As Choi leads system, MU deals with enrollment drop

By: Lucas Geisler

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri is looking to different parts of the country for recruitment, as dropping enrollment and state cuts continue to take a toll.

Dr. Mun Choi takes over the four-campus UM System Wednesday in the midst of declining state appropriations, but improving credit rating. The firm Standard & Poor's upgraded the system's credit rating to stable Wednesday for "ongoing strong operating performance, fundraising, and financial profile compared with peers."

The rating firm mentioned the drop in enrollment at its Columbia campus, but expected "modest enrollment growth" across the state.

Interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley said he expected Choi to be a leader that understood the struggles people working in higher education faced. Choi held several high-level positions at the University of Connecticut before coming to Missouri, including dean of the school of engineering and then provost.

"If you haven't lived all those experiences and those 80-hour weeks, it's hard to learn it," Foley told ABC 17 News.

Foley predicted the future of the school would look more diverse in its students and staff, but would come with some service cuts. The school still must decide how it plans to accommodate tens of millions of dollars in state withholdings by the end of the fiscal year, June 30. Higher education also saw a significant decrease in state funding in Gov. Eric Greitens' proposed FY 2018 budget. Foley said administrators are going through every financial record to find money to make it to the end of June, and are in the process of consulting with campus leaders on how to handle next year's budget.

"We have to make some difficult decisions about some things that we will no longer do," Foley said. "The people of Missouri need to know that we cannot do all the things we've done before with the kinds of revenue that we have now."
No decisions on cuts have been made yet, but Foley said any of them will be "data-driven." Others around campus have said they are ready for tough cuts to be made, but want them based on information like productivity, and their ability to maintain the school's core values.

Foley said by making the tough decisions to hold spending flat, marginal revenue that might come in could go back into investing the MU’s employees.

"No one ever told them that they took a vow of poverty to work for the University of Missouri, but they might as well have," Foley said. "[Revenues] need to go back into our infrastructure. We have $740 million and rising in deferred maintenance and repair. That’s unsustainable. And that marginal revenue needs to help us help students of the greatest need."

Since the protests that took national headlines in 2015, enrollment on campus dropped considerably. The school started in Fall 2015 with 35,448 students, the highest mark in five years. MU now has 31,010 students, its lowest point since Spring 2011.

Students tuition have become a crucial part of MU’s budget, Foley said. Leaving out programs like MU Health and the athletics department, tuition covers about 80% of the $700 million budget dedicated to academic work. Enrollment classes of around 4,500 may become the new normal, Foley said, after several years of record-breaking freshman classes.

To accommodate, the school has turned its attention to different parts of the country to recruit prospective students, while also increasing its presence in Missouri. The school hired four new full-time recruiters, bringing its total to 20. MU News Bureau head Christian Basi said nine of those recruiters work in Columbia and travel around the state, while recruiters work full-time in Kansas City and St. Louis each. Nine more work around the country. Basi said the school has recently turned its attention to places in the southeast, like Atlanta and Washington, D.C., where high school graduation rates are climbing.

But MU’s 20 recruiters is behind a couple of its competitors. The University of Florida added two full-time recruiters this year for a total of 26. The University of Illinois hires 30 recruiters, with regional staff working in Boston and Indianapolis.

Foley said he did not believe MU was being outdone on the recruitment trail. The move to the Southeastern Conference in athletics came at an "amazing" time because of the rising rates of high school graduation in places like Texas and Florida.

"We are getting our feet underneath us," Foley said. "We will be on the television screens of elementary school students and high school students for the next decade in the Southeastern Conference. We will come to be known as an SEC school."

Foley said both the budget limitations and recruitment efforts allow the school a chance to re-evaluate what it's good at providing, and what its message is for prospective students. With a focus on its research facilities and benefit to those across the state through its extension program, Foley said he hoped for a turnaround in enrollment.
Standard & Poor's restores the University of Missouri System's outlook to stable
By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch

ST. LOUIS • The University of Missouri System's AA+ credit rating has been restored to an outlook of stable, more than a year after upheaval in leadership triggered a downgrade.

In February 2016, Standard & Poor's lowered the outlook to negative. The bond-rating company made the move a few months after protests on the Columbia campus captured national headlines and led to two top leaders resigning.

Some feared the negative outlook would later trigger a decline in the overall credit rating, but that never materialized.

"The revised outlook reflects the system's recent and expected ongoing strong operating performance, fundraising, and financial profile compared with peers," S&P analyst Ashley Ramchandani said Wednesday in a statement.

She said the outlook is good "despite some softening of enrollment at its Columbia campus, presidential turnover, and prolonged negative media coverage."

Wednesday marks the first day for UM System president Mun Choi, and his leadership gives the credit agency hope, according to their statement.

“S&P’s affirmation accurately reflects the hard work of our campuses and health system to serve the citizens of Missouri through research, teaching and outreach and is welcome news,” Choi said. “My predecessor, Interim President Michael Middleton, and the Board of Curators deserve much credit as their leadership secured the stability of the UM System and enabled the university
to maintain its solid financial footing. We plan to build on this momentum to create a stronger and more resilient institution.”

MARCH 1, 2017 6:25 PM

University of Missouri System reclaims stable financial outlook rating from S&P

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
mdwilliams@kcstar.com

University of Missouri System officials are happy about getting good marks from Standard & Poor’s Global Ratings regarding the university’s financial future.

The credit rating service on Wednesday announced the four-campus system’s AA+ credit rating and returned the outlook for its overall credit rating to “stable.”

S&P’s opinion came after analysts held in-depth briefings with university leaders about the future of the institution. The report also affirmed a stable outlook rating for the system from Moody’s Investors Service last July.

Last year at this time, S&P issued a poor rating for the UM System. It was based primarily, university officials said, on the turmoil that followed racially fueled student protests in November 2015 — the resignations of the system president and the chancellor of the flagship campus, an enrollment drop, and threatened funding cuts.

The AA+ rating is the second-highest long-term credit rating given out to institutions by S&P.

“Moving from negative to stable is a huge victory,” said Kelly Wiemann, a university system spokeswoman.
A UM System statement said the rating from S&P and Moody’s “keeps the UM System among an elite group of aspirant institutions.” Less than 10 percent of the public institutions rated fall within both rating services’ top two rating categories.

Although the Columbia campus has recently seen a dip in enrollment, the S&P report pointed to — among other things — historically stable-to-growing enrollment across all four campus as a plus toward its stable rating.

“S&P’s affirmation accurately reflects the hard work of our campuses and health system to serve the citizens of Missouri through research, teaching and outreach and is welcome news,” said UM System President Mun Choi.

Choi credited the former interim system president, Mike Middleton, and the board of curators for securing the stability of the university and enabling it “to maintain its solid financial footing.”
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
UM System outlook turns
stable, retains AA+ credit rating

Standard & Poor’s Global Ratings is maintaining the University of Missouri System’s AA+ credit rating and has revised the outlook for the system’s overall credit rating to stable from the negative outlook it placed on the system’s debt last year.

“The revised outlook reflects the system’s recent and expected ongoing strong operating performance, fundraising and financial profile compared with peers despite some softening of enrollment at its Columbia campus, presidential turnover and prolonged negative media coverage,” the S&P report reads. “We believe the system will experience a return to modest enrollment growth in the future and a steady financial profile and will develop a focused strategic plan under the guidance of its incoming president that will strengthen its position over time.”

A news release from the UM System noted that the AA+ rating is the second highest long-term credit rating an institution can receive from S&P. Last year, the system’s outlook was changed to negative after the resignations of UM Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and UM System President Tim Wolfe.

At the time, UM system officials said the change was related more to debt the university had assumed to fund investments in buildings and infrastructure.

“S&P’s affirmation accurately reflects the hard work of our campuses and health system to serve the citizens of Missouri through research, teaching and outreach is welcome news,” UM System President Mun Choi said in the news release. “My predecessor, Interim President Mike Middleton, and the Board of Curators deserve much credit as their leadership secured the stability of the UM System and enabled the university to maintain its solid financial footing.”
Student attends diversity program prior to getting arrested for anti-Semitic comments

New students at Mizzou must attend lecture


COLUMBIA, Mo. - Harassment charges have not been filed, as of Wednesday, for two Mizzou students who were arrested for allegedly making anti-Semitic comments toward another student Tuesday.

Noah Rogers, a sophomore, and Erich Eastman, a freshman, are both music majors at Mizzou.

MU Police say the two allegedly made racial remarks verbally, and on a written note, about and toward another student.

A diversity and inclusion training lecture was required of all new undergraduate students at Mizzou, starting in January 2016, according to a statement from previous Chancellor Bowin Loften.

Eastman was required to attend; otherwise he wouldn't be able to sign up for his second semester.

The program is called Citizenship at Mizzou and it includes brief faculty presentations, a music performance by students and a discussion of global and national identity, tying in with Mizzou's identity.

Some freshmen at Mizzou said they barely remembered attending the seminar and could not give many specifics of what they were exposed to during the two-hour lecture.

Tim Schwall, a freshman at Mizzou, said some of the stories that were told were interesting, but he felt like he didn't learn anything new about diversity.

"I don't think it's that impactful. I feel like if you are changing people's minds, it needs to be like a class, like a full semester class. I don't think an hour or so lecture will make a difference," Schwall said.
Other freshmen students said it was hard to remember anything from the program because of timing. Most of the times offered were during the week students moved into residency halls, had Greek rush or were trying to get used to a new place.

**Suing for discrimination at work gets harder under measure OK'd by Missouri Senate**

BY AUSTIN HUGUELET ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, Mar 1, 2017

JEFFERSON CITY • After more than 12 hours of debate and filibuster that stretched into the early morning Wednesday, Missouri senators reached a compromise on a proposal that would make it harder for Missourians to sue for workplace discrimination.

Under a measure given initial approval after midnight, people would have to prove their race, sex or other protected status actually motivated their boss or colleague to mistreat them to win cases like wrongful termination suits.

Currently, they need only prove their status was a "contributing factor" to prevail in court.

For example, if a black plaintiff was fired from a job because of tardiness, but white employees routinely showed up late and weren't fired, the black employee could contend that race "contributed" to the boss's decision.

If the new measure is approved and signed into law, such employees will need to meet a higher standard — they would have to show that race was a "motivating" factor, rather than just a contributing factor.
Farmington Republican Sen. Gary Romine's original offer would have required plaintiffs to prove their protected status was the sole reason causing their mistreatment firing suits, something Democrats simply couldn't abide.

Republicans and business groups presented the measure as an antidote for judicial overreach that has unfairly favored plaintiffs and extorted largely innocent companies. Romine said he was just trying to bring Missouri in line with federal law.

But Democrats said the burden of proof he proposed would effectively bar discrimination victims from their day in court.

Bigoted bosses could evade any accusation of discrimination by claiming an employee coming in late was the "motivating factor" for a firing, Sen. Jill Schupp, D-Creve Coeur, said in initial discussion Monday night.

"This bill is a direct assault on every black person and every woman in this state," added Sen. Kiki Curls, D-Kansas City, who is black. "I feel personally attacked, I really do."

Progressive groups echoed those concerns in a news conference Tuesday morning.

"The best way to stop discrimination lawsuits is to stop discriminating," Empower Missouri executive director Jeanette Mott Oxford said.

State NAACP President Rod Chapel also railed against the House version of the bill, carried by Rep. Kevin Austin, R-Springfield. Pineville Republican Rep. Bill Lant cut Chapel's mic off during testimony on the bill last month, prompting accusations of blatant racism and an apology by Speaker Todd Richardson the next day.

Schupp tried for a moral victory with an amendment adding gender identity and sexual orientation to the list of statuses protected by the by the Missouri Human Rights Act.

But the measure, which passed the chamber on the final day of the 2013 session, failed on a 20-10 vote Wednesday morning.
In the end, Republicans were only willing to move so far.

**Romine agreed to eliminate a contentious provision shielding state entities, like the University of Missouri System or prisons under legislative investigation for sexual harassment claims, from punitive damages. He even raised the caps the bill imposed on payouts from the biggest companies.**

But Democrats failed to snuff out a ban on suing other employees, meaning suits would have to be filed against companies, and remained ardently opposed.

Former Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, vetoed similar legislation in 2011 and 2012.

But Republican Gov. Eric Greitens has prioritized making Missouri courts friendlier to business.

"Our judicial system is broken," he said in his State of the State address last month, "and the trial lawyers who have broken it, well, their time is up."

Romine's measure is one of dozens of proposals catering to Greitens' wishes this session.

It's also one that could cater to his bottom line.

The Post-Dispatch reported last month that Romine's rent-to-own furniture chain has been embroiled in a racial discrimination lawsuit for the past two years.

The suit alleges that a supervisor at the chain's Sikeston store used racial slurs against a black account manager and that Romine declined to address complaints.

Romine dismissed the implication of self-dealing, pointing out that he first filed the legislation in December 2014, four months before his company was sued.

Debate stayed largely germane to Schupp's amendment until around 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, when Democratic senators Jacob Hummel of St. Louis and John Rizzo of Kansas City left the floor.
Republican Senators Will Kraus of Lee's Summit and Caleb Rowden of Columbia discussed Facebook Live logistics and how fast Rowden drives home every night.

Kansas City Senators Jason Holsman, a Democrat, and Ryan Silvey, a Republican, couched Big Lebowski jokes between discussions of the Kansas City Royals, term limits and trout fishing.

Senators returned their seats around 2 a.m. to vote on the compromise.

The measure, Senate Bill 43, requires House approval and the governor's signature before becoming law.

**THE KANSAS CITY STAR.**

**Oops! UMKC’s failure to drop old free-speech policy from website draws ire from watchdog**

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

*mdwilliams@kcstar.com*

FIRE, The Foundation for Individual Rights in Education took the University of Missouri-Kansas City to task because it appeared the school was blocking students’ spontaneous free speech.

One problem: When asked about the restrictive policy FIRE had highlighted, UMKC officials said it hadn’t been the school’s policy since 2015. But the policy had inadvertently been left in the university’s student handbook.

John Martellaro, UMKC spokesman, said Tuesday that “some confusion may exist because we discovered today that an older web page with the discontinued policy that should have been deleted is still live. We are working to fix that problem.”

FIRE is a nearly 20-year-old nonprofit watchdog group based in Philadelphia and focused on civil liberties at colleges and universities.
Officials at FIRE said the old UMKC policy was on the university website as of Monday, when they checked and rated the school on free speech. FIRE gave UMKC its lowest grade on the allowance of free speech on campus.

That rating was based on UMKC’s outdated policy, which said all campus demonstrations and rallies had to be registered with the university at least 10 working days in advance.

FIRE said that policy presented an “extreme waiting period,” and would make “spontaneous expressive activities on campus impossible.”

More common, but not ideal, FIRE says, is for universities and colleges to require a two- or three-day advance notification about a planned student demonstration or rally.

Under its new policy, based on the Missouri Campus Free Expression Act signed into law in 2015, UMKC has no wait time for demonstrations and students do not have to register a rally or protest in advance with the university.

“Students must be able to engage in demonstrations and other types of expression in response to unfolding events both on campus and in the world around them,” said Samantha Harris, vice president of policy research at FIRE. “We would consider a waiting period of any length to be troubling for this reason...”

The University of Missouri campus in Columbia also does not require students to wait and register protests with the university administration, said Christian Basi, an MU spokesman. Kansas State University also said it does not have a wait time or registration requirement. The University of Kansas did not respond to an email asking about its policy.

The UMKC policy was selected from the FIRE database of roughly 450 colleges and university policies, and highlighted as one that needs attention, Harris said. FIRE has been drawing attention to policies that restrict free speech for about a decade.

About half the universities marked by FIRE as having restrictive or unconstitutional free speech policies ultimately have revised their policy to make it right, Harris said.

As for UMKC, Harris said, “I’m glad it was an outdated policy and that they will be taking it down. This is a great resolution.” She said that as soon as UMKC makes the change, FIRE will change their rating.
Missouri college students allegedly taunted Jewish classmate with anti-Semitic notes for months

Erich Eastman and Noah Rogers are accused of harassing a Jewish student for months.

By Chris Sommerfeldt

New York Daily News

Updated: Thursday, March 2, 2017, 6:29 AM

Two University of Missouri students were arrested on Monday after police learned that they had allegedly been harassing a Jewish classmate for months, officials said.

Erich Eastman, 18, and Noah Rogers, 19, were slammed with harassment charges after the alleged victim told cops the duo had regularly been taunting him with anti-Semitic notes and comments since August, according to the Columbia Daily Tribune.

Eastman and Rogers were booked at the Boone County jail, but later released after posting $1,500 each in bonds.

Interim university chancellor Hank Foley told the campus community in a statement that the alleged harassment would "not be tolerated."

"This behavior is abhorrent and antithetical to our core value of respect," Foley wrote. "It simply will not be tolerated."
Rogers and Eastman are music majors at the Missouri college, according to their Facebook profiles. Both profiles feature numerous photos of the two teens singing and playing various instruments.

The Boone County Prosecutor's Office will investigate the case. The university's civil rights office will also take part in the investigation and the two suspects could face expulsion.

"Please know we remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that Mizzou is a welcoming and safe campus," Foley said, using a popular nickname for the college.

The alleged on-campus anti-Semitism comes amid reports of numerous bomb threats against Jewish community centers across the country.

President Trump has been blasted for supposedly not addressing the spike in anti-Semitic attacks. On Monday, Trump reportedly suggested that the uptick is "sometimes" caused by Jews who try and "make others look bad."

The President backed off that apparent claim during his first speech before Congress on Tuesday night, telling the joint session that the country "stands united in condemning hate and evil in all its forms."

Two MU students accused of harassing Jewish student with anti-Semitic notes

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
mdwilliams@kcstar.com

Two University of Missouri students are facing harassment charges in connection with the intimidation of another student with anti-Semitic comments and notes.

University police on Monday arrested Erich J. Eastman 18, and Noah B. Rogers, 19. Both are from Columbia.
They were held in the Boone County jail and later released, each on $1,500 bond, according to jail records.

Police said they were called to McDavid Hall on the MU campus in Columbia on Monday and told by a student that he had been harassed by the two students since August.

MU Police Department Maj. Brian Weimer said the harassed student, who is Jewish, said that at various times over the last six months, he received anti-Semitic notes and was the target of anti-Semitic comments from two students.

Weimer said a police investigation led officers to Eastman and Rogers.

In an email message to the campus community, MU’s interim chancellor, Hank Foley, denounced the accused students’ behavior.

“This behavior is abhorrent and antithetical to our core value of respect,” Foley said. “It simply will not be tolerated.”

He thanked campus police for “quick work” and said the criminal case is now in the hands of the Boone County Prosecutor’s Office. Information is being shared with the university’s Office for Civil Rights and Title IX.

Foley said the two students who were arrested could be expelled from the university.

**UPDATE: Two MU students arrested on suspicion of anti-Semitic harassment**

MICHAEL CONNOLLY, Feb 28, 2017 Updated 16 hrs ago

**Updated Information:**
This story has been updated to include comments from the students’ fraternity.

COLUMBIA — Two MU students were arrested Monday night on suspicion of using anti-Semitic messages to harass a Jewish student at McDavid Hall, MU police said.
Erich J. Eastman, 18, and Noah B. Rogers, 19, were both held on $1,500 bond at the Boone County Jail on suspicion of first-degree harassment, according to online records. They were both released after posting bond.

MU Police Maj. Brian Weimer said he could not give any more specific information about the harassment.

Both students were members of the Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia music fraternity at MU. On Wednesday, the fraternity released a statement condemning the actions of the students.

"The chapter is shocked by the allegations made against these two men — one a full, active member and the other probationary — and is actively pursuing disciplinary measures," the statement read. "We would like to assure the public that this matter came to our attention after the two members in question were already taken into police custody."

The statement said the Zeta chapter has removed the probationary member and begun the process of suspending the other. It is considering expulsion from the fraternity as the situation develops.

Both students could face disciplinary action and expulsion from MU, according to an email Tuesday from Interim Chancellor Hank Foley.

The criminal case is being handled by the Boone County Prosecutor's Office, which will share information with MU's Office for Civil Rights and Title IX, according to the email.

"This behavior is abhorrent and antithetical to our core value of respect," Foley said in the email. "It simply will not be tolerated."
In wake of threats on Jewish communities, victim of anti-Semitism aims to root out hate

BY MAX LONDBERG
jlondberg@kcstar.com

In the aftermath of threats and vandalism against the Jewish community, an Overland Park victim of anti-Semitism is continuing her work in the area to connect with community members of all backgrounds to defuse hate-filled acts.

“It’s important we do hear their story so we understand where their ignorance and hate come from,” said Mindy Corporon of Overland Park.

Corporon lost her son and father to anti-Semitism, after F. Glenn Miller Jr. targeted the Jewish community in a shooting spree on April 13, 2014.

“A white supremacist murdered my family,” she said, “so I speak from experience that there’s a group of people out there that want to kill Jews.”

Bomb threats caused the evacuation of Jewish organizations in at least 12 different states on Monday, the latest in a rash of similar incidents over the last two months.

Corporon drew a parallel to the triple shooting in Olathe at Austins Bar & Grill, in which Adam Purinton allegedly shot to death Srinivas Kuchibhotla, who was originally from India, and injured two others, after he reportedly told two men to get out his country. Purinton is charged with first-degree murder and the FBI is investigating the shooting as a hate crime.

“It sounds like he wanted to kill brown people or those of a different color or nationality than him,” Corporon said.

Reports of anti-Semitic threats were called into Jewish community centers and schools in states including New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Alabama, Michigan, Delaware, Indiana and Pennsylvania.
“Anti-Semitism of this nature should not and must not be allowed to endure in our communities,” said the Jewish Community Center Association in response to Monday’s threats. “The Justice Department, Homeland Security, the FBI, and the White House, alongside Congress and local officials, must speak out — and speak out forcefully — against this scourge of anti-Semitism impacting communities across the country.”

In Columbia, two University of Missouri students, Erich J. Eastman, 18, and Noah B. Rogers, 19, face harassment charges after allegedly sending anti-Semitic notes to a fellow Jewish student over a course of six months.

Corporon said white supremacists and other hate groups may be exploiting President Donald Trump’s campaign slogan, “Make America Great Again,” to pursue their ignorant ideology.

“It seems to me that different groups of people are interpreting (the slogan) their own way, and there is a faction of people who are angry and hateful and think that a whole faith should not exist,” Corporon said.

Miller was found guilty of capital murder after he targeted Jewish people with a shotgun outside the Jewish Community Center and Village Shalom care center in Overland Park. Miller killed three people, Corporon’s father and son — William Corporon, 69, and Reat Underwood, 14 — and Terri LaManno, 53.

On Tuesday, Trump did denounce anti-Semitism and the recent threats against Jewish people, calling them “painful reminders” of lingering prejudice in America. The remarks, made at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, marked the first time he directly addressed increasing incidents of anti-Semitism.

According to the Anti-Defamation League, around 90 threats have been made so far this year to Jewish institutions across the country. ADL said there were at least 20 threats on Monday.

“While this latest round of bomb threats to Jewish Community Centers and day schools across the country again appears to not be credible, we are nonetheless urging all Jewish institutions to review their procedures,” said ADL chief executive Jonathan A. Greenblatt.

The Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City, based in Overland Park, released a statement about the threats faced by the Jewish community around the country.

“Although we did not receive a threat here in Kansas City, our thoughts are with each of the organizations impacted by these latest threats,” the release stated. “We remain vigilant and will continue to work with local and national law enforcement agencies to ensure proper safety protocols are in place. The safety of our members and guests is always our top priority.”
Following the loss of her son and father, Corporon helped found the Faith Always Wins Foundation and the SevenDays Ripple event, a weeklong series of activities to commemorate the victims of the 2014 shooting spree outside the Jewish Community Center and Village Shalom, and to promote understanding and acceptance among different groups.

The SevenDays activities, which will take place next month, begin with a “Day of Love” on April 18. A Christian minister, Muslim imam and Jewish rabbi will together speak about the similarities within their respective religions. The event begins at 7 p.m. at the Congregation B’nai Jehudah.

“We’re not born with hate,” Corporon said. “We’re born needing to be loved and wanting to be loved and nurtured, and we’re taught hate by others.”

Other activities planned for the SevenDays Ripple event include the “Faith, Love & Song” competition, which will reward a $5,000 scholarship to the winning songwriters who compose lyrics that encourage and inspire acceptance. Song winners will be announced during a special evening program April 20.

A “Peace Walk” will take place April 24, embarking from Union Station, and a youth interfaith workshop on April 24 will be held at Cleveland University in Overland Park.

All events require registration, Corporon said, and some are free. To learn more about the activities planned, visit GiveSevenDays.org.

"Not in our United States"; Jewish community reacts to anti-Semitism
COLUMBIA- Columbia's Jewish community feels "concerned" and "saddened" after recent vandalism to a Jewish cemetery in St. Louis left more than 100 headstones damaged. This coincides with multiple bomb threats and a local incident in which two students were accused of harassing a Jewish community member with anti-Semitic messages.

According to the Jewish Community Center Association, there have been at least 100 incidents of bomb threats made against Jewish community centers and schools this year.

"All it takes is one individual with wicked intentions," Congregation Beth Shalom Rabbi Yossi Feintuch said.

Congregation Beth Shalom is a reform Jewish synagogue in Columbia. Feintuch said some of its members were scared after someone attacked Chesed Shel Emeth Cemetery in University City, a St. Louis suburb. The vandal or vandals toppled dozens of headstones over the weekend of Feb. 17.

"There were a few members here who were concerned that such a violent attack on a Jewish cemetery might spill over and target also the Jewish section in the Columbia cemetery," Feintuch said.

A Beth Shalom board member contacted a local cemetery to see if anything was "out of the ordinary". The cemetery staff assured the board member nothing was damaged.

Despite worry, Feintuch said, he believes an incident like this won't occur in Columbia because of the outpouring of support at the St. Louis cemetery's cleanup.

"The very presence of Vice President Pence and Governor Greitens accompanied by hundreds of people," Feintuch said, "Amongst them not only Jews, but Christians and I'm told other religions, say Muslims as well, who gathered together to say 'Not in our state. Not in our United States'."

**Mizzou Hillel is a Jewish organization on MU's campus. Jeanne Snodgrass, the executive director, said threats of violence is an ongoing issue.**

"It just brings home how important it is to continue doing the work that gets done as far as education to the community," Snodgrass said.

She said the problem reaches far beyond the Jewish community.

"It's not just about Jews and Jewish groups but also about other minority groups and anyone that might be perceived as 'other'," she said. "A lot of it stems from ignorance and sometimes hate towards a broader range of groups."

Snodgrass said Mizzou Hillel takes the appropriate safety precautions when it comes to protecting its students and has not been the target of any violence or threats.
David Posner, director of strategic performance at Jewish Community Center Association of North America, said in a statement, “Actions speak louder than words. Members of our community must see swift and concerted action from federal officials to identify and capture the perpetrator or perpetrators who are trying to instill anxiety and fear in our communities.”

Because of the national hate crimes, Feintuch said, Congregation Beth Shalom sometimes increases security. He said the congregation has to always be alert when gathering in large numbers.

Congregation President Dan Edidin sent KOMU 8 News the following statement.

"We certainly are disturbed and saddened by the vandalism of Jewish graves in St Louis. As Jews, we live with a history of persecution and are extremely sensitive to attacks on people of any faith. Fortunately, here in Columbia our small Jewish community has not been the target of any threats or violence.'"

Feintuch said Congregation Beth Shalom has not experienced any anti-Semitic incidents, but he encouraged people to continue to support one another.

"All that it takes for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing about it," Feintuch said.

**Academy of Science generates list of 2017 'outstanding' honorees**

By Joe Holleman St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 17 hrs ago

*Generated from News Bureau direct pitch to reporters.*

Academy of Science St. Louis has announced its "Outstanding Scientists of 2017," who will be given out at a gala April 6 at the Chase Park Plaza.

The lifetime achievement award will be given to Stephen M. Beverley, head of the molecular microbiology department at Washington University School of Medicine.
The lifetime award is named in honor of longtime Missouri Botanical Garden director Peter H. Raven.

Raven’s successor, Peter Wyse Jackson, will be given the science leadership award at the ceremony.

Other awards to be bestowed at a gala will go to: Dr. Philip O. Alderson, Saint Louis University School of Medicine; Sharon L. Deem, St. Louis Zoo veterinarian; Ebenezer Satyaraj, Nestlé Purina; Jeremy Taylor, University of Missouri Columbia; Tom H. Adams, Monsanto Co.; Robert Standley, SunEdison Semiconductor; Edward Spitznagel, Washington University; Liviu Mirica, Washington University; Kater Murch, Washington University; and David Westenberg of Missouri University of Science and Technology.

University police ask for help identifying man seen near car theft location

Courtesy of University of Missouri Police Department

This surveillance image shows a man University of Missouri police want to question in connection with a stolen vehicle investigation.
University of Missouri police released Wednesday a surveillance image of a man who was in the area of a recent car theft, hoping the public can help identify him so investigators can speak with him.

The photo, which shows a balding white man who appears to be jogging in a hallway, was released Wednesday via email and on a page dedicated to requests for public help on the department’s website. MU police Maj. Brian Weimer said the page was set up recently after a website overhaul and is similar to efforts the department has made in the past to get information from the public.

The theft occurred on Feb. 11 in a parking garage at University Hospital. Weimer said no arrests have been made and the car has not been recovered. The man in the photo has not been deemed a suspect, Weimer said, but surveillance indicates he was in the area at the time and investigators are hoping he can offer information that might solve the crime.

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MU Police seek assistance in identifying man

MISSOURIAN STAFF, 19 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **MU Police are seeking the public's help in identifying a man caught on video surveillance as he runs down a hallway of an unidentified building.**

The man was in the area of a car theft the department is investigating, Maj. Brian Weimer said.

Police are looking to make contact with the man, according to a police news release.
People with information are asked to call the department at 882-7201 or Detective Kenrick Tucker at 884-4495.

MU police has two other requests for assistance, which can be found on their website.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

Back From the White House, Some HBCU Leaders Find Upset Students

NO MU MENTION, MISSOURI MENTIONED

By Alex Arriaga  March 2, 2017

On Tuesday morning, squarely in the middle of Howard University’s campus yard, a message spray-painted on the sidewalk in blue read, "Welcome to the Trump plantation. Overseer: Wayne A.I. Frederick." On academic buildings, in front of the student center, outside the freshman dorms, other comments had appeared: "Wayne Frederick doesn’t care about black people," and "Make Howard black again."

Mr. Frederick, president of Howard, and several other leaders of Historically Black Colleges and Universities had met with Trump administration officials and, briefly, with President Trump himself. Students at Howard and several other HBCUs were critical of the meetings, perceiving them as a sign of support and, in the case of the Oval Office event, a photo opportunity for the media-savvy Mr. Trump.

Allyson Carpenter, a senior and president of the Howard University Student Union, said in an interview that she was disappointed. On the 150th anniversary of Howard’s founding, she said, Trump’s administration hasn’t demonstrated an understanding of the value of HBCUs. Ms. Carpenter referenced a statement by the education secretary, Betsy DeVos, asserting that HBCUs are "real pioneers when it comes to school choice."

"How, after meeting with so many HBCU leaders, after meeting with Dr. Frederick weeks ago, how is it that she doesn’t even understand the purpose of an HBCU, the history of an HBCU?" Ms. Carpenter said. "What were you guys talking about?"
She expressed concern that the meetings with HBCU leaders were being used as a way to legitimize President Trump’s agenda for black outreach while not actually responding to the educational needs of black students or the economic-development needs of impoverished black neighborhoods.

Shaan Khan, a senior at Howard, said in an interview that opinions on campus were split. During Black History Month, he said, there tends to be a disingenuous tokenization of black issues. Still, he said, the spray-painted messages were blowing the situation out of proportion. "Students are really upset, think that he sold out, or are wondering if he really has the best interests of the school in mind," Mr. Khan said. "I think he can either be an activist or he can be a president, and I think he’s just being a president."

Mr. Khan said that it makes sense that Mr. Frederick would take a meeting with the administration whose funds keep the university running but that the Trump officials should be more direct in supporting HBCUs financially. "Blanket statements about cooperation and togetherness, that doesn’t really get the job done," Mr. Khan said, "It’s all about funding. That’s what most HBCUs lack."

Students at other HBCUs have registered similar displeasure. Marquise McGriff, a student at Lincoln University of Missouri, expressed his concerns in a piece for HBCU Digest. "Because of the sporadic nature of it all, many presidents were unable to conduct surveys and gather input from their schools and the communities they serve, furthering our uneasy feeling about such a meeting," Mr. McGriff wrote.

Mr. Frederick, among other HBCU presidents, did not respond to The Chronicle’s interview requests. But leaders of black colleges have defended their visits to the White House as an opportunity to advocate for themselves.

A Place at the Table

William R. Harvey, president of Hampton University, told a Chicago radio station that he’s been to the Oval Office during every U.S. presidency since he started at Hampton. "I believe that you need to be around the table trying to influence what your own interests are," he said.

The president of Dillard University, Walter M. Kimbrough, said in an interview on NPR’s "All Things Considered" that he wanted to advocate for investment in Pell Grants, since over 70 percent of HBCU students are supported by those funds. "I really was interested more in a conversation with the [Education Department] secretary because she’s new," he said. "She doesn’t really know higher education. She doesn’t know HBCUs. And so this is an opportunity to educate her."

Story continues.
JEFFERSON CITY — Two proposals that would increase transparency in public colleges and universities were debated Wednesday by members of the Missouri House.

House Bill 814 would require each department at public universities to post on its website the following information for each course offered:

• Course syllabus
• Reading list
• Attendance requirements
• Extra-credit opportunities
• Description of required assignments and projects

State Rep. Jason Chipman, R-Steelville, the sponsor of the bill, said course descriptions can be vague and don’t provide students an adequate amount of information before registering for a course.

"Kids need to know what they’re getting into before they sign up for a class," Chipman said.
Brian Sajko, vice president for enrollment management at Stephens College, said he grew up as "a poor boy" in the inner city who wouldn't have known how to seek out such information for himself. He said transparency is necessary for academic success.

"Any way you could make it clearer for people who aren’t part of the world of higher education, that’s really important,” Sajko said.

First-generation college students don’t know they can ask professors for information prior to the class, he said.

Michael Hafner, a registered lobbyist for the Missouri Century Foundation, said taxpayers have the right to know what professors are teaching in classes.

"They shouldn’t shield information from the public," said Hafner, whose organization works to advance free-market principles.

"We believe taxpayers have the right to know how their money is spent in public education. Simply providing course syllabi in a publicly accessible format can provide basic information to taxpayers and to the public at large."

Opponents of the bill argued that such a requirement is unnecessary. Paul Wagner, executive director of the Council on Public Higher Education in Missouri, said requiring public universities to provide this information "is another example of an unfunded mandate."

The estimated costs of the bill could range could possibly exceed $100,000, according to a fiscal note filed with the bill. Wagner also said it would continue to get more expensive for universities to update course information each year.

Wagner said the proposal could "stifle faculty members’ creativity." He argued that professors should have the ability to incorporate new information into their classes throughout the year and might feel locked in by a published syllabus.
Wagner also said this is the intellectual property of the professor and people could take the information and try to profit from it.

Another proposed bill, House Bill 832, would require public universities to be more transparent with the estimated cost for each degree program, including fees or expenses that aren’t included in tuition.

Chipman said it is difficult for students to find information about program fees online.

"Many of the students are surprised when they get their bills," he said. "I would like the schools to be a little bit more upfront about what these costs are going to be."

The bill would require universities to post data about the estimated salaries earned by those in different degree programs. The information would come from the federal Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics.

State Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Jackson, said posting salary information online could be misleading, because salaries are going to be different, depending on where someone lives.

Wagner said he agrees with the portion of the bill requiring universities to be more transparent about posting fees. However, he said requiring these institutions to post information about salaries isn’t possible right now because that data doesn’t exist.

Wagner said it would be difficult to link degree programs to earnings for various jobs.

"What are you going to do with a philosophy and ethics degree?" Wagner asked. "Well, you could be governor of Missouri."

Gov. Eric Greitens studied ethics and philosophy in college.

The House Higher Education Committee considered a separate bill last week that would stop public universities from requiring students to live on campus for more than one year. The University of Missouri does not, but some schools in the state have such a requirement.
"One year is more than enough to become acclimated with student life," Chipman said.

Requiring students to live on campus could be a financial burden, he said, adding that living costs at some universities could add up to $9,000 to the annual cost.

"It becomes very prohibited to even go to school because as a parent, if I’m footing the bill, my kid is going to live where I tell them," Chipman said.

Wagner said the University of Central Missouri changed its residence policy four years ago to begin requiring sophomores to live on campus.

"They switched to that requirement as part of an overall campus strategy to increase completion rates, get kids to the finish line quicker, and have a higher percentage of success," Wagner said.

Wagner said the university has seen a 14 percent increase in the number of students on track to graduate on time.

House committee looks at making universities post course content online

No MU Mention

JEFFERSON CITY - The House's Higher Education committee held a public hearing
Wednesday on House Bill 814, which if passed, would require course content at public colleges and universities to be posted online.

Bill sponsor Rep. Jason Chipman, R-Steelville, said the bill aims to increase transparency between students, parents and universities.

The bill would require university websites to include course syllabi, reading lists, attendance requirements, extra credit opportunities and required assignments descriptions for all courses listed in the course catalog.

Chipman said the requirement would help inform the public about what courses tax dollars are funding. He also said it will help students decide which courses to take.

"If I have a specific interest and I know a professor will teach to that interest, I will probably take that class," he said.

Chipman said knowing course content upfront could save students money.

Paul Wagner, who works as the executive director of the Council in Public Higher Education opposes the bill.

"It really inhibits the flexibility that faculty have to keep the content of their courses current and up to date," he said.

Wagner said competition between universities to find talented faculty also weighs into his opposition.

"They put a lot of work and talent into developing their syllabus," he said. "The courts have found that is their intellectual property and we believe it's important to protect that."

The bill is currently awaiting further action by committee chair, Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Cape Girardeau.
Columbia winters warming up

February 2017 breaks record

By Megan Favignano
Columbia Daily Tribune

February 2017 was the warmest on record for Columbia and this winter was the third warmest.

Mark Britt, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, said the average temperature for February was 45.9 degrees, which surpassed February 1910’s record of 37.8 degrees. The daily temperature passed 70 degrees on nine days last month.

Andrew Biggs, superintendent of the University of Missouri Bradford Research Center, said he also has been worried about the dryness this winter.

“We are behind on where we should be with rainfall and that can have some serious impacts throughout the growing season,” Biggs said.

Precipitation has been down this winter compared to past years.

With just 2.23 inches of precipitation recorded, this winter is the fifth driest on record for Columbia. Biggs said that without moisture in the soil, seeds don’t germinate and, if seeds don’t germinate, then farmers don’t have crops.

Bradford Research Center researches wastewater management, pest and weed control, alternative crops and other topics on its 501 acres. Biggs said the center has increased the frequency in which it waters plants in its hoop house because of the heat.

The average temperature for this winter, or the period December through February, was 37.8 degrees — making it the third warmest for Columbia, Britt said.

The warmest winter on record for the city is December 1890 through February 1891, when the season average reached 41 degrees.

Biggs said unseasonably warm winters can cause problems for woody species. If Mid-Missouri sees a cold snap come through this month, it could kill buds of fruit tree crops, he said.

Steven Sapp, owner of Strawberry Hill Farms in Columbia, said the high temperatures mean less propane is needed to heat greenhouses during winter months. However, warm winters also mean plants need more water.

“Any time you’ve got hotter, sunnier weather in February you have to do more watering than you’re used to,” Sapp said.

Strawberry Hill Farms is gearing up for spring and planting seedlings in the site’s 27 greenhouses. Sapp said he plans to keep closely monitoring the weather.

Tony Lupo, University of Missouri Atmospheric Science professor, said everyone will have to carefully watch to see how much precipitation Columbia gets between now and May.

“We had a very warm February, a very warm and dry February that followed a warm and dry January and that means we are preconditioned, that we could have a pretty dry summer,” Lupo said.

A dry summer will reduce crop yields. But, he said the area could see more rain in March and April, making the chances of a dry summer slimmer. Biggs said the research center is waiting to see what Mother Nature does in the next couple of months.

“It could rain 10 inches next week and catch us up,” he said. “Or not.”

Reporter Rudi Keller contributed to this report.

mكفavignano@columbiatribune.com
573-815-1719
Families in Missouri could have to pay for ACT testing for students

Watch the story: http://www.komu.com/news/families-in-missouri-could-have-to-pay-for-act-testing-for-students

No MU Mention

COLUMBIA - Performance assessment funding that Governor Greitens proposed is about $4 million less than what the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requested.

Without the $4 million, ACT funding could be cut.

It costs the state just about that amount to have each high school junior take it for free.

In order to comply with the legislature, the state is required to offer mandatory testing, but it is not made to pay for ACT testing.

The issue now is being millions of dollars short in test-related funding.

Sarah Potter, the DESE communications coordinator, said that could affect the the department because, if there is no funding, the numbers of students taking the ACT would drop.

"Before we offered this service, there were only about 50,000 students taking this test. After it was paid for, that number jumped up to 70,000," Potter said.

The ACT cost $42.50 for students to take.

If there is a written portion required, that price goes up to $58.50.

Michelle Baumstark, the Columbia Public Schools community relations director, said that, if the funding is eliminated, she is not yet sure how it will affect students in the district.
"We believe that all of our students should have the opportunity to excel. Before this funding was in place, we did all we could as a district to help our students take this test," Baumstark said.

Potter said, if there is no funding for the test, families will be required to pay for the exams themselves.

Official decisions will be made after the budget is final.