University of Missouri Working to Develop Corn Varieties that are Resistant to Pests

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New School of Music building coming to MU's campus


COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri Board of Curators has approved plans to construct a new School of Music building on MU's campus.

The curator's unanimous approval at its last 2016 meeting last Friday allows Phase 1 of the project to begin and Phase 2 of the project will continue with fund raising for the overall plan.
Phase 1 is a $24 million project that includes designing the academic part of the new building. Phase 2 will focus on a 500-seat concert hall.

The School of Music is currently housed in the Fine Arts building, along with the Department of Art and the Department of Theater. The School of Music currently is spread across six buildings, which also house students and classes from other MU departments.

The new School of Music facility will be built at the northeast corner of Hitt Street and University Avenue after the Fine Arts Annex, which is there now, is demolished.

Interim Arts and Sciences Dean Patricia Okker said the spaces music students work in now were not designed for musicians, and the new space will be beneficial for bringing students together in one place designed for music.

"The vision of this new school is to bring our composers, our performers, and our scholars and our educators all together in one building so they can work collaboratively together," Okker said.

Okker also said many people involved with the School of Music have been hoping for a new building for over 20 years.

"It really has been a long time coming," Okker said. "So it's really an exciting fruition of dreams of many different people."

She also said the new building won't just benefit music students.

"Music touches everyone's lives and many people know this is going to be a facility that is going to be a beacon for the arts for the town, for the community, for campus," Okker said.

Plans are already underway to begin designing the new building and it should be complete by July, 2019.

MU Economics Professor Addresses Proposal to Cut Corporate Taxes in Missouri

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=91b5c05c-e8ef-4483-8211-360985005ca6
In his windowless fifth-floor office, amid piles of papers and lab equipment, Justin Steinfeld explains why he’s wearing a "I Voted Union Yes! Today" sticker.

There are two Columbias, says the third-year Ph.D. student in cellular, molecular, and biomedical studies. There’s the face to the outside world, with swanky donor parties and gleaming new buildings. And then there’s his reality, the one where he and colleagues put four air filters in their lab because they’re worried about air quality and where they shared their cramped space with a giant trash bin for weeks to catch a leak from the roof.

"It’s just so shameful how much they make certain parts of Columbia pristine," says Mr. Steinfeld, "and other parts they don’t care about because they know people don’t see it."

After he says administrators ignored his and his colleagues’ concerns about conditions in the William Black Medical Research Building, he decided to put his hope in a graduate union. He was one of an overwhelming majority of Columbia
students who voted last week in support of forming a union, only the second ever at a private university and the first at an Ivy League institution.

The students had a number of concerns, including lack of dental insurance and delays in payments, but their issues essentially were all a variation of Mr. Steinfeld’s: Graduate students aren’t a university priority. A union, they hope, will force them to be. "I want graduate students to be on a level playing field with the administration," says Evan Jewell, a classical studies Ph.D. student and union organizer. "Not in the ‘Please, sir, I want some more’ situation we currently find ourselves in."

The Columbia vote was among the first of a series of graduate-union elections expected at private colleges across the United States this academic year. A sweeping National Labor Relations Board ruling in August, in a case involving Columbia, effectively gave teaching and research assistants at private colleges the right to form unions. Graduate students at Harvard University held a union election in November, but the final vote count has been delayed until officials sort out hundreds of ballot challenges. (A few hundred ballots were also challenged at Columbia, but they won’t be counted because there weren’t enough to change the outcome.)

Hopes and Clouds

With the blowout victory at Columbia — 1,602 to 623 — momentum appears to be on the side of union organizers. Moreover, activists have said that more grad students favor unionization since the last time they had a legal right to form unions, from 2000 to 2004. One reason, advocates argue, is that students now feel bleaker about the prospect of secure academic employment.

"It seemed tenable if you imagined, Well, I’m putting in five, six or seven years being underpaid and overworked, but after that I’m getting into a cushy tenure-track job," says Bennett Carpenter, a third-year Ph.D. student in literature at Duke University who is helping to organize a union there. "The calculus changes somewhat when you look beyond the Ph.D. and don’t see that, or you see people cobbling together a living by teaching at several colleges."

Despite the new momentum, the election of Donald J. Trump as president has cast a cloud over the legal landscape for graduate unionization. A labor board under a President Trump, several labor-relations experts say, would probably overturn the
Columbia ruling. Because of this uncertainty, graduate activists say that they are racing to win elections and contracts that secure improvement in working conditions and protections. That was the case at Columbia.

"This may be our only chance to get a union," Olga Brudastova, an Ph.D. student in engineering at Columbia and a union organizer, said on Thursday, the second of two days of voting.

Last week, Ms. Brudastova and other organizers fanned out across campus to answer questions about a possible union and nudge stragglers to the polls. Part of their goal was to counter points Columbia had made in opposition to a union.

The university’s provost, John H. Coatsworth, earlier this month sent a message to the campus raising questions about what unionization would cost graduate students and how it would affect their relationship with the university.

For example, he wrote that, assuming 2 percent in dues, a union would mean an annual transfer of about $2 million from members of the bargaining unit to the United Auto Workers.

"If teaching and research assistants are represented by the UAW, a new group of union representatives will be inserted into the existing conversation between student assistants and the university’s faculty and administration," Mr. Coatsworth wrote, "and we will all be governed by a regulatory framework."

And while most graduate students were in favor of a union, some were vocal in their opposition. Emily Moore, a Ph.D. student in biomedical engineering, wrote in an op-ed in The Columbia Spectator this fall that graduate students already have channels to voice concerns to administrators and that a single graduate union comprised of different disciplines, professional schools, and even some undergraduates couldn’t effectively advocate for everyone. The union "claims that it’s possible to include demographic-specific circumstances in the contract," she wrote, "but how realistic is it to account for every academic community in a single document?"

**Concerns Beyond Pay**

Unlike on other campuses, stipends were not a rallying point for students at Columbia. Its stipends — the portion of a graduate student’s financial package meant for living expenses — are $30,000 a year in the humanities and higher in other disciplines. That doesn’t make for easy living in New York City, but it’s relatively generous, compared to what graduate students get elsewhere.
Mr. Steinfeld, for example, feels fairly compensated. But he and other graduate students say their frustration around a general culture that devalues graduate students has built up over time. He’s not sure what change a union can bring, but "the status quo is unacceptable."

The movement to spotlight campus sexual assault and colleges’ response to it, Mr. Steinfeld says, has made clear that "universities react to two things: the law, through the use of Title IX lawsuits with sexual assault, and through shaming. A union provides those two things. Law and shame, through a potential strike and other avenues."

With the union vote over, it’s unclear whether Columbia will bargain with the graduate students or continue to challenge the legal right to unionize. Mr. Coatsworth, the provost, was not made available for an interview, and a university spokeswoman did not respond to questions about next steps. Private-college administrators may be waiting to decide their strategies based on what the incoming Trump administration does.

The new president could quickly fill two vacancies on the labor board, making it majority Republican and poised to overturn the Columbia ruling if a college were to bring a challenge before it. Graduate students have won and lost the right to unionize under other boards. A Clinton-era board gave them the go-ahead in 2000, but a Bush-era board took it away in 2004, in a case involving Brown University.

A college would certainly bring graduate unionization before the panel again if a Republican majority took hold, says Joseph W. Ambash, a lawyer who represented Brown in the 2004 case. This could happen in different ways. If graduate students voted in favor of a union, a college could refuse to bargain. A college could also challenge a petition to hold an election.

"It’s a fair assumption that the Republican board is going to reverse many, many decisions of the Democratic board," Mr. Ambash says. "And it seems logical to assume that the Columbia decision is going to be one of the decisions that’s going to be reversed."

Activists at Columbia, Duke, and elsewhere now worry that colleges will try to run out the clock until the labor board’s composition is more favorable to universities. Union supporters say they hope the lopsided nature of the vote leaves no doubt about where Columbia graduate students stand and forces administrators to negotiate.
"I hope that it will make the Columbia administration think twice about continuing to pour resources into a fight they cannot win and that only makes them look bad," says Julie Kushner, a UAW regional director. "They’ll only look like they’re trying to crush the will of the majority. This vote makes it clear they need to come to the bargaining table without delay."

Students should be wary of fake textbooks

NO MU MENTION

COLUMBIA - As the semester winds down on college campuses, some students head to the bookstore to exchange their books. This year, a team of investigators says more students might not be able to do that because their books are counterfeit.

Chief Executive Officer at MBS Textbook Exchange, Bob Pugh said counterfeit books are a growing problem and these books are popping up everywhere.

"It's not well-known, but it's metastasizing into a significant problem," Pugh said.

Students trying to return counterfeit books not only cannot get their money back, but could also face legal repercussions.

Pugh said it is hard to tell these books apart from the real ones. The exchange has a team in place to detect counterfeit books. If they see one that could be fake, they send it off to the publisher.

Pugh said it is hard to tell where these books come from. Once these books are found in circulation, the person who sold the book is at fault, even students.

Pugh said unfortunately there is not much for students to do to protect themselves against buying a fake book. One sign to look for is drastically reduced prices.
"If it looks too cheap it probably isn't any good. If it looks so good price wise, it probably won’t.. it may be counterfeit," Pugh said.

**Bill Aims to Improve Veterans' Career Readiness**

Spending bill contains provision aimed at blocking veterans from attending institutions where path to a job isn't assured.

**No MU Mention**

Last week’s U.S. Senate-approved spending bill contained a provision that seeks to block student veterans from using their GI Bill benefits on career programs that won't help them land a job.

The [Career Ready Student Veterans Act](#), which was attached to the continuing resolution to fund the government through April 28, would prohibit institutions from receiving GI Bill benefits if their programs don't meet the requirements needed for required licensing exams or certification in order to enter the chosen career field.

Walter Ochinko, a policy director with Veterans for Education Success, conducted a study that found that 20 percent of about 300 approved programs to train veterans were improperly accredited and that, as a result, their graduates were not eligible to sit for licensing exams or certification in their fields of study. The report came out last year and identified eight programs offered by 15 different institutions at 60 campuses that failed to meet employer or state requirements.

Although the issue affects every sector, Ochinko said the study only examined for-profit institutions.

"One of the issues was accreditation," he said, adding that he examined settlement agreements between states' attorneys general and for-profit institutions and student complaints to his organization to see how common the issue was. "These institutions were claiming all the degrees were accredited, and they weren't. People couldn't get jobs."

Ochinko said the problems are mostly surrounding programmatic accreditation. Institutions may earn national or regional accreditation to qualify to award federal student financial aid, but separate programs like those in nursing, criminal justice, law or teaching often require program-level accreditation. Some states will only
allow students to sit for state licensing exams if they've graduated from a properly accredited program.

Some former students at the defunct for-profit Westwood Colleges accused the institution's criminal justice program in Chicago of not preparing them for work in Illinois law enforcement agencies. Last year, the Federal Trade Commission charged online-based Ashworth College with also misrepresenting the training and credentials students could earn there. Many of the programs didn't meet state requirements for specific careers. The institution settled with the federal agency.

"This good-faith policy ensures [veterans] that they earn an education that will help them enter the civilian work force and provide the opportunity to seek employment that will put them on a path toward a successful career," said Senator Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican and member of the U.S. Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, in an email. Tillis originally sponsored the legislation.

Ochinko said he's unaware of just how many veterans have enrolled in programs that lack the requirements needed for graduates to enter their career fields, but the issue also affects nonveterans.

"This is a problem that has been addressed for veterans, but it's a larger problem for other students who attend and don't have these protections," Ochinko said.

**Seeking 'Culture of Integrity' in College Sports**

Following a series of high-profile cases of academic fraud in college sports, the American Council on Education releases a new report calling on institutions to better align athletics with their academic mission.

**No MU Mention**

Citing high-profile cases of academic fraud at some of the country's most visible universities, the American Council on Education released a report today urging colleges and universities to better align their athletics departments with their academic mission and to “ensure a culture of integrity.”

The report is based on a roundtable discussion, organized by the council in April, that included college presidents, coaches, athletes, faculty members, researchers, conference commissioners and the president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The panel was convened, ACE said, in the wake of a series of cases of academic fraud. Earlier that month, the University of North
Carolina at Chapel Hill and Syracuse University -- two men’s basketball programs that had recently been investigated over academic fraud by the NCAA -- met in the Final Four of the NCAA men’s basketball tournament. A week later, the NCAA punished the University of Southern Mississippi for academic fraud.

Since the April meeting, more cases of academic fraud emerged at the University of Mississippi, Georgia Southern University, the University of Notre Dame and California State University, Northridge. In total, the NCAA has punished Division I institutions at least 17 times for academic fraud in the last decade, with NCAA officials saying last year that 21 institutions were being investigated. Nine cases have occurred in the past two years.

“I think it’s moderately widespread and worth the attention of the university presidents and governing boards,” said Walter Harrison, president of the University of Hartford and former chair of the NCAA’s Committee on Academic Performance. “The problem is, in my view, that there is an enormous amount of money and attention flowing into athletics. College campuses are complex places, and within athletic departments, it’s pretty easy to sort of hide some of the problems that are happening.”

The ACE report focuses on three areas: culture of integrity, management of risk, and integration of athletes into the student body.

The panel recommended that institutions should have to cross a "very high bar" in adopting policies or practices that separate athletes from other students. Academic misconduct involving athletes "should be a functional responsibility of campus officials outside of athletics," the report stated.

Calling it a “top-down issue,” the ACE panel also stressed that institutions should not only offer study abroad and internship opportunities to athletes, but actively encourage them to pursue those opportunities. Coaches, the panel wrote, “need to understand and appreciate that student-athletes are students first, and need to be flexible in scheduling practices and travel to ensure academic preparation and opportunity.” This point previously emerged as a major theme at this year’s National Collegiate Athletic Association meeting, with Mark Emmert, the NCAA’s president, calling for a “rebalancing” of athletics and academics. The association has since agreed to consider proposals at next year’s meeting that would aim to better address access to internships, student teaching and study abroad programs for athletes.

While this recommendation does not address academic integrity specifically, the panel wrote, if colleges are going to better align athletics with academics, then "athletics should not be siloed and managed in a way that ignores its integration in and support of the academic mission of the institution."
Similarly, the report’s recommendations for integration included telling institutions to pay particular attention to diversity in hiring within athletics and the broader administration.

“Because of the opportunities for multicultural relationship building and recruiting in athletics, colleges and universities should make an effort to hire athletic directors, athletic staff and coaches from different backgrounds who can be relatable role models for student-athletes,” the ACE panel wrote.

According to a study released last month by the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport at the University of Central Florida, more than three-quarters of presidents at the 128 Football Bowl Subdivision colleges were white men, as were nearly 79 percent of athletics directors. About 7 percent of athletics directors were women, and all of them were white. Nearly 90 percent of faculty athletics representatives were white, as were 100 percent of conference commissioners.

While more than half of college football players are black, 87 percent of Football Bowl Subdivision head coaches are white.

In September, the NCAA urged college presidents and conference commissioners to sign a new pledge promising to “specifically commit to establishing initiatives for achieving ethnic and racial diversity, gender equity, and inclusion with a focus on hiring practices in intercollegiate athletics.” While many in college sports praised the creation of the pledge, the effort was also criticized for its lack of sanctions for those who do not honor it.

The report also comes at a time when the NCAA’s members are debating what role the association should continue to play in preventing and punishing academic fraud. Earlier this year, just prior to the ACE’s April meeting, the NCAA’s Division I Council adopted new rules designed to update its academic integrity policies for the first time since 1983.

For decades, the NCAA has laid out what counts as academic misconduct, clearly barring college employees from completing athletes’ course work for them, for example, and banning any “knowing involvement in arranging for fraudulent academic credit or false transcripts” for athletes.

Colleges must now “maintain and adhere to written academic integrity policies that apply to the entire student body.” If a college breaks its own rules, the NCAA would consider that to be a case of academic misconduct. At the same time, the new rule redefines “impermissible academic assistance” as “academic conduct involving a staff member or booster that falls outside of a school’s academic misconduct policies, provides a substantial impact on the student-athlete’s eligibility and is not the type of academic assistance” generally available to all students.
“We did not have a regulatory framework in place to ensure appropriate guidelines for all of our institutions,” John DeGioia, president of Georgetown University and chair of ACE’s Board of Directors, said. “That was what led the NCAA to go down the route of crafting new legislation. But it also created the context in which [ACE] recognized there is more we can do create this culture of integrity that is at the heart of this report.”

The panel also recommended that colleges “publish and operate under clear mission statements that stress that educational values, practices and mission will determine the standards by which intercollegiate athletics programs are conducted.” College presidents must “be engaged, informed and realistic,” the report states, “and hold staff and student-athletes accountable.”

Staffers in academic advising and support services for athletes, the panel wrote, should report to senior academic officials, ensuring that there is “regular access, communication and oversight. Athletic directors, coaches and faculty athletics representatives should never be perceived as operating outside of presidential oversight.” Colleges and universities should have processes in place to identify “unusual course or major clustering” involving athletes, and institutions should conduct annual audits of the athletics program in areas including admission, academic progress and graduation rates.

Some of the recommendations are “blindingly obvious,” members of the panel admitted in a phone call with reporters Monday, and similar guidelines and auditing processes are already in place at institutions for monitoring the integrity of scholarly research, for example. But the panel said recent cases of academic fraud demonstrate a need to better apply those practices to athletics departments.

“We know how to sustain a culture of integrity,” DeGioia said. “We have quite a bit of experience in sustaining this in a context involving research. This is a time to connect the deep aspects of what we know to our intercollegiate athletics programs.”
Planned Parenthood seeks preliminary injunction to resume abortions
ALEXANDRA COUNCIL, 16 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Planned Parenthood's Missouri affiliates asked a federal district judge to suspend two state abortion restrictions while the legal effort to remove them continues.

Comprehensive Health of Planned Parenthood Great Plains and Reproductive Health Services of Planned Parenthood of the St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri asked U.S. District Court Judge Howard Sachs, of the Western District of Missouri, to block the ambulatory surgical center and admitting privileges requirements recently struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

"We are proud to have filed this preliminary injunction today and to ask the court to make abortion a greater reality than it is today," said Laura McQuade, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Great Plains, during a teleconference with the news media on Monday morning.

The two specific restrictions were found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in June in a Texas case — Whole Woman's Health vs. Hellerstedt case, according to previous Missourian reporting.

The Missouri affiliates filed a federal lawsuit Nov. 30 to challenge the restrictions.

"My patients face an enormous amount of insurmountable challenges because of state laws that have never taken into consideration their health and safety," said Kristin Metcalf-Wilson, assistant vice president of Health Services at Planned Parenthood Great Plains.

Metcalf-Wilson said the restrictions have been devastating for Planned Parenthood patients who now have to drive to St. Louis, the only abortion-providing location in Missouri, or seek home health concoctions they find on the Internet.
McQuade said she didn't know when the judge would rule but expected it would be in the New Year.

If the judge suspends the restrictions, the Planned Parenthood location in Columbia would offer both medical and first-trimester surgical abortions, McQuade said. She said the location will likely have two providers — one being Colleen McNicholas, the physician who lost admitting privileges with University Hospital last fall.

Planned Parenthood in Midtown Kansas City would provide medical abortion services only, referring patients to the center in Overland Park for surgical services, McQuade said.

In Joplin, only medical abortions would be provided, but both surgical and medical abortions would be provided at the Springfield location, said Mary Kogut, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood St. Louis Region and Southwest Missouri.

"We have a vow and promise to our patients every day," Kogut said. "We are committed to taking this fight as far as we can."

DECEMBER 12, 2016 5:55 PM

Missouri Planned Parenthood asks judge to block two abortion laws

NO MUN MENTION

JEFFERSON CITY - Planned Parenthood officials in Missouri want a federal judge to block abortion regulations so four additional clinics can offer the procedure.
Leaders on Monday requested some regulations be put on hold while a court case over the constitutionality of the laws plays out. Planned Parenthood affiliates filed the case Nov. 30 challenging two state laws they say are unconstitutional.

The laws require abortion clinics to meet standards for surgical centers and that their doctors have privileges in a nearby hospital.

The U.S. Supreme Court in June ruled similar Texas regulations unconstitutional.

Laura McQuade and Mary Kogut said Planned Parenthood plans to offer drug-induced and surgical abortions in Columbia and Springfield if regulations are temporarily blocked. They said drug-induced abortions also would be offered in Joplin and Kansas City.

The women are presidents and CEOs of Missouri’s Planned Parenthood centers.

Missouri now only has one abortion clinic — a Planned Parenthood center in St. Louis.

Opponents of Planned Parenthood’s legal actions gathered Monday outside the clinic in Kansas City and scheduled simultaneous gatherings in St. Louis, Columbia, Springfield and Joplin.

“This latest action is yet another demonstration of Planned Parenthood’s staggering disregard for the health and well-being of Missouri’s women,” the opponents said in a news release.

Missouri state Rep. Rick Brattin, a Harrisonville Republican, was among the speakers addressing about a dozen people outside the Kansas City clinic.

“All surgical centers have to abide by our state laws,” Brattin said. “How is it that an organization does not have to abide by the same laws of every other surgical center in this state?”