MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

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MU celebrates engineering school expansion

Generated from News Bureau media advisory

On the last day of his final legislative session in 2014, Chris Kelly finished something he started in December 2008 — securing money to finance a major renovation and expansion of Lafferre Hall, the main engineering building on the University of Missouri campus.

Kelly was not on-hand Thursday when Gov. Jay Nixon and university leaders cut the ribbon on the $44.7 million project, but in a telephone interview, he said he was thrilled it is complete and reflected on the six-year effort. The state contributed $38.5 million from bonds issued by the Board of Public Buildings, and MU secured $6.175 million in private donations to pay for the work.

“The two most frustrating things were the time it took to get Lafferre done and the time it took, to get Fulton State Hospital done,” Kelly said. “They were absolutely no-brainers. I don’t think it was very political in Democratic-Republican terms, but in a term-limited environment, there was not a lot of continuity of people who understood the need for capital improvements.”

Nixon was joined by interim UM System President Mike Middleton, interim Columbia campus Chancellor Hank Foley and College of Engineering Dean Elizabeth Loboa for the ceremony, which was followed by a tour of the new building. They cut a ribbon held aloft by drones to applause from the audience of about 150 students, faculty, administrators and guests.

The event was a celebration of the new building for MU and, for Nixon, a chance to list the areas where his eight-year administration has supported higher education. It also was an opportunity for levity, as Nixon noted that Foley is an engineer while he and Middleton are attorneys.

“He and I both have concerns about opening buildings that would never accept us as students,” Nixon said.

The state financing was part of a $200 million investment in new and repaired facilities at colleges and universities across Missouri, Nixon said. The state borrowed at low cost and cut ongoing costs of maintenance for two- and four-year campuses, he said.

“We have stopped the necessity of bleeding of dollars for inefficient, unusable space and having to put buckets on the floor when it rains and things of that nature,” Nixon said.
Lafferre Hall, renamed to honor Thomas and Nell Lafferre for a $7.5 million donation in 2004, was built in 1892 and 1893, with additions constructed in 1922, 1935, 1944, 1958, 1995 and 2009. As part of the project, the 1935 and 1944 additions were demolished to make room for modern facilities.

The 20,000-square-foot expansion will serve the 3,861 engineering students and allow for enrollment growth, Loboa said. The new facilities along with the expanded opportunities for collaborating with medicine, agriculture and other disciplines will make MU the “college of choice” for engineering students across the country, she said.

“In order to maximize our potential in these core areas, we must provide continual improvements to our facilities so our faculty and scholars have both the space and the state of the art equipment to produce and translate their groundbreaking technologies,” she said.

Features of the construction project include classrooms with space for competition teams, high-quality audio-visual equipment and a classroom for as many as 80 students with a raised floor so electronic equipment can be quickly moved in and out of use. Laboratories and offices were built to allow modifications without major construction work.

The building also uses natural and LED lighting and ventilation systems that capture heat and moisture to cut utility costs.

Looking back to 2008, Kelly said it was MU’s top capital improvements priority and that the request had been before lawmakers since at least 2004. Now that it is finished, Kelly said, he expects it to make a significant impact on the college and the state.

“One of the most important things it gives them is an incredible recruiting tool,” Kelly said. “And when students are trained as engineers here, they are more likely to stay here.”
MU College of Engineering celebrates completion of renovations to Lafferre Hall

TARYN PARKER, 14 hrs ago

Generated from News Bureau media advisory: MU Ceremony to Celebrate Completion of Lafferre Hall Renovations

COLUMBIA — Two drones picked up each end of a gold ribbon inside Thomas and Nell Lafferre Hall to murmurs of surprise and a round of applause Thursday, marking the completion of a nearly year-long renovation.

Gov. Jay Nixon and Elizabeth Loboa, dean of the College of Engineering, cut the ribbon in front of a crowd of about 140 people. In attendance was UM System Interim President Mike Middleton, MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley and the building's namesake, Tom Lafferre.

Lafferre graduated from the college in 1956 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. He retired in 1993 after a nearly 40-year career as the vice president of operations for Monsanto Chemical Company. In 1984, he received the college's Missouri Honor Award for Distinguished Service in Engineering.

The building was named in his honor in 2004, after he made a $7.5 million donation. Lafferre flew in from Franklin, Tennessee, to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The renovations are an absolute transformation, Lafferre said, and he is glad there is finally a place for students to better learn and show creativity.

"I am proud to have a role in getting this to where it is," Lafferre said.
Renovations to portions of Lafferre Hall that were built in 1935 and 1944 have been in the making for several years. Construction started in April 2015. The hall now accommodates 3,300 additional students and faculty with its 20,000 square foot expansion. The university estimates the project will eliminate more than $15 million in deferred maintenance.

The Missouri House voted in May of 2014 to pass a bill issuing $38.5 million to renovate sections of Lafferre Hall on MU's campus. Nixon said one of the reasons for this investment was to dramatically cut the ongoing cost of maintenance.

Lafferre Hall was originally built in 1892 and houses around 70 percent of the College of Engineering. It is one of the largest buildings on campus. Foley said Thursday the college holds 3,400 students, 114 faculty members and nine academic disciplines. The new space will allow for the college to continue to grow and meet the needs for the 21st century, he said.

Nationally, students in areas of science, technology, engineering and math are in high demand. Middleton said last year alone at MU there were 8,600 graduates from the College of Engineering, making up 40 percent of total undergraduates who had graduated.

To continue growing, Middleton said, the college needs the physical infrastructure such as labs and classroom space.

The renovations include updated labs and more space for conference rooms, study areas, an elevator and a coffee shop that will be run by Campus Dining Services. These improvements bring Lafferre Hall up to date with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

Nixon said the newly renovated building will help prepare students for good careers in high-demand industries.

"You can’t learn about the jobs of the future if you’re not working in places that reflect the environment of the future," Nixon said.
University opens renovated Lafferre Hall


COLUMBIA, Mo. - University of Missouri leaders and Gov. Jay Nixon held the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the renovated Lafferre Hall, home to the College of Engineering, on Thursday. The renovations cost a total of $44.6 million, $38.5 million coming from bonds approved by Nixon and the Board of Public Buildings. The remaining $6.1 million came from private donations.

The university and the state hope the renovations help the MU College of Engineering to become a world leader in the field. The project replaced older parts of the building, creating state-of-the-art classroom space. The University of Missouri estimates the project will also eliminate more than $15 million in deferred maintenance costs.
The university expects more than 3,000 students to join the program, a number the new building will be able to accommodate.

"They hope to have, with this additional facility, an additional 3,300 students able to be educated just right here," Nixon said.

In addition to the students, the College of Engineering expects to hire up to 50 faculty members. The hires will work in conjunction with other colleges on campus.

"Our strength lies in our differences," said Elizath Loboa, College of Engineering dean. "The proximity of so many different schools within walking distance on the same campus allows us as engineers to develop out-of-the-box innovative solutions to the global challenges facing our world today."

Loboa said the faculty members would have "joint appointment," one person working in both the engineering and veterinary colleges for example.

"So we actually can create the technologies that are utilized to solve these global challenges," Loboa said.

Interim President Mike Middleton said the new facilities will help educate the state's future workforce, in turn fueling the economy for generations.

"Nationally, graduates in the areas of science, technology, engineering and math are in very high demand," Middleton said. "According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, by 2022, there will be 161,000 S.T.E.M. jobs to be filled in Missouri alone. 125,000 of them will require at least a four-year degree."

Middleton said last year S.T.E.M. graduates made up 40 percent of Mizzou's total graduates. He wants that number to keep growing and said this renovated Lafferre building can help that.

"To accomplish that growth, we need the physical infrastructure -- the labs, classroom space -- in place for those students," Middleton said.

"Everybody predicts thousands more students will be able to use this building and we know with engineering degrees being really in demand, this is a place where the workforce of tomorrow is going to be built," Nixon said.

Nixon said he believes the multi-disciplinary program design is the way future careers will unfold.

"I think by looking at designing programs for the future where you have multi-disciplinary programs in engineering to make the new products and drugs and things of the future, this is the concept that's going to succeed long run."
MU's campus gets a new look


COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri completed its renovation of Lafferre Hall a little over 2 years after Governor Jay Nixon approved the project.

Nixon approved the state's issuance of $38.5 million in October of 2014 after taking a tour of the building. Demolition of the renovated areas began in May 2015.

The renovations include the addition of classrooms, conference rooms, study spaces, and a coffee shop that will be ran by MU's Campus Dining Services.

“If we are going to keep up at the state level, at the national level, we have got to make sure that we are providing our faculty and our students with the world class infrastructure and facilities that are critical to advancing technology and translating the technologies that we develop in the university into products that actually help people,” said Elizabeth Laboa, dean of the College of Engineering.

The project also included many energy saving measures including an active air quality monitoring system and new automatic lighting.

MU held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the renovations and speakers included Laboa, Governor Jay Nixon, UM System Interim President Mike Middleton, and MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley.
Documents highlight drinking, hazing and more drinking problems among Mizzou fraternities

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 8 hrs ago

ST. LOUIS • Almost half of the fraternities on the University of Missouri-Columbia campus are currently on probation.

Most of the violations that led to probation, as well as three recent suspensions, stem from circumstances involving alcohol abuse, according to a series of records obtained Thursday by the Post-Dispatch through a records request.

Among the more egregious incidents in the documents is a hospital visit March 18 for a new member of the Sigma Pi fraternity who had a blood alcohol level of 0.34 percent and bruising on his buttocks from a hazing incident involving being hit with a paddle. Missouri law says 0.08 percent is legally drunk.

The incident led to the university revoking recognition of the fraternity chapter. Yet Sigma Pi initiated more than a dozen new members this semester.

According to accounts from two Mizzou police officers on the scene, the student was transported to a hospital from a dormitory after he was found largely unresponsive and clearly under the influence. Both officers noted in the emergency room that the man’s buttocks were bruised.

Notes from student interviews by Mizzou administrators after the incident create a narrative for what was ruled as a hazing incident involving new members being paddled by more senior fraternity members. Mizzou found the fraternity guilty of coercing members to drink, as well as a slew of alcohol violations.
Mizzou leaders opted to suspend the fraternity for five years as long as the fraternity basically disbanded during that time. The national group declined, moving forward with rush and its own homecoming events this fall. In October, the group was banned for life from Mizzou’s recognition.

“While we value our relationship with the university and recognize the important role our chapter must play in promoting a safe campus environment, we came to a different conclusion about the future of the chapter,” national executive director Jason Walker said in a statement. “Sigma Pi has imposed comprehensive, corrective sanctions on our University of Missouri chapter, which both hold individual members accountable as well as focus on accountability and risk prevention for the chapter.”

The documents released Thursday included incident reports for all fraternities and sororities at Mizzou from Aug. 1, 2015, through October 2016.

While 14 of the 30 recognized fraternities are on probation, none of the 16 sororities currently face similar punishment. Probation puts organizations on notice that further violations could result in suspension.

Five of the fraternities will be removed from probation effective Friday, the end of the fall 2016 semester.

Delta Sigma Phi is on probation until May 2017 after Mizzou leaders found the chapter guilty in fall 2015 of alcohol violations and “hazing activities.” A parent called administrators in September 2015 and reported that his son was forced to drink and carry a “pledge pack” filled with condoms, cigarettes and gum.

“This is not the first time we’ve heard such things from this chapter,” a Mizzou student life official wrote in an email about the parent’s allegations.

According to a document from the fraternity, at least one member was suspended and possibly expelled from the group.
At least 12 other fraternities were found responsible for alcohol violations, according to the documents. In addition, Delta Upsilon and Kappa Alpha Order were both suspended or removed from campus this fall.

Many Greek life organizations met with administrators in preparation for the document release. The Interfraternity Council, governing board for Mizzou’s fraternities, issued a statement Thursday about the documents.

“For nearly 150 years, fraternities have played an important role in contributing to the University of Missouri’s safe, vibrant and engaged campus community,” the council said in the statement. “Recent media reports are deeply troubling to our fraternity community, which is united in its strong stance against sexual assault, hazing, alcohol abuse and intolerance. These behaviors stand in direct contradiction to every one of our fraternal values, the University Code of Conduct, the law, and basic human decency.”

In a recent interview with the Post-Dispatch, top Mizzou student life administrator Cathy Scroggs noted that while leaders have made progress with student organizations, each group turns over its members every four years, so the process is perpetual.

“There’s sort of a ‘two steps forward, one step backward’ phenomenon that we’re seeing,” she said.

But Scroggs has hope.

“These are 18- and 19-year-olds that are learning, too, and they’re testing us from time to time,” she said. “Our students join Greek organizations because they want to be leaders and see opportunity. They join to be change makers, not to accept the status quo. I am encouraged by their willingness to take action.”
Sigma Pi fraternity no longer allowed at University of Missouri


COLUMBIA, Mo. - In an "extreme" decision, the University of Missouri banned the Sigma Pi fraternity from ever returning as a student organization.

The letter comes after an ABC 17 News records request, as part of its investigation into the Greek system, questioning how effective the school's system of discipline was in holding groups responsible.

MU originally withdrew Sigma Pi's recognition in May 2016 for a decade after numerous violations as part of its induction of new members, including hazing and providing minors alcohol. The fraternity appealed, and the school offered a five-year withdrawal of recognition in June, with the option to come back in four years if it worked with the Office of Greek Life in that time.

According to an October 3 email from Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs, students continued to live in the Sigma Pi house at the corner of Providence and Burnam, and "identifying themselves as members of the Sigma Pi fraternity."

"These actions violate the implicit trust of my June 13, 2016 correspondence wherein I agreed to reduce the original sanction significantly," Scroggs wrote.

Sigma Pi executive director Jason Walker tells ABC 17 News that its MU chapter still has an active charter, meaning men can still live in the house.

"We regret the stance that the University of Missouri has taken toward the students who choose to freely associate with any organization that benefits the campus as the members of Sigma Pi do," Walker said in an email.

The investigation began on March 18, when two students carried another into Laws Residence Hall. Joshua Brown, the hall coordinator for nearby Lathrop, wrote one of the students said the unconscious person had taken PCP. MUPD officers later found the student in the emergency
room with dark bruises to his buttocks, apologizing for what happened and not wanting Sigma Pi to get in trouble.

Sigma Pi, which was already on probation for an earlier alcohol incident that semester, put the chapter on suspension the next day, as details emerged of what happened that night. Notes summarizing the events show it was part of "Pledge Dad Night," where new members were ordered to complete a "scavenger hunt" of random items, then learned who would be their pledge "father," or an active member closely tied to them throughout their time in school. Pledge fathers also introduced the "family drink," such as beer or hard liquor.

The new members were then told to hide "paddles" the active members gave them throughout the house. If the person's pledge father found it, they were allowed to paddle their pledge son.

After the Office of Student Conduct's decade-long withdrawal punishment for hazing, several members sent affidavits claiming they never felt forced to take part. Scroggs eventually reduced it to five years, and forbid Sigma Pi from trying to re-organize until the Fall 2020 semester, while working with Greek Life.

Scroggs got involved again after some members of the Student Conduct Committee asked about Sigma Pi, noticing letters still fixed to their home. Facebook posts from Scott Evans, the chapter's advisor, came in the open records request, and included an August 20 post that said in part, "Just finished initiating 19 young men to Sigma Pi Fraternity, installing our new officers and meeting with new [executive committee] to prepare for this year."

Scroggs' letter did not specify if that post lead her to her decision to ban Sigma Pi from returning.

More cases of mumps reported at MU

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri released a new total number of mumps cases on Wednesday.

Since the start of the fall semester on Aug. 22, there have been 228 cases of mumps diagnosed among MU students. At least 190 of those cases are considered recovered, which means the student is no longer contagious.

Most of the infected students report having friends who have or had mumps, belong to Greek organizations or have recently visited local bars.
Officials said all of the students had met the school’s immunization requirement of receiving two Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccines. The school continues to recommend that MU students receive a third MMR vaccine.

The university issued several other recommendations to help stop the spread of mumps.

- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid sharing eating and drinking utensils.
- Avoid exchanging saliva with others.

The Student Health Center is working with local and state public health agencies to identify new cases and prevent additional cases.

Symptoms of mumps include a variety of conditions.

- Swollen glands in front of and below the ear or under the jaw.
- Pain with opening and closing the jaw.
- Fever, headache or earache.
- Fatigue and malaise.
- Among men, mumps can lead to painful swelling of the testicles.
- Among women, mumps can lead to swelling of the ovaries, which may cause abdominal pain, or swelling of the breasts.

If you believe you're infected with mumps, call the Student Health Center at 573-882-7481 or your medical provider.

*Similar stories ran in numerous national outlets.*

**MU mumps outbreak passes 200 cases**

ASSOCIATED PRESS, 22 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — The number of confirmed and probable mumps cases at the University of Missouri has grown to 228.
The University of Missouri released the latest numbers Wednesday as students take finals before heading home for winter break.

Health officials say they plan to continue monitoring cases over the break and through January. The school also is recommending that students receive a third dose of a vaccine that protects against mumps, as well as measles and rubella.

The school says most of the sickened students have recovered, with at least 190 of them no longer infectious.

Mumps is a viral infection that causes swelling in the salivary glands and cheeks. The university is among several across the nation that has grappled with outbreaks this year.