MU Health interim chief leading talks about potential new hospital

Generated from a News Bureau press release: Foley Appoints Jonathan Curtright Interim CEO of MU Health Care

The new top executive at University of Missouri Health Care is leading a team to develop recommendations for a new south Columbia hospital to take pressure off services provided at Women’s and Children Hospital, University Hospital and other system services.

Jonathan Curtright, who on Friday was named interim CEO of MU Health effective Feb. 25, said planning for a new hospital is still in its “infancy — if it goes anywhere at all.”

Curtright’s résumé listed among his achievements leading the development team looking at the need for a large “micro hospital” — estimated to cost between $75 million and $100 million — in the Discovery Ridge area.

“I really can’t stress this enough. It’s more of a concept than it is a specific location because we’re looking at multiple options,” Curtright said Friday just hours after MU interim Chancellor Hank Foley announced the appointment. Current CEO Mitch Wasden is leaving next month to become executive vice president of Oregon Health & Science University in Portland. Wasden has been MU Health’s CEO since January 2013.

Curtright also will continue in his duties as chief operating officer, MU Health said in a news release.

Under Wasden’s leadership, MU Health Care has expanded its footprint by affiliating with a number of private practice physicians — operating 56 outpatient clinics — and undertaking an expansion of the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute, which also houses the Mizzou BioJoint Center. UM System curators in October lauded Wasden for an “extraordinary” and “breathtaking” performance as hospital CEO.

Wasden had led a partnership with Leawood, Kan.-based Nueterra Health, resulting in the December 2014 joint purchase of Callaway Community Hospital in Fulton. The MU Health/Nueterra partnership subsequently proposed a 10-bed, $38 million surgical hospital in east Columbia as a campus for the Fulton hospital.
Boone Hospital President Jim Sinek was among the more vocal opponents, and the Missouri Health Facilities Review Committee rejected the project in July 2015.

The rancor included Wasden accusing cross-town Boone Hospital and BCJ HealthCare, which leases the county-owned hospital, of using “deliberately misleading” information in a successful campaign against the proposed hospital in south Columbia. Sinek, meanwhile, argued that the geographic area outlined in documents touting the need for a Columbia-based Fulton hospital campus was “gerrymandered” to give the appearance that a large swath of the population had no access to other local hospitals. He said the hospital proposal would “cherry pick” the more lucrative aspects of Boone’s surgery department.

The hospital proposal displaced residents of Ed’s and Sunset Hills mobile home parks off South Lenoir Street. The property, owned by Whirlwind Properties LLC, still is for sale.

Wasden had said the new hospital would boost revenue for the struggling Fulton hospital while also offsetting the anticipated need for more beds at University Hospital. He cited growth that would create the need for additional beds by 2018.

Sinek said Friday he’s not aware of changes in hospital bed needs since the state committee denied the certificate of need application 18 months ago.

“I think it would be a tall mountain to climb,” Sinek said, adding that a Discovery Ridge project sounded “essentially the same” as the 2015 proposal.

Sinek also offered his congratulations to Curtright.

“Hopefully, we can work together and see where we can collaborate and continue to bring excellent health care to Columbia and Mid-Missouri,” Sinek said.

Despite the history of tension and competitive conflict, MU Health is one of four health systems in talks with the Boone Hospital Board of Trustees about managing or partnering with Boone Hospital. Curtright is part of the MU Health team that crafted a proposal.

Neither Boone trustees nor Curtright provided specifics of the MU Health proposal. The trustees this week hired a public relations firm to help present management plan options to the public in the coming weeks. Trustees started seeking proposals for companies vying to operate the hospital in the spring. The trustees and BJC must notify each other by 2018 if they wish to continue, modify or terminate the lease, which expires in 2020.

Curtright has more than 20 years of experience in health care leadership, including serving as an administrator for various departments at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. He has degrees in economics, finance, health administration and business administration, all from MU.

With the potential repeal of the Affordable Care Act, Curtright acknowledged the health care industry is facing challenges.
“Whether you’re a Democrat, a Republican, whether you’re talking about the Affordable Care Act, society has spoken,” he said. “Health care needs to be higher quality with higher satisfaction at a lower cost. That’s the assignment that our team takes on every day.”

MU Health Care Names New Interim CEO

The new interim CEO of MU Health Care is Jonathan Curtright, its current Chief Operating Officer. Curtright, who holds bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Missouri, previously served as COO at Indiana University Health and University of Kentucky Healthcare.

Though the University of Missouri System has been the center of recent budget cuts and withholding, Curtright says he’s optimistic about the program’s fiscal outlook.

"We, as a state, have some budget challenges we've got to deal with, and we’ll do our part," Curtright said. "We’re part of the University of Missouri and the University of Missouri has to be fiscally sound and meet all of its budgetary requirements, and we’re going to do everything we can to be supportive of that."

Curtright will add the duties of interim CEO to his current workload February 25, when current MU Health CEO Mitch Wasden leaves for a position at Oregon Health and Science.
University of Missouri enrollment unlikely to rebound in fall

The University of Missouri is unlikely to see a rebound in freshman enrollment in the fall, which means tuition revenue will not be the source of money to cover the latest round of state budget cuts.

A decline of more than 20 percent in this year’s incoming class forced layoffs, a hiring freeze and a 5 percent cut in general fund budgets across the Columbia campus. Overall enrollment, down 6 percent from the 2015-16 academic year, already was expected to decline further as the smaller freshman class moves toward graduation.

Gov. Eric Greitens on Monday ordered $146.4 million in new withholdings from state spending, including almost $20 million earmarked for MU. Provost Garnett Stokes and MU Faculty Council Chairman Ben Trachtenberg discussed how to deal with the new cuts during a Thursday council meeting.

“The enrollment picture is not much different than it was,” Trachtenberg said. “That is continuing to be a concern about the budget.”

The budget woes come at a time when many schools on campus, and the campus itself, are under interim leadership. Stokes updated the council on searches underway for five deans, and Tim McIntosh, of the UM System human resources office, discussed the search for a chancellor.
The chancellor search committee will hold its first meeting next week, after a forum for faculty, staff and students at 10 a.m. Thursday in Reynolds Alumni Center.

The process for deciding what to cut in the wake of Greitens’ withholding has not been set, Stokes told the council.

“Part of it is, is it temporary? Is it permanent? We’ve got to plan for both,” she said. “The bigger issue is, what is the plan going to be going forward?”

Of the $20 million withheld from the MU budget, $4 million was earmarked for expanding medical education in Springfield. The remainder includes $2 million for extension services and $13.7 million for general campus operations.

“We need to find a way to not spend that $20 million or to find some other way of getting that money, which I can’t think of immediately,” Trachtenberg said.

One possibility, he said, was to create a committee of faculty, staff, students and administrators to make recommendations.

Jeffrey Rouder, professor of psychology, asked for a forum for campus leaders to hear ideas and air concerns about the budget.

“Morale is really low among the faculty, and trust is not so much higher,” he said.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley wants an open process for determining cuts, Stokes assured the council.

In an interview, she said the goal for meeting with the council was to get initial feedback on the cuts and discuss options for finding the money. The university has stepped up freshman recruiting, including hiring a recruiter for the Washington, D.C., area for the first time, she said, so she declined to estimate whether the fall class would be larger or smaller than this year.

“We are recognizing that it is early in the process to give any accurate assessment,” she said.

Foley is seeking a permanent appointment to the job he has held since November 2015. His application will be included with others for the search committee. McIntosh and Elizabeth Loboа, dean of engineering and co-chair of the chancellor search committee, asked the council for examples of experience, leadership and other desired qualities they would like to see in the choice.

Members asked for a chancellor with experience at an American Association of Universities school that has a land-grant mission and a medical school. The committee should look beyond the successes listed on a candidate’s resume to learn how they handled failure, Rebecca Graves of MU Libraries said.
“Why did they fail, what did they learn from their failures, did they share their failures?” she asked. “Sometimes failure is not a bad thing.”

Anne Stanton, an associate professor of art history, said she wants a chancellor who will listen to and value faculty.

“We are not a liability, but sometimes we have felt like that,” she said.

**Could higher tuition increase be in Missouri's future?**

For the better part of a decade, Missouri has been the envy of other states when it came to holding the line on tuition increases for four-year colleges and universities.

But after being hit last week with restrictions to their core funding from the state, higher education officials don’t know what to expect from Jefferson City, either when it comes to funding for the next fiscal year, or in the long run. Some worry that the state could fall back on tuition and fee increases to cover expenses.

“We don’t know what the new governor’s focus in higher education is, yet,” said Clif Smart, president of the Council on Public Higher Education in Missouri and president of Missouri State University in Springfield. “He didn’t talk about higher education in the State of State (address) at all.”

Gov. Eric Greitens gave the address that laid out his policy priorities on Tuesday, after announcing about $146 million he was withholding from the current fiscal year budget to balance out a more than $456 million revenue shortfall. More than $67 million in core funding was cut from universities and community colleges around the state, along with an additional $12 million in university capital projects and scholarships, meaning more than half the cuts came from higher education.

If revenue collections improve, the governor could choose to release the funds.

Requests for comment from the governor were not returned, but he has vowed to share his budget proposal in early February, which is when higher education officials will know whether budget restrictions will become permanent.
Smart said most universities, including his own, will use their reserves to plug the one-time cuts to their budgets. However, if the cuts continue or the lower level of funding becomes permanent, universities will have to start thinking of other ways to make up for the costs: raising tuition and fees, reducing services, or both.

**Missouri fared well**

Not every governor has the same priority for higher education, Smart noted. Some focus on improving the quality of the education. Some want to turn universities into economic engines for their state. He said the most important priority for the last administration was maintaining affordability and keeping tuition costs down. For a little less than a decade, former Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, along with the legislative body, made annual deals with universities and community colleges: they would freeze tuition for the upcoming year, and the elected officials would provide a certain level of state funding for the schools’ operating budgets.

Paul Wagner, executive director of the Council on Public Higher Education in Missouri, said the agreement provided stability for the schools because they knew how much money they would get.

"It gave Missouri something to be proud about, that we kept tuition down nationally," he said.

Also helping hold the line was a 2007 law that limited the amount universities and college could raise in-state tuition to no more than the Consumer Price Index, which was calculated at 2.1 percent for 2016. But universities can and did apply for exemptions since then.

Since the governor cut some of their core funding, universities would be free to up their tuition rate for this fiscal year. However, with the spring semester having already started, the likelihood of a tuition increase for the current fiscal year is low.

With the law and Nixon pushing to keep tuition low, Missouri saw much smaller tuition increases than the rest of the country.

According to an analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, average tuition at four-year public colleges in Missouri rose 9.5 percent when adjusted for inflation between 2008 and 2016. Only Ohio and Montana fared better. Twenty-seven states saw increases greater than 30 percent; 14 of them saw increases push past 40 percent during that period.

The Washington, D.C., think tank, which was founded in 1981 to provide an alternative perspective on the social policy initiatives of the Ronald Reagan administration, also noted that Missouri students fared better than most of the rest of the country when it came to the dollar value of those increases.

From 2008-2016, average tuition at Missouri's four-year public colleges rose $740, with only Ohio and Montana lower. More than half the states saw tuition rise by more than $2,000 or more during that period.
Last year, all universities and community colleges agreed to hold in-state or in-district tuition rates flat in exchange for a 4 percent increase in the performance funding formula, though the promise was verbal and needed to be approved by the governing bodies of the higher education institutions.

But some state universities tried to get around the tuition increase cap by raising fees instead.

State Sen. Gary Romine, R-Farmington, who chairs the Senate Education Committee, said finding out that universities have been raising fees has been “frustrating.” He was referring to a report from the Missouri state auditor, which showed that fees for students rose by 25 percent between 2009 and 2015 to help universities offset losses in revenue.

Overall, supplemental fees rose nearly 140 percent at the state's four-year schools during that period.

Missouri Southern State University fared well among state schools. From 2009 to 2015, net tuition and fees at MSSU only went from $3,065 to $3,221 per year, an increase of $156, or about 5 percent overall.

Meanwhile, other universities saw tuition and fee increases during that same period ranging from 26 percent (Missouri State University) to 51 percent (Missouri Western in St. Joseph.) At the state's flagship institution, the University of Missouri in Columbia, net tuition and fees rose 31 percent during that period.

Romine said that universities have already done a good job of cutting inefficient programs, but the reality of a tight budget means all parties have to come to the negotiating table once more.

Asked about upcoming budget challenges, Romine said: “We have to see where is the fat and where can it be cut."

Southern's ability to hold the line on tuition has been one of its selling points, according to students such as Michael Lemons, a pre-med major.

"I can definitely say if this school didn't have low tuition, I wouldn't have considered this school," said Lemons, a U.S. citizen who is technically an international student because his parents are missionaries in central Africa. "It was ultimately why I came here."

Lemons said he currently has a few scholarships and a Pell grant, and although a tuition increase wouldn't be ideal, he doesn't believe it would be enough to make him consider leaving MSSU.

"But I think it would discourage people from coming here," he said.

State Rep. Gail McCann-Beatty, a Democrat who has the University of Missouri-Kansas City in her district, said that with the cuts, she’s worried about tuition rising and students taking on more debt.
“All deals are off,” said McCann-Beatty, who is the House minority leader. “Tuition increases are coming, we just don’t know the magnitude.”

Both Alan Marble, president of MSSU, and Jennifer Methvin, president of Crowder College in Neosho, noted the possibility that tuition increases might have to be part of a solution in the future but said it was too early to speculate when they would be implemented and what amounts might be involved.

"We understand we are moving toward more tuition-based funding because the state is not investing as they have historically," Marble said last week, following the announcement of funding cuts.

Along with about $1.77 million being cut from MSSU’s core funding, the state also will withhold about $808,000 of the $2 million set aside for MSSU to pursue a dental school in partnership with the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Marble said. From both MSSU and UMKC, the governor cut about $1.2 million of the total $3 million allotted for the dental school in the yearly budget. With that cut, MSSU and UMKC suspended plans to open a dental school in Joplin.

“I would imagine all universities would be looking at tuition increases,” Smart said.

John Fougere, the University of Missouri System chief communications officer, said in an email that it was too early to talk about how the reduction in state spending will affect its schools, which includes campuses in Columbia, Rolla, Kansas City and St. Louis. The system took the lion's share of cuts last week, with $38 million being withheld from the four schools’ budgets.

“We certainly understand that our state leaders have to make difficult decisions in challenging budgetary times,” Fougere said.

Student perspective

For some students, raising tuition could undermine their ability to attend.

MSSU Sophomore Carli Thurman said the cost is barely affordable now. The marine biology student from Raymore said she owes $2,000 for the current semester, even after her A+ Scholarship, her Missouri Pell and Access grants and several loans.

"This is the cheapest school in Missouri, and that's what appealed to me," Thurman said. "If (tuition) increased even more, I might just have to drop out.”

Thurman said she doesn't mind paying a reasonable amount in tuition costs, but she worries that any potential increases would negatively impact her ability to continue her education.

"I don't want to leave the school because I'm already 30-some credits toward my degree," she said.
But Shelby Jackson, a freshman communications major from Buffalo, attends MSSU thanks to athletic and academic scholarships, and she takes out roughly $800 per semester in loans.

"I wouldn't want them to increase tuition, but it's not make-or-break for me," she said.

Jackson said she also wouldn't begrudge Missouri Southern leaders if they felt that raising tuition was their best option moving forward.

"I feel like in terms of the school, they can afford to do that," she said. "They're still going to have that competitive edge; their enrollment rate is not going to drastically drop."

**Comparison**

In 2008, 17 states reported average tuition for four-year colleges and universities that was higher than Missouri's average of $7,824. In 2016, 28 states were higher, when Missouri's average was $8,564.

---

**Editorial: Missouri economy can't grow when students saddled with debt**

*The numbers are startling: A year at the University of Missouri — the state’s flagship institution — is now calculated at $27,374, which includes tuition, fees, room and board as well as sundry costs such as travel.*

Four years will top $109,000, according to MU’s own estimate, but this is based on 14 hours per semester, or 28 hours per year, which won’t quite do it. A bachelor’s degree in English requires 121 credit hours, mechanical engineering requires 126 hours and so on, making the cost of a degree actually closer to $123,000 over 4 1/2 years.

When lawmakers from the governor on down consider funding for the state’s colleges and universities, we hope they keep those numbers in mind.

And these:

- In 1988, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, tuition comprised about 25 percent of total education revenue nationally. Today, it’s closer to 50 percent.
• In 2015, nearly half the states already got more of their higher education dollars from tuition and fees than from local and state governments.

• Since 1973, the center reported, average inflation-adjusted public college tuition has increased by 274 percent while median household income has grown by only 7 percent in this country.

• While federal student aid, such as Pell Grants, has risen in the past decade, average state aid has fallen. In 2008, the typical student got $740 in state aid; in 2014, it was $710, and it’s falling. That’s, again, according to the Center.

• Wages in many Missouri communities are far below the national average, a fact that needs to be kept front and center when discussing state aid to colleges. The fewer young people who can afford college means the further wages fall below the national average.

• In Joplin in 2015, wages were 75 percent of the national average, according to the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis.

• “The most obvious candidate for the next (financial) bubble is student loan debt, which has ballooned to $1.26 trillion,” the Chicago Tribune reported last summer.

In short, every dollar a student borrows is not a stimulus to the economy in the long run but becomes a drag on it, and that’s what Gov. Eric Greitens and legislators in Jefferson City need to remind themselves of as they discuss funding for colleges and universities while trying to balance the state’s budget. Money students borrow and then pay back is money they would be using to buy houses and cars, start families and build businesses.

If you want to grow the state’s economy, don’t saddle them with debt. Make sure college remains affordable.
Editorial: Study shows women in Missouri are making slight gains, but more work needed

By the Editorial Board, 19 hrs ago

Generated from a News Bureau expert pitch

Missouri is a slightly better place for women now than it was two years ago, with more women having health insurance and fewer women 65 and older living in poverty, but other benchmarks of success are still lagging, according to a new study by the University of Missouri's Institute of Public Policy.

What’s not working so well for women is that their numbers have shrunk in the Missouri Legislature compared to 2014, when the Women’s Foundation released its first study on “The Status of Women in Missouri.” Only 19 percent of state prosecutors are women and only two women serve as sheriffs in Missouri.

The study shows that as Missouri is increasingly identified with low achievement in areas such as educational attainment, health care availability for poor citizens and opportunities for good day care and jobs, women bear the consequences of these shortcomings more than men. Older women have it tougher than younger women, and a significant percentage of female-headed households with children under 18 live below the poverty line.

This scenario can improve, and a male-dominated Legislature can make the needed changes just as easily as one with more women in it. To that end, Missouri House Speaker Todd Richardson pledged in December to work on initiating paid family leave for Missouri workers, and to help create a new occupational licensing board or commission to eliminate unnecessary barriers for citizens entering into entrepreneurial roles.
The health care gain is threatened by GOP pledges in Washington to repeal the Affordable Care Act though there’s no plan to replace it. About 60 percent of Missouri’s uninsured are women. Repeal would likely result in increased numbers of women without coverage. The study shows that 9.8 percent of Missourians had no health care in 2015, compared to 13 percent in 2013. Nationally, 9.4 percent of Americans are uninsured.

If the state expanded Medicaid access, nearly 73,000 uninsured women would be eligible for health care coverage.

An area in which women have lost ground since the earlier study is in accredited child care centers. Accessibility and quality of child care was the top concern for most Missouri women in 2014, and the new study finds that 38 percent of Missouri counties do not have an accredited child care center. That figure was only 27 percent in the earlier study.

Since the last study, the wage gap has narrowed, even though it remains sizable. Full-time working women now make 78 cents for every dollar a full-time working man makes. The prior gap was 77 cents.

The Women’s Foundation intends to use the study to establish benchmarks and help shape policy solutions moving forward to give more women economic advantages. Improving the state’s economy for women will work to the advantage of all Missourians.
COLUMBIA (AP) — A University of Missouri professor hopes his invention of a new mug that maintains the coffee's temperature longer percolates into hot sales.

Columbia professor Hongbin "Bill" Ma's company, ThermAvant International, and the university have a patent pending for what's called the Lexo mug, The Columbia Missourian reported.

Like other high-end tumbler mugs, the Lexo is composed of stainless steel walls and uses vacuum insulation. But its unique bio-based material inside the mug reduces the coffee's initial temperatures within minutes to a comfortable drinking temperature and maintains it for up to eight hours.

"Before you pour hot coffee into it, the material is solid, but after you pour the coffee, the material turns to liquid and absorbs the thermal energy," said Ma, a professor in the Columbia campus' mechanical and aerospace engineering department.
The 10-ounce mug became available last month for purchase on Lexo's website, as well as on Amazon. The company has sold more than 650 mugs, which Ma says should last 20 to 30 years. A 16-ounce mug should be available by April, as well as an improvement on the current lid.

"We tested a number of mugs from different companies, and we blew them out of the water," said Michael Merwin, a ThermAvant engineer.

Ma, director of the university's Center for Thermal Management, came to the university in 1999 to work as an assistant professor, with a research specialty in thermal heat transfer and electronic cooling. He has written more than 140 papers.

He helped founded ThermAvant Technologies in 2007 to largely provide more efficient heat-transferring devices for military applications. Ma and his colleagues started working on consumer products in 2015, and Lexo was born a year later.

Because Ma works at Missouri, his patent was filed through the university, meaning the university will get royalties of any products sold after negotiations with ThermAvant.

---

**Woman and Minorities Paid Less While Serving on Boards of Directors**

COLUMBIA — Alicia Pitts was a freshman at MU in 2006 when, one night, she became worried about a friend of hers who'd gone to a party at a fraternity house. She decided to go look for her.

She began in the basement where the party was and then started going room to room. She found her friend in a bedroom, passed out. Four men were in the room in various states of undress, and one was having sex with her friend. Pitts started yelling and pushed the men away. They were too drunk to give her a fight.

She got her friend dressed and took her home.

They discussed going to the hospital, but her friend didn't want to because she couldn't remember what had happened, Pitts said. They didn't discuss reporting the assault to police.

Pitts now investigates crimes, including sexual assault and child abuse, as a forensic science consultant in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. She now has a better understanding of the boundaries of consent and said she would encourage her friend to report the assault were it to happen today.

Looking back, she's struck by the fact that she and her friend didn't realize what had happened was a crime.

"During college for me, that was just something that happened at frat houses," said Pitts, whose last name was Swartz when she was a student at MU. "In my mind at that time, I didn't realize that level of intoxication played a part of consent. Not being able to consent because of intoxication didn't click as being illegal. That was just something that was expected at frat parties, which is why I just didn't go to them, or didn't drink."
Witnessing her friend's assault has made it easier for her to empathize when she talks with victims, she said. But she thinks students need a better understanding of how often assaults happen because when victims realize they're not alone, it's easier for them to come forward, she said.

"I've told victims that true predators aren't going to stop offending until they're stopped by an outside force," Pitts said. "They have to have someone that says enough's enough — you're stopping now. Maybe a report can be that outside force."

Preventing sexual assault is a goal that's eluded universities as they've faced greater public scrutiny, and MU hasn't yet found an approach that has resonated.

In the past few years, MU has mandated bystander awareness training for all incoming freshmen, expanded its Title IX office and created a peer education program for fraternities.

But sexual assaults at MU remain higher than the national average for universities. In a 2015 report, 30 percent of MU female undergraduates reported being victims of nonconsensual sexual contact by their senior year. Nationally, 26 percent of undergraduate women reported experiencing nonconsensual sexual contact, according to a study by the Association of American Universities.

Preventing sexual assault in MU's Greek life community has been a narrower focus because of a higher rate of incidence associated with Greek life.

Members of Greek life made up 27 percent of MU's student body in the 2014–15 school year. However, 38 percent of reports of sex discrimination made to the Title IX Office that year involved members of Greek life in some way, Assistant Vice Provost for Civil Rights and Title IX Ellen Eardley said in a June 2015 campus sexual assault summit. The university has not yet released data from the 2015–16 school year.

New rules forbade fraternities from serving hard alcohol at their houses beginning in fall 2015. Nearly half of MU's fraternities have been placed on probation in the last two years, many for alcohol violations, some of which were related to sexual assault allegations.
Other proposals aimed at making fraternities safer were rejected in June 2015, included banning women from fraternity houses on weekend nights and drug-testing all students living in Greek houses.

Besides the policy changes, Greek life leaders and Title IX officials are using various programs to educate students on sexual assault: what it means, what the consequences are and how to prevent it.

**A new approach to education**

The Interfraternity Council, which is the governing body of 30 of MU's fraternities, took matters into its own hands in spring 2015 and created a peer education group to teach other fraternity members about sexual assault. Since then, the program has expanded to presentations that include alcohol and party culture, masculinity and mental health.

The men in the peer education group represent 13 fraternities. They visit chapters to facilitate group discussions about these topics, tailored to any specific problem a fraternity might be facing. The sexual assault program teaches men about bystander intervention, definitions of consent and gives information about Title IX. IFC Vice President of Risk Management Ryan O'Connor and Vice President of Programming Sean Miller led the group in 2016. Mike Pasternock will take over their roles in 2017, Miller said.

Kim Scates, MU's Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center's education coordinator, works with O'Connor and Miller to train the men in the group. They meet as a group every Wednesday and were presented to about one chapter each week this past semester.

It's easier for IFC men to engage and ask questions in the peer education setting because they know people presenting have probably been in similar situations, Miller said.

"I've gotten presentations about similar topics, and you could almost see people just (tuning out)," Miller said. "They see an adult who's spitting out numbers, and those numbers are really important, but a lot of times college students feel like the adult talking in the front of the room doesn't understand what college is like, right now."
It's up to the majority of men who will never sexually assault someone to stop the small percentage who will, O'Connor said. More than 60 percent of men at one university who said they had committed or attempted rape also said they had raped more than once, according to a 2015 National Sexual Violence Resource Center report.

O'Connor and Miller both said they've found that members have been engaged during the peer educators' presentations.

"What's inspired me is looking at a chapter during these discussions and just seeing light bulbs go on," Miller said. "Almost 100 percent of these guys understand that this prevention work is something important, it's an issue, but don't realize how much they can do to work toward stopping sexual assault. During our discussions, a lot of them realize how much power they have in this situation, and that's really cool."

**Truth and consequences**

Pitts agrees that good guys can and should use their influence.

"Nobody wants to say they have a rapist in their brotherhood or sisterhood," she said. "When you identify a predator, I would like to believe that the other people would be able to call those people out and weed them out."

There's a difference between predators, who assault women intentionally and repeatedly, and potential offenders, who may not realize that it is a crime to assault someone who cannot give consent if they are intoxicated, Pitts said.

"Predators are predators. You're not going to change that," she said. "But you can educate people on the circumstances so whenever they see that going on, then they can stop it."

She also said she believes sexual assault education should focus on teaching men not to assault, rather than teaching females how to avoid being a victim.
"There are things you can do to make yourself safer, but you can only do so much against a predator who's going to offend no matter what," she said.

Ultimately, all students need to be made more aware of the consequences of sexual assault and the boundaries of consent, she said.

"Everybody's not going to get a break like Brock Turner," she said, referring to the Stanford University swimmer who was found guilty of three felony counts of rape but was released from jail after three months. "Eventually, society is going to catch up."

Eardley, who leads MU's Office for Civil Rights and Title IX, also presents to individual Greek chapters and said she believes it helps humanize her office. She said all students need to know what behaviors are prohibited and how allegations are handled. She also wants victims to understand their options and the privacy the office provides.

"Folks understand the process of engaging with our office," she said. "They learn that we don't immediately, necessarily, start the investigation so that people might feel more comfortable accessing resources that they might need to access. I also think that it's important for individuals who might be inclined to engage in behavior that is prohibited to know that we're serious and that we take these types of allegations very seriously."

Her office works in tandem with the Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center for campus education efforts, including in Greek life, she said.

"We would like to have enough staff to have regular outreach to every single fraternity and sorority," Eardley said. "We don't have that. We have a campus of over 50,000 people so we rely on the RSVP Center to be a leader in this regard. In many ways, it's surprising to me there hasn't been more focus by the university on RSVP. It's one of the first organizations like it in the country."

Studying how men can advocate against gender violence is Jackson Katz's life work. In a speech at MU last November, he urged men to stop viewing sexual assault and domestic violence as "women's issues."
"We don't need all the men on the University of Missouri campus to become activists for gender justice," Katz said in an interview after his talk. "That's not a realistic goal. A realistic goal is to empower more men to start taking some risks and joining women who are the driving force behind the change."

He said he believes leaders of campus organizations, including fraternities and sororities, need intensive training on sexual assault prevention so they're prepared to navigate situations as they occur.

"If you haven't had training and haven't been pushed to think about your leadership role in that way, you're not often going to come up with (solutions)," Katz said. "Training has got to be expected, mandatory and organically embedded in the whole experience."

Many men in fraternities aren't comfortable with their peers' behavior, Katz said, but remain silent because they're afraid of how they'll be perceived if they speak up.

"One of the goals of prevention education is to empower people to not be silent, to take some risks and know they're not just speaking for themselves," he said. "They're speaking for men who haven't spoken up for one reason or another."

**Jay Owenhouse defends show as petition to stop his performance circulates in Columbia**

COLUMBIA — A magician set to perform Saturday in Columbia is speaking out as a petition to stop his show surpasses more than 1,000 signatures.

Alfredo Martin started the petition on Change.org, raising concerns about Jay Owenhouse's ownership and use of Bengal tigers. In the petition, Martin also raises concerns about from where Owenhouse acquired the tigers.
"I believe everybody has a right to their opinion, the right to express their opinion, I just think to have a healthy dialogue, we need to focus on facts and not fiction," Owenhouse told KRCG13.

**Owenhouse, the self-proclaimed authentic illusionist, is scheduled to perform at Jessie Auditorium on the University of Missouri Campus Saturday night.**

"He [Martin] is misinformed about me, about my tigers, about what we do," Owenhouse said. "They don't travel in cages, they are given the best food money can buy and they are really a part of our family."

Online records show Owenhouse has had an active exhibitors license with the United States Department of Agriculture since 1996, owning two tigers in a sanctuary in Bozeman, Montana. A 2016 routine inspection by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service showed Owenhouse was completely in compliance.

"We went through a pretty intense screening process through the state of Missouri where they look at several factors; what our plan is when we're in the state, how our animals are cared for, what our licensing is," said Owenhouse. "We have an excellent reputation."

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, there are about 3,500 tigers remaining in the world. The species is endangered.

Owenhouse said he and his family raise money to conserve the world-wide tiger population.

"Our focus is to help provide the funds so these wild tiger populations in India that are on unprotected land can be protected from poaching," said Owenhouse. "There's a lot of temptation to poach a tiger and sell it on the black market, because one tiger can change the financial future for one Indian family."

In an effort to raise money for conservation work, Owenhouse sells special VIP tickets

"Contrary to what's out there, it does not include petting the tigers," Owenhouse said. "It's a chance for people to see them up close and hear about our conservation work."

Owenhouse said his two tigers only travel in sanctuaries and are on the road ten days out of the month for performances.

"It's going to be a great show," Owenhouse said. "This doesn't taint our excitement at all."
MU Author Hosts Event About Mindful Eating


The Chronicle of Higher Education

Blue Bubble in a Red State

By Katherine Knott January 15, 2017

To get to his hometown, Ike Uri drives three hours — west, then north — past small towns and farm fields until he reaches a hill. From there, he says, he can see all of Concordia, population 5,400.

People there take pride, says Mr. Uri, a senior at the University of Kansas, in having never set foot in Lawrence, home of the state’s flagship university. Only a handful of natives of his county attend the university, which draws a significant share of its students from just three counties in the eastern part of the state. In Concordia, Lawrence is seen as liberal, elitist, and disconnected.

In many ways, it is. Like most college towns where state flagships are located, Lawrence is a liberal enclave — a bubble or an oasis, depending on your view.
Across Kansas, 57 percent of voters chose Donald J. Trump in November, compared with only 29.7 percent in Douglas County, where Lawrence is located. The gap in voter preference between the flagship’s county and the rest of the state was one of the largest in the nation.

What does it mean that universities like Kansas are blue dots in seas of red on maps of voting patterns in state after state? Does it matter that these campuses are separated, at least in some ways, from many of the communities they were created to serve? Should the universities be doing something about that? Would the universities be better, would our nation be better, if the bubble were more porous?

Moving to a place he saw as a progressive oasis is part of what drew Mr. Uri to the University of Kansas. It was the only in-state university he considered; he didn’t think he would fit in elsewhere. Not all college towns are liberal bubbles; beyond flagships, many aren’t. In Kansas, voters in the six counties that are home to the state’s other public universities, many of them regionally oriented, favored Mr. Trump. In two of those counties, voters favored the Republican by an even wider margin than the voters of the whole state did.

For Mr. Uri, being in Lawrence, in turn, has highlighted the ways he feels disconnected from where he grew up. He sees value in Concordia, in its people, his extended family, but their views and his own have only diverged. Mr. Uri doesn’t eat meat, which is a point of contention when he goes home. Conversations about his research — in which he analyzes capitalism through a fairly unsympathetic lens, using classic Marxist theory and current economic theory on inequality and environment — elicit some negative reactions.

At family gatherings, he tries to avoid talking politics. He’s given up on changing the minds of relatives who are more conservative.

"The difference is incredibly stark," he says. "There’s no other place like Lawrence in the state."

Lawrence is the kind of city where people live when they like the state of Kansas but not its politics.

In the reliably red state, Douglas County has long stood out as a haven for activists and progressives. In the 1800s, people from New England settled in Lawrence intending to block the spread of slavery. In 1995 the city became the first in the state to add sexual orientation to its antidiscrimination policy. In 2005 the county
was the only one to reject an amendment to the state Constitution prohibiting gay marriage and civil unions.

The city’s progressive leanings are visible. Downtown, businesses display Black Lives Matter stickers in their windows. In neighborhoods, houses fly rainbow flags.

In the book *What’s the Matter With Kansas?* (Metropolitan Books, 2004), Thomas Frank wrote that Lawrence "remained one of the truly liberal places" in the state. Mr. Frank grew up in what he called the "churchified suburbs" of Kansas City, Kan., and attended the University of Kansas. To him, Lawrence was a bohemian paradise. He heard the Sex Pistols on the student-run radio station at a time when such music, he recalled, would have been an "unthinkable perversion" for Kansas City stations to air.

A majority of in-state students who attend the university are from the eastern part of Kansas, where most of the larger cities are. The overrepresentation of people from that region — more than 60 percent of in-state students this fall hailed from three counties there — contributes to the sentiment that the university is out of touch with large swaths of Kansans.

People at the U. of Kansas, in Lawrence, don’t really understand the rural western part of the state, where he grew up, says Ike Uri, a sociology major. “There’s no other place like Lawrence in the state,” he says.

In Mr. Uri’s experience, people at the university don’t really understand what the western part of the state is like. "People say here that western Kansas starts in Topeka," he says. Topeka, the state capital, is about 65 miles from the eastern border of a state that is 425 miles wide.

The remove of college towns like Lawrence from large portions of their state populations is problematic for democracy, says Terrell Strayhorn, director of the Center for Higher Education Enterprise, at Ohio State University. Higher education, he says, can help teach people to live together and interact productively, a foundation of our system of government.

The very fact that metaphors like "liberal bubble" and "ivory tower" are so often ascribed to higher education indicates a problem, he says. Both suggest communities that are isolated from their surroundings. Colleges should work to
establish reputations to counter that impression, he says, by valuing and putting a high priority on the application of research to real-world problems.

Like many flagships, the University of Kansas is a liberal enclave, unlike many of the communities it serves. Should the bubble be more porous?

Higher education has become a progressive echo chamber, Mr. Strayhorn says. People talk about the importance of diversity and try to use inclusive language. "It’s taken for granted that we would not want to act in ways or talk in ways and certainly not make decisions that can be perceived as racist, sexist, homophobic," he says. "We, on average, work to remove any of the barriers that get in the way of people being successful."

But the world outside of higher education doesn’t share the same concerns, he says. "The larger public doesn’t necessarily think this way, isn’t always conscious of the ways in which language can be exclusionary and create divisions." And "I don’t think the greater public is as bothered by some of these divisions."

Within these flagship bubbles, students like Mr. Uri can find camaraderie. Students like Adam Steinhilber experience frustration.

Mr. Steinhilber, a senior studying political science who identifies as a conservative, had seen the maps and knew Lawrence would be different from his hometown, a suburb of Kansas City.

For him there’s not just one moment that highlights the difference in the political climate between where he is from and where he goes to college. Rather, it’s a collection of moments.

"Whether it be the continual presence of protests in the center of campus or whether it be the pro-Trump chalkings that you can tell had water thrown on them, it just continually makes you realize that this is so different from the rest of Kansas, politically," says Mr. Steinhilber, who is president of the campus chapter of the College Republicans.

The group did not officially endorse a candidate in the presidential election, staying out of the controversy over Mr. Trump. Instead it worked on the local level.
When he got involved in the group, in his freshman year, it was on "life support," he says, with few meetings and only a handful of members. Over the next three years, he and a group of friends worked to build it up to about 50 members now.

"We really did feel that there was a need for a place for Republicans and conservative students on campus," he says. "Last year we were able to revive the organization and really make it into a more permanent presence on campus, which I think is sorely needed."

**Kansas Board of Regents**

At the U. of Kansas, says Stephonn Alcorn, student-body president, he has met people from around the world. Still, only 4 percent of the students there are black.

On another side of the political spectrum is Stephonn Alcorn, president of the student body, who sees the liberalism of Lawrence as a benefit.

The relative diversity of the campus, where 40 percent of the students come from outside the state, has given him an opportunity to meet people from around the world and hear different perspectives, he says. He’s found the campus to be "a marketplace of ideas" rather than a homogeneous bubble.

Mr. Alcorn comes from Gardner, a southern suburb of Kansas City. He moved there with his mother, who immigrated from Jamaica, when he was 9. Leaving Gardner for college was a chance to experience the world, he says.

Still, only 4 percent of the students at Kansas are, like Mr. Alcorn, black. Last year black students sought to form a separate multicultural student government, but the chancellor [vetoed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Veto) the $2 student-fee increase that would have financed the effort.

As student-body president, Mr. Alcorn tries to see that all students feel safe on campus since Election Day. For him, both the color of his skin and whom he represents are on his mind.

He says he feels a responsibility to give a voice to those who don’t have one. "I know I’m helping shape this place for the better," he says.

Clarence Lang doesn’t buy into the bubble conversation. Mr. Lang, chair of the department of African and African-American studies, wants to complicate the thinking about the liberalism of college towns. They are not utopias where everyone gets along in harmony, he says.
A graduate of the University of Missouri at Columbia, he’s taught at Kansas since 2011. Before that he was at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

College towns typically grapple with inequality, says Clarence Lang, chair of the department of African and African-American studies at the U. of Kansas. People can grow up near a university and feel that it isn’t available to them.

College towns typically grapple with inequality, Mr. Lang says. People can grow up in the shadow of a university and feel that it isn’t available to them. To Mr. Lang, Lawrence’s liberalism is more a matter of self-regard, which can mask systemic problems. It breeds political complacency.

The self-regard also clashes with actual experience.

Before the 2016 election, a local middle-school teacher, who is white, was suspended after making racist comments in class, reported the Lawrence Journal-World. The local chapter of Black Lives Matter and the NAACP have criticized the school district’s handling of the investigation and said it was protecting the teacher, who has resigned.

"If he was black and it was the other way around, it would’ve been learned that he was out the door immediately," one parent said at a December meeting of the school board. Parents and other residents disrupted the meeting to demand answers from the board.

Mr. Lang says the community seemed surprised by the grievances of people of color. While racism in Lawrence might not be as bad as in other parts of Kansas, he says, it still exists there.

"There’s not that many people of color in the town, so people can think they are liberal," he says. "People can lull themselves into thinking it’s OK." About 85 percent of the county’s residents are white. Sixty-nine percent of the university’s students are.

Mr. Lang wants to disrupt the notion that Lawrence is a liberal bubble. Such a mind-set doesn’t help the city or the university’s relationship with people in the state, he says.
University officials want to do more to connect with all of Kansas, to get past the perception that the campus is an island of liberalism and to take their work and their message to the people.

That’s what Carl Lejuez did last summer. Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, he drove 1,000 miles of Kansas roads as part of the Rock Chalk Roadshow, an annual tour put on by the admissions office.

The university, he says, needs to share the message that it’s for all students.

“There's not that many people of color in the town, so people can think they are liberal. People can lull themselves into thinking it's OK.”

Political differences between Lawrence and the rest of the state weren’t among the concerns he heard from parents and students, he says. Rather, many told him they were worried about the size of the campus. With about 28,000 students, the university’s population dwarfs those of the towns on much of the dean’s tour. He lets them know that the university is student-centered, that students can get to know their professors, and that through participation in extracurricular activities, students can make the campus seem smaller.

University officials point out that its reach extends beyond eastern Kansas in concrete ways, too, through training institutes, health-care services, and other programs.

And even though students like Mr. Alcorn do leave the state, plenty of others stay. On the tour, Mr. Lejuez met many who want to bring a university education back to their communities.

Yes, there are challenges, the dean says. The roadshow is a once-a-year event, and the university’s location, on the eastern side of Kansas, makes it more difficult to be present, consistently, throughout the state. "It makes it more challenging to show how much we care," he says. "I will tell you we do a lot, but it is a challenge given the location."

Mr. Uri’s drive to the university is about 175 miles from home.

His sentiments toward Concordia have "ebbed and flowed" since he’s been at college, he says. At first he was glad to get away and didn’t see much value in where he came from. In Lawrence he started working for a community-service
organization and listened to conversations about social justice. He realized "just how terrible some of the overtly racist comments were by my high-school teachers, and how growing up in such a homogenous setting really skews social views." Only one person of color was in his high-school graduating class of about 100.

Now he’s recalibrating again. He’s come to have a better understanding about people in his hometown and places like it. He studied communities in developing countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia in his sociology courses and saw parallels between them and those in rural Kansas. Both are concerned about being left out of broad policy conversations.

"As I’ve come to understand the more political nature of what’s going on, I’ve come to better understand why people maybe have the reactions that they do," he says. "Particularly in the last election, regarding the fear of white conservatives in central Kansas of being left out of political processes — not necessarily grounded in discriminatory views, but more just being concerned about voices being heard."

After the election, much was made of the divide between white voters in terms of higher education. Two-thirds of those without a college degree backed Mr. Trump, while 28 percent backed Hillary Clinton.

With about 28,000 students, the university's population dwarfs those of the towns on much of the dean's tour.

Mr. Uri identifies with white voters on both sides of the political, educational, and geographical divides. Now he feels a sense of responsibility to bridge those gaps.

How to do that?

He would like lines of communication more open between his university and the state as a whole. He hopes the election results will spur more thought about how Lawrence could improve that communication.

And Mr. Uri will try to engage better with his hometown.

"The election shows more than ever just how much communication has broken down," he says. "Like Hillary Clinton said in her concession speech, the divisions in our country are much larger than we thought they were."

A version of this article appeared in the January 20, 2017 issue.
Lincoln University in Missouri made headlines last year for shuttering its history department against the advice of a faculty committee. Now Lincoln has changed its financial exigency policy in ways that would make it much easier to lay off tenured faculty members. Financial exigency -- defined by the American Association of University Professors as a dire, institutionwide crisis -- is one of the few ways AAUP policy says that professors in good standing may lose their jobs. Most institutions have adopted that policy, and those that don’t risk possible censure by the AAUP.

Lincoln has changed its rules to specify that financial exigency may be declared not only at the university level, but also “for specific colleges, schools, departments or programs.” Faculty members with the shortest term of service now also “will generally,” not definitively, be terminated before those with longer periods of service.

A spokesperson for Lincoln did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Hans-Joerg Tiede, associate secretary for tenure, academic freedom and governance at AAUP, called the university's new policy a “significant departure from our standards” and reiterated that the association defines financial exigency
as “a severe financial crisis that fundamentally compromises the academic integrity of the institution as a whole and that cannot be alleviated by less drastic means.”