forms a stark contrast to his predecessor, 23rd UM System President Timothy Wolfe, who came from the business world, previously serving as president for enterprise software company Novell.

In November 2015, Wolfe resigned from his post as system president amid student protests and accusations of racism. Since then, deputy chancellor emeritus Michael Middleton has been serving as interim system president.

In 1994, Choi began work as a faculty member in the mechanical engineering department at the University of Illinois. He moved to Drexel University in 2000 to become department head of mechanical engineering and associate dean for research. Choi has been at the University of Connecticut since 2008 and was appointed provost in 2012.
How toenail clippings could catch nuclear smugglers

Generated from News Bureau press release: Nuclear CSI: Noninvasive Procedure Could Identify Criminal Nuclear Activity

A urine test is the standard way to identify people exposed to nuclear materials, but urine only picks up recent exposure.

Scientists say it might be possible to identify exposure within one year based on hair, fingernail, and toenail clippings.

“We were able to identify exposure to enriched uranium, which is used to make both nuclear fuel and weapons.”

“We are working to develop a tool that law enforcement agencies in nuclear proliferation or smuggling investigations can use to identify individuals who have handled special nuclear material,” says John Brockman, associate professor of research in the University of Missouri Research Reactor Center. “The goal of our research was to determine if hair, fingernail clippings, and toenail clippings could be used to better detect uranium exposure.”

Brockman collected hair, fingernail, and toenail clippings from workers in nuclear research facilities from around the country. Testing procedures developed by Brockman and his team identified exposure to both natural and manmade sources of uranium.

These bacteria leave dangerous uranium ‘immobile’

According to the World Nuclear Association, naturally occurring uranium is a mixture of three isotopes, including uranium-238 (U-238), U-235 and traces of U-234. U-238 accounts for over 99 percent of the isotopes found in nature; U-235 is the isotope necessary to create nuclear weapons or power a nuclear reactor. U-235 is considered a fissile isotope, meaning the atom has the ability to split, yielding a large amount of energy. Uranium that has been used as fuel in a nuclear power plant also contains the manmade isotope, U-236.
“Our technique was not only able to determine uranium exposure, but also the specific isotopes the individual has handled within the last year,” Brockman says. “We were able to identify exposure to enriched uranium, which is used to make both nuclear fuel and weapons, and U-236 which is suggestive of nuclear fuel reprocessing.”

With this discovery, law enforcement official could use specialized equipment and identify individuals who have been exposed to special nuclear material within 48 hours. Brockman is looking to expand his analysis with the national human radiobiological tissue repository (NHRTR) to further provide insight on how hair and nail samples could be used to monitor exposure to special nuclear material.

The study was published in Analytical Chemistry and funded by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and National Science Foundation.

University of Missouri Confirms 4 Students Have Mumps

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) – The University of Missouri says four students have confirmed cases of mumps and five other students are being tested.

The university said in a news release Wednesday that none of the students live in university housing.

Some of the students who have been tested are still contagious and the university has recommended that they stay home for now.
Susan Even, executive director of the Student Health Center, says all of the students had received required doses of the vaccine to prevent mumps.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Four MU students contract mumps, five still being tested**

CHLOE KENZY, 13 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Four MU students have contracted mumps and five others are being tested, the MU News Bureau confirmed in a Wednesday press release.

None of the students live on campus, the release said.

Susan Even, executive director of the MU Student Health Center, said test results for the five unconfirmed cases could take up to two weeks.

In the release, Even said that all of the students received the recommended two doses of the Measles, Mumps and Rubella vaccine.

Health officials recommend that the infected stay home and not attend classes.

Even said the Student Health Center and MU Health Care are working with the Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services Department and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services to determine if the mumps cases are related.

Even said Boone County has seen about 20 cases of mumps in the past five years. At least nine MU students contracted mumps in the summer of 2015 and one contracted mumps in April.

Even said mumps cases in the U.S. have increased in the past year, with more than twice the number of cases in 2016 compared to 2015.
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, outbreaks have been reported from several university campuses over the past two years. The two largest outbreaks were from Iowa and Illinois, both involving several hundred university students.

The virus is spread through saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose and throat, the release said. An infected person can spread the virus by coughing, sneezing, sharing cups and utensils or touching objects with unwashed hands.

According to previous Missourian reporting, diagnosed mumps cases must be reported to the Health Department. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention test and track mumps cases if several have been reported in a short period.

4 MU students diagnosed with mumps, 5 more cases suspected


COLUMBIA – Four MU students have been diagnosed with mumps and five more are under suspicion of having the disease. All diagnosed students live off campus.

”We advise them to stay at home, don’t go to class and take care of themselves,” said Susan Even, executive director of the Student Health Center.

Even encourages people suspecting they have the mumps to immediately call their health care provider, as the disease is highly contagious.
”Students should be careful with hygiene, don’t share food with others, cover their mouth when they sneeze and wash their hands with soap and water or alcohol based sanitizer,” she said.

The typical symptom of mumps is swollen glands. Typical flu-like symptoms such as headache, fever, muscle pain, and general tiredness are also associated with mumps.

Mumps can be prevented with an MMR vaccine, which all students are required to obtain. However, even people who have been vaccinated are not necessarily safe from getting mumps.

”The immunization for mumps is not perfect, like many of our immunizations. It doesn’t always prevent it, but it can decrease the risk of getting mumps a lot,” said Dr. Michael Cooperstock, medical director of University of Missouri Health Care’s Infection Control Department.

There is currently no cure for mumps and, according to Cooperstock, the best possible thing to do is to stay at home, drink lots of fluids and wait it out.

In the summer of 2015, about 20 cases of mumps were diagnosed in Columbia.

University of Missouri confirms four students diagnosed with mumps


COLUMBIA, Mo - **On Wednesday, the University of Missouri confirmed four students have contracted mumps.**

University officials also state that five additional students are being tested for the disease.

Mumps can show no symptoms, however the Center for Disease Control states the most common sign of the disease is swelling of the salivary glands right underneath the jaw. Health officials also state the disease can be transferred through coughing, sneezing, sharing drinks and utensils, and touching objects with unwashed hands.

The University says the students with the confirmed cases as well as those waiting for the results have been asked to stay home and not attend class.
All of the students have been treated and Mizzou's health care center says anyone who is feeling like they have the symptoms to schedule a same day appointment.

All the students with confirmed cases of the disease do not live on campus.

Mizzou officials confirm 4 students contracted mumps

COLUMBIA — University of Missouri officials have confirmed four students have contracted mumps and five students are being tested for the disease.

In a release sent from the university, none of the students are living in university housing. Some of the students awaiting test results were still contagious, health officials have recommended that they stay home and not attend classes, according to the release.

“All of the students received the required two doses of the MMR vaccine,” said Susan Even, executive director of the Student Health Center. “We’re encouraging anyone who might have facial swelling or soreness to call for a same-day appointment.”

The virus is spread through saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose and throat. An infected person can spread the virus by coughing, sneezing, sharing cups and utensils, or touching objects with unwashed hands, the release stated.

“Although some people with mumps experience mild or no symptoms at all, the most common indication of the disease is swelling under the angle of the jaw as a result of swollen salivary glands,” said Michael Cooperstock, medical director of University of Missouri Health Care’s Infection Control Department, in release. “Other typical symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness and loss of appetite. Symptoms usually appear two to three weeks after infection and can last up to two weeks until complete recovery.”
University of Missouri Confirms 4 Students Have Mumps

The University of Missouri says four students have confirmed cases of mumps and five other students are being tested.

The university said in a news release Wednesday that none of the students live in university housing.

Some of the students who have been tested are still contagious and the university has recommended that they stay home for now.

Susan Even, executive director of the Student Health Center, says all of the students had received required doses of the vaccine to prevent mumps.

Associate medical school dean steps down

Rachel Brown has stepped down as associate dean for student programs and professional development in the Office of Medical Education at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, an MU Health official confirmed Wednesday morning.

MU Health spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said in an email that Laine Young-Walker, the medical school’s chief of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, replaced Brown as dean of student programs Tuesday.
Jenkins said Brown will focus on her academic work as professor of clinical psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry at the MU School of Medicine and at the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders.

Students and staff were expected to discuss the personnel change at a regularly scheduled student forum Wednesday. Jenkins said the forum was not open to the public.

Brown joined the MU faculty in 1998. Jenkins said that since assuming the role of associate dean for student programs in 2006, Brown “has made important and enduring contributions to the medical student education program.”

Jenkins said Brown helped develop programs and recruitment efforts that more than doubled medical school applications overall and increased the number of applications from minorities.

Young-Walker is an associate professor of child and adolescent psychiatry and training director of the child and adolescent psychiatry fellowship program at the School of Medicine.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Medical school leadership change was motivated by 'sense of urgency,' dean says**

TAYLOR BLATCHFORD

COLUMBIA — Patrice Delafontaine told an audience of MU medical school students Wednesday that he realized he needed to reshuffle the school’s leadership team after he read the school’s accreditation report in June.

Delafontaine, dean of the School of Medicine, said he felt a sense of urgency. The report highlighted problems with student mistreatment and diversity, and the school was given two years to improve in those areas to keep its full accreditation.

Hundreds of medical school students, a few faculty and administrators filled Bryant Auditorium as Delafontaine explained that the need to address the problems prompted recent personnel changes, including the resignation of Rachel Brown as the School of Medicine’s associate dean for student programs and professional development.
Brown, who stepped down Oct. 28, oversaw admissions, student services and curriculum initiatives as one of the leaders of the school’s Office of Medical Education.

Brown had been an associate dean since 2006 and a faculty member since 1998. She will retain her position as a professor in the Department of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said.

Delafontaine said many students had emailed him expressing concern about Brown's resignation while many others wrote to thank him. He said he realized the decision had generated anxiety.

Laine Young-Walker, an assistant professor of clinical psychiatry, took over Brown's duties beginning Tuesday. She said at the meeting that she had already scheduled meetings with students who have reached out to her.

Delafontaine spent some time at the meeting explaining his decision-making process. He said that after reading the report, he took time to reflect on how to put the school in the best position to move forward.

"It became clear that I needed to take a fresh look at the Office of Medical Education's processes and practices and reshuffle my executive team," he said.

Delafontaine said the leadership change was "motivated significantly" by his concerns about the accreditation process. He mentioned multiple areas that had been flagged in the 2008 accreditation report and hadn't improved significantly, such as curriculum evaluation and diversity.

Delafontaine became the school's dean in December 2014. He resigned for reasons that were never publicly disclosed under then-Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin in September 2015, and interim Chancellor Hank Foley reinstated him in February 2016.

Senior Associate Dean for Education Linda Headrick will also step down Jan. 1, Delafontaine told the audience. She had planned to retire at the end of 2017 but recently decided
to leave sooner. The school will begin a national search for her replacement and name an interim
to fill her position for the time being, he said.

He said he met with representatives from the Liaison Committee on Medical Education on Oct.
25 and 26. They provided feedback on the draft of the action plan, which the school will revise to
submit by the Dec. 1 deadline.

The committee will meet in February to decide whether to accept the report, Delafontaine said. It
will either return to the school in the fall for another visit or ask the school to submit a status
report.

"It's not all going to be easy, but I think we will satisfactorily address these issues," Delafontaine
said.

The medical school has struggled to improve its diversity for years, and only 5 percent of
students enrolled in 2015 were underrepresented ethnic minorities. Its focus on admitting
applicants from Missouri, where few minority students apply to medical school, exacerbates a
recruitment problem that medical schools across the nation are facing.

Delafontaine reiterated at Wednesday's meeting that he believed the risk of losing accreditation
was very low. However, he called the mistreatment problem "totally unacceptable." The report
showed that 43 percent of MU School of Medicine students said they had experienced public
humiliation at least once, compared to a national average of 19 percent. Students also reported
experiencing gender discrimination and offensive or sexist remarks far more frequently than the
national average.

Delafontaine said he didn't understand why the school's numbers were so much higher than
average.

But he encouraged students to push back and tell faculty members when they felt like they were
being mistreated and promised there would be no repercussions.
A student in the audience responded, saying that many students were afraid to speak out and that the climate of fear reflected poorly on the institution.

Another student added that the atmosphere felt tense and divided, and asked Delafontaine: "Where do we go from here?"

"We need to move forward," Delafontaine said. "As the students, you need to get back to work. This is a distraction for you."

Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion Warren Lockette also spoke at the meeting, reminding students that his goal was to help all students reach their goals, not just focus on diversity.

Medical students question sudden switch of associate dean


COLUMBIA, Mo. - Some University of Missouri students question why the medical school switched a prominent leader in the faculty.

ABC 17 News obtained an email from Dr. Patrick Delafontaine, dean of the medical school, telling students that Dr. Rachel Brown would be "transitioning" to a professor of clinical psychiatry from her spot as associate dean of student programs.

The email, dated October 28, said Dr. Laine Young-Walker, head of the child psychiatry division, would take over on November 1.

Several students told ABC 17 News they're puzzled by the sudden move. Many spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retaliation from faculty. Dr. Brown, who dealt primarily with
students' classroom performance and helped guide them in preparing for various tests, was beloved by many students, and some believe she was fired from the spot. A "town hall" meeting is scheduled Wednesday for students and faculty to talk about the move.

Delafontaine's October email listed Dr. Brown's accomplishments in her role as associate dean. Applications for medical school doubled since she took over in 2006, coming from Mercer College in Macon, Ga. She also "led new initiatives in student services focused on student wellness, individual achievement and residency selection." Students selected her for an advocacy award in three of the ten years as associate dean, most recently in 2016.

MU Health and medical school spokeswoman Mary Jenkins did not return ABC 17 News' request for comment Tuesday.

The school is in the midst of coming into compliance with the federal Liaison Committee for Medical Education, which accredits medical schools. The group gave MU two years to correct the four categories, including diversity management, student mistreatment, curricular management and affiliation agreements. Delafontaine told ABC 17 News in September that the school was aware of the issues before the LCME report, and was already working to correct them.

Dr. Young-Walker, an MU graduate, leads the child psychiatry division. She worked as associate medical director for the state Department of Mental Health, and led the MU Health Diversity Advisory Council.

MISSOURIAN

Missouri Senate Majority Caucus offers dinner for a price

ALEXANDRA COUNCIL, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — If you want to have dinner with the Missouri Senate Majority Caucus leadership team, the price is $5,000.

The caucus's retreat, scheduled for Nov. 16 to 18 in Kansas City, offers two levels of "sponsorship opportunities." It costs $5,000 to have dinner with the Senate leaders and $2,500
Progress Missouri, a liberal advocacy organization that engages citizens about state and local issues, hosted a conference call Wednesday morning to criticize the Republican leadership for the sponsorship program.

"What is unique about this particular fundraising scheme — and I do call it a scheme — is that they are directly correlating an amount to direct access with these Senate leaders," said Laura Swinford, Progress Missouri's executive director.

When asked whether Democrats host similar sponsorship opportunities, Swinford said all candidates and parties do fundraising. She noted that Democrats raise money through activities like golf tournaments and email appeals.

"To sit down one-on-one and face to face is something a vast amount of Missourians can't do," Swinford said.

Sherry Golden, a home health-care worker in St. Louis who spoke at the conference, noted that low-wage earners in the state could not afford to pay a hefty price to meet with legislators. She said the government should be open to and responsible for the needs of all Missourians.

"I feel like this isn't right to actually have to reach out to leadership like this and have to pay $5,000 to be able to get a plate," Golden said.

**Peverill Squire, an American politics professor at MU, said Missouri has weak ethics laws. Missouri currently has no limits on campaign contributions or lobbyist gifts.**

"Short of taking a clear bribe, there is little a state lawmaker can do to run seriously afoul of state ethics laws," Squire said. "As long as it’s being offered ostensibly to everyone, it's allowed. It's the sort of thing that happens, and when it becomes public they have to address it."
A press coordinator for Sen. Ron Richard's office declined to comment.

FACT CHECK: PAC oversimplifies Kander's time in General Assembly

NATALIA ALAMDARI, 14 hrs ago

“In two terms in the Missouri General Assembly, Jason Kander passed ZERO bills that were signed into law.”

--One Nation political action committee,

mailer sent to Missouri voters

In a recent mailer sent to Missouri voters, One Nation, a conservative political action committee, criticized Democrat Jason Kander for not passing any legislation during his two terms as a representative in the Missouri General Assembly.

Kander, the current Missouri Secretary of State, is challenging incumbent U.S. Senator Roy Blunt for a seat on Capitol Hill.

The front of the mailer is blank, except for the words, “This page is dedicated to all the laws Jason Kander passed in the Missouri General Assembly.”

The back, featuring a photograph of Kander with his hands up, has “ZERO” printed in all capital letters.

For such a dramatic advertisement, we figured it was a claim worth checking.
Our only method of contacting One Nation was via Twitter. The group’s website lists no phone number or email address. We received no response. But, as the mailer states, Kander’s legislation record can easily be found in the Missouri House of Representatives archives.

Kander’s time in the House

The mailer goes on to make the case that Kander “has run for three different offices in just eight years, instead of concentrating on the job he was elected to do.”

Kander has in fact run for three different offices in the past eight years. He served two terms in the House, but could not run again because of term limits. After his time in the House, Kander was elected secretary of state in 2012, and announced his bid for U.S. Senate in February 2015.

But what did Kander do during his time in the General Assembly?

Kander served as a state representative from 2009 to 2012, and was a member of six different committees, including the budget committee. During both of his terms, the House was controlled by Republicans, making it difficult for Democrat-backed bills to make it out of committees and onto the floor.

In fact, of the 28 bills Kander sponsored as a representative, only two passed in the House — House Bill 504 in 2009 and House Bill 238 in 2011. Neither were signed into law.

Kander co-sponsored seven bills that were eventually signed by the governor.

“As a member of the minority in the State House, the most effective way to have an impact on legislation is through partnering with Republicans and working hard at the committee level,” said Anne Feldman, press secretary for Kander’s campaign.

Kander focused much of his time in the House pushing for ethics reform. In 2010, he and Rep. Tim Flook, R-Liberty, passed a major ethics reform bill through the House — the first passed in Missouri since 1991. The bill made it through the Senate and was signed by Gov. Jay Nixon.
However, in 2012, the Missouri Supreme Court struck down the bill, saying it was unconstitutional because the ethics provisions were tacked onto a bill dealing with purchasing provisions, two unrelated matters.

Sponsorship versus co-sponsor

The difference between sponsorship and co-sponsorship really depends on the bill.

A bill’s sponsor is the representative who actually brings the bill to the floor.

“Usually, though not always, sponsors put a lot more effort into researching, drafting, and pushing through a bill,” MU political science professor Marvin Overby said.

Bills are either crafted by a sponsor and that legislator’s staff, or brought to sponsors by lobbyists or special interest groups.

Bills can only have one sponsor, but can have an unlimited number of co-sponsors. A co-sponsor’s involvement in the lawmaking process can vary.

For example, in passing the ethics reform bill, Kander partnered directly with Flook to craft the bill, showing as much involvement as a sponsor.

On the other hand, lawmakers can co-sponsor bills “as a cheap way of position-taking,” Overby said. This is more common with non-original co-sponsors, when lawmakers sign onto a bill after it’s already been brought to the floor.

Not an effective measure

Measuring a lawmaker’s success by the number of sponsored bills they passed is pretty inaccurate in the long run. The percentage of bills passed is more telling than number, Overby said.
“More effective legislators usually concentrate more, putting effort into passing a few bills, rather than introducing a lot that have little chance of passage,” he said.

Being a Democrat in a Republican-controlled General Assembly didn’t make passing bills any easier for Kander.

“In majoritarian institutions, especially those with super-majorities like the Missouri legislature, it is very difficult to get minority-sponsored bills passed,” Overby said. "Bill passage rates is much more relevant for members of the majority.”

Our ruling

One Nation's mailer is misleading and cherry-picks Kander’s record. While none of his directly sponsored bills made it past the House floor, he was an active co-sponsor for ethics reform, and managed to get his bill through the Senate and to the governor’s office.

While Kander co-sponsored seven bills that became law, no bill he directly sponsored was signed by the governor. But the statement ignores key facts to paint an incomplete picture.

We rate it Mostly False.

Willy Wonka's Peter Ostrum to talk about veterinary medicine at MU
COLUMBIA - Peter Ostrum quit acting after his role as Charlie Bucket to become a veterinarian, and he will talk about his life of helping animals Thursday on MU's campus.

The free event is called From Film to Farm: A World One Health Day Event. One Health is a national movement to unite plant, animal and human medicine for the sake of bettering all three.

"We’re looking at where animal health, human health, and even environmental health intersect and how we can make changes at that nexus of that intersection," said Carolyn Henry, a veterinarian and faculty facilitator for One Health Mizzou.

The event is at noon at the Bond Life Sciences Center, and 200 chocolate bars will be for sale. Five of the bars will contain a golden ticket redeemable for a prize basket.

Proceeds from the event benefit the MU School of Veterinary Medicine’s Barkley House.

"The Barkley House is an idea that we would have a guest house similar to guest houses that are associated with human hospitals, where a family could stay with a patient. The difference is the patient here is a pet animal," Henry said.

The event is sponsored by The Mizzou Advantage, The Candy Factory, and Students for One Health.

**MU fraternity raises money for chef with sick wife**


COLUMBIA - An MU fraternity exceeding its goals to help a chef with a sick wife.

Scott Young, who cooks meals for Beta Theta Pi has a wife in St. Louis sick with a blood infection that has taken over her body.
When fraternity members heard about it, they got together and started a GoFundMe page for Young's family. The goal was $5,000; when that was quickly surpassed, the members set their sights on more. In eight days, they have raised more than $10,000.

Beta Theta Pi president Chase Wisniewski said, in terms of Greek life, he is hoping this will show other houses that, despite the negative environment after recent scandals, it's still possible to do good.

"I think there is two good aspects of what we are doing here, one is obviously for Scott and his family and the other is that the environment at Mizzou and Greek life right now is not the best and there is a lot of negativity with that," Wisniewski said. "It’s saying we are still capable of doing good things for Greek life and for the whole campus and for the community around us."

Young says people should look past the scandals.

"A lot of people take the bad stuff from fraternities, but they do so much more good stuff and it’s great for the community, it’s unbelievable what these young gentlemen do for the communities," Young said.

Members say it's not about being a shining example for other Greek chapters, it's about being a good person.

"This is not about Greek life. This is us stepping up as people helping another person in need. I think that’s exactly what we have done and, if that sets an example for other Greek houses, than great, and if it sets an example for just a person in general, then great," Wisniewski said.

"In our eyes he is more than just our chef, he is one of our brothers," he said.