EDITORIAL

THE TRIBUNE'S VIEW

Mun Choi is off to a good start

The new president of the University of Missouri System takes office at a time when the institution is recovering from the most tumultuous period in its recent life. UM has been operating with an interim president, and echoes of harsh criticism are just now abating. With so much berating of UM management loose on the land, skeptics wondered if it would be possible to attract good applicants for the top job.

Those who have had the most interaction with Mun Choi, who assumed the office earlier this week, are pleased.

The former provost of the University of Connecticut is making friends with members of the state legislature who are on their way to adopting budget cuts for the university. The day before he officially took office in University Hall, Choi told lawmakers gathered at the annual UM Legislative Day at the Capitol that he recognizes the imperatives of the state budget he is receiving and will work hard to respond with spending reductions and revenue increases from other sources.

From a broad perspective, the situation facing Choi is about as good as one could expect. The budget cuts imposed by Gov. Eric Greitens are the result of revenue shortfalls affecting the entire state budget, not merely aimed at the university. Higher education is one of the largest discretionary spending segments available for juggling by the legislature and governor. They seem to have conscientiously preserved as much UM funding as they could. Perhaps the conservative majority in Jefferson City believes it has belabored the institution enough, particularly the flagship Columbia campus.

So it's a new day at the university, a perfect time for a new leader to come aboard bearing no baggage from the past and able, even obliged, to focus entirely on the future.

By all accounts, President Choi is setting the right tone. His demeanor and commentary are pleasing everyone he meets, an attribute particularly valuable as he
makes his initial way through the Capitol thickets.

But despite our preoccupation with external politics, the main job of the UM president is to manage a large, complex and, let us pray, improving institution of higher education. UM actually has a lot going for it, particularly in areas of scientific research and development compatible with Choi’s background. He will not need educating on the value of the university’s research reactor. He knows Interim MU Chancellor Hank Foley, who shares his scientific background. Choi should be a quick starter in fulfilling one of the key roles of the university.

And Mun Choi comes from an academic background. The past two presidents from the world of business injected a valuable perspective, and now it’s time for a leader with direct higher education experience. In addition, Choi brings an aura of pragmatism and political savvy. He will get along as well in Jefferson City as any UM president. Now he enters the challenging fields of UM academe, a curious environment he is well equipped to navigate by past experience. He will be required by circumstances to make some tough internal campus budget decisions. The institution can be better for it.

*We are going to make the best case that we can, and always in a respectful way, why it is important to make investments in higher education, because it is about making an investment for the future of Missouri.*

UM President Mun Choi
Mun Choi Begins Work as UM System's 24th President

By DAVID MCPHERSON • 22 HOURS AGO

The first Asian-American and 24th president of the University of Missouri System began work on Wednesday.

Mun Choi’s appointment is a departure from previous appointments of presidents with primarily business backgrounds.

Former University of Missouri Curator David Wasinger says Choi’s academic knowledge, amongst other requirements, is one of many vital presidential skills.

“Certainly academia is a very important quality for a university president to the extent he has experienced or knowledge of academia, I think it adds to his talent level,” he said.

Mizzou Asian American Association President Tessa Miles said the school is taking a step in the right direction by appointing Choi.

“With the help of the organizations we do have on campus and making sure that those organizations are visible and getting the funding they need then it will definitely attract more students of different backgrounds,” she said.
Choi was born in South Korea before he immigrated to the United States as a young child. He is a former provost at the University of Connecticut.

**Greitens talks funding, budget at first full Capitol press conference**

DYLAN JACKSON JOHN SADLER, 11 hrs ago

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Eric Greitens discussed a wide range of issues, from higher education budget cuts to lack of funding for Missouri road repairs, during a meeting with journalists Thursday.

After opening with a reference to the Thursday announcement of a firearms and outdoor recreation company moving its distribution center to Boone County and an overview of some of his priorities, the governor opened the floor to questions from reporters at the event organized by the Missouri Press Association and The Associated Press.

**Higher education cuts**

In his proposed 2017-18 budget, Greitens recommended $40 million in cuts to the University of Missouri System and almost $160 million in cuts for higher education statewide.

Despite the proposed cuts, Greitens said he doesn't want to see in-state tuition increase and blamed politicians for the current state of the budget.

"I don't want to see students paying for the mistakes of politicians," he said.
Greitens also attributed much of the UM System's budget woes to waste, not funding. He announced that he is meeting next week with the presidents and campus leaders of several Missouri higher education institutions to talk about ways to save money.

He pointed to Purdue University, which has kept tuition rates flat, as an example for Missouri to follow.

Purdue owes some of its success to its aggressive out-of-state student recruitment program. Bringing in more out-of-state students, who pay more than double what in-state students pay, allows the university to suppress in-state costs.

**Transportation funding woes**

The Missouri Department of Transportation has repeatedly called for more funding for Missouri's roads and bridges. Of the nearly 10,400 bridges in Missouri, around 860 are rated "poor" by the Federal Highway Administration.

The department said they're "treading water," burning through cash reserves to simply maintain the current system.

Greitens said the solution to funding the more than $700 million in priority improvements needed to properly fix the state's roads lies in the overall economy.

"What we're going to have to do is get the economy moving again," he said.

Greitens would not pin an infrastructure plan to a specific date but said the solution instead lies in loosening regulations and legislation such as "right-to-work," which he said will stimulate the economy and lead to more investment in infrastructure.

Much of MoDOT's funding, though, comes from a combination of a gas tax and federal funding, with a small fraction coming from general revenue.

**Inauguration finances**
Greitens refused to commit to releasing the list of donations for his inauguration ceremonies, breaking with the tradition established by the last two governors.

The inauguration was funded by a non-profit organization founded by Greitens. Non-profits are not required to release donor names or donation amounts.

Govs. Matt Blunt and Jay Nixon both released the names of donors and the amounts given for their inaugurations. Nixon raised funds through his campaign committee, which is required to report such information to the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Greitens said he felt releasing the list of donors, sans donation amounts, fulfilled his responsibility. When asked if he would ever consider releasing the amounts, Greitens was non-committal.

"I would be happy to talk to the inauguration committee about (releasing the list of donations) again," he said. "But right now, the plan that we have is to release the list that we released."

**Department of Corrections**

Greitens also tackled the issue of Missouri’s Department of Corrections. The department has been under fire recently for allegations of cover-ups of sexual harassment and sexual assaults, as well as fostering an environment of psychological and physical abuse.

The governor said he has high hopes for the new director of the Department of Corrections, Anne Precythe, who replaced George Lombardi in the wake of the scandals that broke earlier this year.

He said a new method of incarceration is needed in Missouri, focusing more on rehabilitation.

"We need to build a Department of Corrections that actually corrects things," Greitens said. "So, we’re going to build a system where … from the first day that somebody enters the prison system, we’ve got a plan in place and programs in place so that they can leave prison, come out,
get a job, pay taxes, and if they have kids, become a role model to their kids. Right now, we don’t have that plan, that program, that system in place."

He also said effort is needed to boost morale through the ranks of the department.

"We need to do some work to get to all of the front-line folks who are doing hard work and often putting their own safety at risk on behalf of all of us to keep us safe," Greitens said. "We need to get down and let them know, as I and Anne (Precythe) have, that change is on the way."

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**Greitens gives media 30 minutes of unfettered questioning for AP Day; other state leaders speak**

**NO MU MENTION**

By MARSHALL GRIFFIN & KRISY LANE • 14 HOURS AGO

Republican Gov. Eric Greitens’ relationship with the media has had its ups and downs.

Greitens has willingly answered questions from reporters, provided that those questions directly correspond with the topic of the news conference, and has agreed on a few occasions to exclusive interviews. He generally announces things directly to the public on Facebook and Twitter videos, seldom disseminating it to reporters ahead of time.

On Thursday, he stood in front of a gaggle of media in his office for his first any-question-goes news conference since he was sworn in Jan. 9. It was part of the Missouri Press Association/Associated Press
Day at the Capitol, when leaders of the state’s top agencies address the media. Attorney General Josh Hawley was scheduled to take part, but Lt. Gov. Mike Parson took his place.

Reporters asked Greitens wide-ranging questions, and including some about his proposed $146 million in cuts to higher education. He said he plans to meet with college and university presidents next week.

“I think it’s imperative that we keep tuition down for Missouri students,” the governor said.

“There was over $700 million that politicians were planning to spend that we just didn’t have in the bank and that means that higher education is going to get less money than expected.”

He also commented on St. Louis’ proposal for a partially publicly financed Major League Soccer stadium, which will be on the April 4 ballot. Greitens reiterated his stance that he doesn’t support using taxpayer money, but said he’s willing to work with those bringing private investments to the state of Missouri in order to bring in more jobs.

Greitens ended the 30-minute session with a statement that praised the media for informing the public but made no comments regarding future Capitol news conferences.

Secretary of State Jay Ashcroft discussed the voter ID law, which he plans to have in place by the August election. The law, which will require voters to show ID before voting, takes effect in June.

The state is still trying to figure out how to pay for the free IDs. Opponents of the law say that such laws disproportionately affect minorities, but Ashcroft called it a “common sense way to help protect the ballot box” that will not keep anyone who is eligible from voting.

Auditor Nicole Galloway, the only Democrat that holds statewide office, asserted that the state is in a budget crisis and that her office has “identified more than $130 million in government waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement” as well as over 30 criminal charges against corrupt public officials.

“I am tough, fair, and thorough,” said Galloway, who is up for re-election in 2018. “That’s what people want out of the only independent watchdog this state has.”
Currently, she is auditing the legal expense fund for lawsuits of harassment and discrimination and is also working to monitor a tax law discrepancy that her office claimed was more than $100 million off.

Parson was the unexpected speaker of the day. Hawley’s office didn’t immediately return a request for comment as to why he canceled his news conference.

Parson began by commending the importance of media but asking reporters to be accurate and not to misquote.

“One thing that probably always disappoints me is if I say a quote and, in today’s time with recording devices and everything else, the quote’s wrong,” Parson said.

But Parson, despite requests from reporters, didn’t speak into the microphone.

He was asked about the request for at least $50,000 to remodel his office. He said that money is set aside every year for Capitol renovations and that the project had been in the works before he took office.

**EDITORS: Failure-factory charter networks like Confluence Academy must be held accountable.**

By the Editorial Board, 15 hrs ago

There is no excuse in public education for running a failure factory, and there can be no sound reason for allowing one to continue operating for nearly 20 years. St. Louis’ Confluence Academy charter schools have failed to meet state standards for the nearly 15 years they have been operating, and yet the state Board of Education granted them another five-year license last week.
The board is the highest state authority over K-12 education, but its hands are tied when it comes to closing charter schools — which are public schools. The board says that under state law the best it can do is sanction the schools’ sponsor when schools fail to meet standards.

The University of Missouri-Columbia agreed in 2014 to sponsor Confluence Academy, which has 2,800 students in five schools in St. Louis. The charter network was threatened with closure when its previous sponsor, the Missouri University of Science and Technology, put it on probation in 2012.

Gerry Kettenbach, MU’s director of charter school operations, says Confluence is headed in the right direction after a long struggle. Confluence has been warned that MU will withhold sponsorship if it is not meeting state accreditation standards in three years, he added.

If Confluence was within the traditional public school system, it would have lost accreditation long ago. At what point do authorities declare enough is enough? This is the second time the state board has renewed Confluence’s five-year charter, despite a persistent record of academic failure.

Charters initially are granted a 10-year license and must renew every five years or be shut off from state funding.

The state’s charter-school rules don’t impose rigorous oversight and accountability, partly by design. They are independently run and publicly funded, and intended to be autonomous from state and local school board meddling. They can usually establish their own operating rules and curriculum and seldom employ union teachers. Charter advocates say that allows greater flexibility and innovation while helping them sidestep bureaucracies that lock in failure at troubled schools.

Granting greater autonomy is understandable, even laudable, provided that schools meet or exceed minimal academic performance standards. But minimal standards must be applied regardless of where a child attends school.

Charters were supposed to offer a better alternative to traditional public schools, with the promise they would close if they failed to perform. The issue is who is empowered to close them. Mike Jones, the state
board’s St. Louis representative, is frustrated that sanctioning sponsors is the board’s only legal leverage. In traditional public schools, the board can revoke accreditation or close an entire district that does not meet standards.

Newly sworn U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is a **forceful proponent** of charters. But we’d wager that even she would be appalled by the failure factory in Missouri.

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**University of Missouri Researcher Discusses Living Apart Together Relationships**

*#2 radio market, Dr. Drew is a nationally syndicated radio show host*


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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI RESEARCHERS CREATE PORK IN THE LAB

March 1, 2017 By Julie Harker Filed Under: Livestock, Livestock, Missouri, News

Generated from News Bureau expert pitch.

University of Missouri researchers have created pork flesh in the laboratory. The University’s Dr. Michael Roberts says they used embryonic stem cells from pigs. He worked with a University of Maryland researcher – and while difficult, he says, they achieved the creation of skeletal muscle, “We also did it very efficiently – within eight days. We were able to show that the cells that were produced by using a whole series of growth factors and chemicals, pharmaceuticals, that we could get muscles.”

Roberts tells Brownfield he wasn’t on board, at first, because of the idea of replacing farm raised pork, “There is some interest, particularly in Europe, in producing meat that has not seen an animal and the goal is to reduce animal welfare concerns.”

But, Roberts says, the lab created pork muscle has great value in regenerative medicine, such as skin grafting.

PORTER RESOLVES CASE WITH GUILTY PLEA

By Joe Vozzelli

Missouri gymnast Morgan Porter pleaded guilty to passing a bad check with a value of less than $500 in a Boone County courtroom Wednesday afternoon.
Porter received two years of unsupervised probation, 40 hours of community service and isn’t allowed any contact with the victim.

Porter, a sophomore at MU, was arrested in August and charged with fraudulent use of a credit device with a value of less than $500 — a Class A misdemeanor. She was suspended for Missouri’s season-opening meet against Ball State and Illinois on Jan. 6.

Porter returned for a meet at Arkansas on Jan. 13 and collected the all-around, bars and floor titles. A week later, Porter suffered a season-ending Achilles injury during floor warm-ups in a home meet against Alabama.

In her debut campaign, Porter won the Southeastern Conference Freshman of the Year award and was the first MU gymnast to be an all-around qualifier for the NCAA Championships since Rachel Updike in 2012.

Two University of Missouri students are arrested after 'taunting Jewish classmate with anti-Semitic messages for MONTHS'

Two University of Missouri students were arrested on Monday for allegedly harassing a Jewish classmate for months, police said.

Erich J Eastman, 18, and Noah B Rogers, 19, both from Columbia, Missouri, are being charged with first-degree harassment, a Class E felony punishable by up to four years in prison.

Eastman and Rogers were held in the Boone County jail and later released, each on $1,500 bond, reports the Columbia Daily Tribune.

Eastman and Rogers were held in the Boone County Jail (pictured) and later released, each on $1,500 bond.

University of Missouri police were called to McDavid Hall on campus, where they spoke with the alleged victim, a male student, who said the duo had regularly been taunting him with anti-Semitic notes and comments since August.
The university's interim chancellor Hank Foley denounced the accused students' behavior.

'This behavior is abhorrent and antithetical to our core value of respect,' Foley wrote in an email to the campus community. 'It simply will not be tolerated.'

Both music majors, Eastman, a freshman, and Rogers, a sophomore, could be expelled from the university, Foley said.

University of Missouri police were called to McDavid Hall on campus, where they spoke with the alleged victim who said Rogers and Eastman had harassed him since August.

The Boone County Prosecutor's Office and the university's civil rights office will investigate the case.

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

Jessica Caldera, a Boone County assistant prosecuting attorney who was assigned the case against Eastman, said she will decide whether to file charges once she receives information from university police.

Recent vandalism at Jewish cemeteries in Missouri and Pennsylvania have stoked fears that anti-Semitism has taken hold since Donald Trump was elected president.

Many high-profile incidents have led organizations to warn of a rise in hate crimes, including numerous bomb threats at Jewish centers nationwide.
Warm winter weather could mean trouble for Missouri crops

Posted on 2 March 2017 at 8:07pm


COLUMBIA- Mid-Missouri's warm weather might have people happy during the winter, but meteorologists and farmers are worried this could mean trouble once spring and summer roll around.

MU Atmosphere and Science professor Anthony Lupo said there was a lot of variability in the weather this winter.

"It was exceedingly warm for the month of February for the Columbia weather records. It hasn't been this warm in February since 1930," Lupo said. "Also it's been very dry, and that's gonna set us up for the potential drought this summer because the soil right now is extremely dry."

Lupo said if the weather temperatures don't decline it could have a negative effect on the seasons to come.

"The weather for the spring, of course, is going to dictate what happens for the summer and that can have a considerable impact on our crop yields," Lupo said.

John Sam Williamson, a farmer in Boone County, said the warm weather is forcing some farmers to move faster than others.

"Some farmers have planted corn. That's probably a month too early. I've never planted corn in March," said Williamson. "Toward the end of March some farmers do, but not in the beginning."

Williamson said although the weather is warmer than normal, he won't be concerned until the spring season comes in.

"It's dry, but we can certainly have a lot of rain and it could change," Williamson said. "I don't think this is a thing to worry about yet."

Williamson said he is not sure when he will begin planting his crops because the weather is so inconsistent. Lupo said precipitation needs to increase in order to have a warm, but bearable spring and summer season.
"If we can get some rain between now and May we may have a decent summer,” Lupo said. "If we don't get rain between now and May it's going to be a very hot summer."

The Chronicle of Higher Education

Legislative Panel Seeks to Open ‘Intellectual Diversity’ Office at U. of Tennessee

NO MU MENTION

By Chris Quintana  March 2, 2017

A committee of Tennessee lawmakers voted on Wednesday to spend nearly half a million dollars to open an office at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville that would “encourage more people with conservative views to speak their minds,” reported The Tennessean.

The move followed the state legislature’s vote, in 2016, to take $436,000 from the university’s diversity office and add it to a scholarship fund for minority engineering students.

In Wednesday’s vote, the State Senate’s education committee approved an amendment that would earmark $450,000 for the “intellectual diversity” office, the newspaper reported. The money would be used for staff and at least four events per academic year to allow “discussion and debate of societal and philosophical issues by presenters with differing views.” The measure requires further votes to win full approval from the legislature.

Republican lawmakers praised the measure, saying it would make it easier for conservatives to share their opinions. But the university system’s president, Joe DiPietro, appeared to be taken by surprise by the idea. “You’ve caught me flat-footed,” Mr. DiPietro said, according to The Tennessean. “It’s not a good thing for you or for us to be in these circumstances with these kinds of amendments.”
Mr. DiPietro told the newspaper he and his staff would have to figure out if they could comply with the amendment.

What colleges are doing to recruit more low-income students

by Katie Lobosco  @KatieLoboscoMarch 2, 2017: 10:33 AM ET

NO MU MENTION

Presidents at 30 of America's top colleges say they're missing out on some of the best and brightest students -- those from low-income families.

"We know we admit many more students from the upper half of the income distribution than the lower half and we believe that talent is distributed much more evenly than that," said Ohio State University President Michael Drake, who's on the steering committee of the American Talent Initiative.

The alliance brings together a mix of public and private colleges including Ivy League institutions like Harvard and Yale, small liberal arts schools like Franklin and Marshall College, and state schools like Georgia Tech and the University of Maryland.

The idea is to encourage colleges with the highest graduation rates to enroll and graduate more low-income students.
They're focusing on students whose families earn less than median income ($57,000). And the goal is to enroll 12% more of them -- or 50,000 students -- at the top 270 U.S. colleges over the next eight years.

"The 50,000 is based on research that show there's about that number of students who would qualify for our institutions today who are not there," Drake said.

The admissions process won't change, he said. These students qualify just like everyone else. But they don't apply for a variety of reasons, whether they think college is too expensive or they're simply not aware of all their options.

Lowering the cost of college with financial aid is one way to increase enrollment of low-income students. Drake has already shifted some money from merit-based to need-based aid for OSU students.

Vassar College, for example, has committed to increasing the amount of its endowment earnings used toward financial aid, according to a report put out by the American Talent Initiative.

But colleges plan to change their recruitment strategy and reach out to these students directly, too. They also need to offer the support services needed to keep them enrolled and to graduate on time.

Franklin and Marshall College, which has more than doubled the number of low-income students over the past eight years, has formed partnerships with high performing K-12 schools to recruit potential students and created a pre-college summer program to help prepare them before they arrive on campus.

The investment is worth the cost at OSU, according to Drake. Making the student body more diverse will benefit everyone.

"I teach still and I know that undergraduates who come from different places ... have different points of view and experiences and they make the discussions more rich," Drake said.
Increasing socioeconomic diversity isn’t a brand new idea. Most Ivy League Colleges give very generous financial aid packages to their lowest income students. At Harvard, for example, any family earning less than $65,000 pays nothing. And a growing number of colleges no longer require applicants to submit their SAT or ACT scores, because they can be biased against students from low-income households.

But previous efforts don’t go far enough, according to a recent study from The Equality of Opportunity Project. The share of the low-income students at elite colleges increased very little since 2000, and has declined at mid-tier institutions.

The report measures success by upward mobility, or the percent of students from the poorest families who graduate and end up making much more money than their parents. It found public schools have so far done this best.