



**MU News Bureau**

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## At MU staff forum, officials offer no specifics on layoffs

By Brittany Ruess

**Questions posed during an open forum between University of Missouri staff and some top administrators focused on the potential for layoffs as the university faces budget constraints.**

The first question explicitly about layoffs came about 20 minutes into the forum, following questions about cutting administrators' pay, trimming down expenses and the number of employees expected to retire this year. The university's Staff Advisory Council hosts the forum every fall and spring.

The UM System's uncertain state funding for the coming fiscal year combined with declining enrollment means the Columbia campus faces a possible shortfall of \$50 million or more. The university's division of operations will lay off 20 employees by July 1.

Administrators didn't have definite answers for staff about layoffs on Tuesday. When a woman asked the first question about layoffs — including how many are expected or when layoffs will happen — she was given no specifics.

Patty Haberberger, vice chancellor for human resources, said university leaders are working on decisions regarding layoffs.

She then reminded the crowd about the UM System's Transitional Assistance Program, which provides laid off employees with a week of pay for every year worked at the university. It also allows employees who worked at the university for a minimum of five years to collect benefits for a year after being laid off. An employee with less than five years of work can use benefits for three months.

Chrissy Kintner, chair of the Staff Advisory Council, said the discussion about layoffs and the budget were anticipated.

“We expected there to be lots of questions and issues about the budget. It did not disappoint,” she said. “Staff members are really concerned about their jobs and that showed. I think it reflected what's actually going on.”

She said she also didn't expect administrators to come out with firm details regarding layoffs during the meeting.

"I think that we knew it was still too early and I also don't know that this would've been the appropriate place to announce" layoffs, Kintner said. "I would think you would want to have a plan in place and let the employees know and your department know and all of that before you give firm numbers."

Jennifer Hollingshead, interim vice chancellor for marketing and communications, said that as the UM System looks at budget cuts across all of its campuses, the university wants to be cohesive in its messaging and ensure its plan is "doable given the time frame to make a decision."

"Conversations are heartfelt and painstaking," she said when describing administrators' discussions about layoffs. "And the reality of the changes that we're making and the consequences on people's lives that it will have on them personally is never far from our minds."

Someone asked if the university was considering cutting top administrators' pay by 10 percent and limiting the number of administrators. Rhonda Gibler, vice chancellor of finance and the chief financial officer, said cutting pay for top administrators would not solve the budget woes, but officials have considered how many administrators the university employs. She said some of the highest paid individuals at the university are faculty, particularly in the medical school.

"On some level, it seems very simple that the" administrators "who make a lot of money should be able to take a cut in hard times," she said. "I will tell you — in a lot of those positions, there is a market and as much as you may feel somebody is overpaid, they got the pay amount because of the demands of the position and" based on market compensation.

In response to another question, Gibler said she didn't know how many employees were expected to retire this year and that the university would have a better idea closer to Dec. 31. She said the university does not ask employees if they plan to retire, calling it a personal decision.

The university's preferred provider organization, or PPO, health care option will not be eliminated to save money, said Kelli Holland, human resources director.

# MISSOURIAN

## MU staff members question administrators about potential layoffs

By Andrew Kessel

**COLUMBIA — Worries about potential staff layoffs at MU were not assuaged Tuesday after an open forum allowed staff to ask questions to university administrators.**

About 100 people attended the forum, which was hosted by the MU Staff Advisory Council, an organization that acts as a liaison between staff and administration on campus. Staff members were invited to submit questions beforehand, which were presented to a panel of administrators along with questions from the attendees.

Talk of layoffs began with an April 3 email from UM System President Mun Choi, who announced that cuts to staff and non-tenure track faculty might be necessary in order to cut the system's budget by 8 to 12 percent for fiscal year 2018 in order to keep up with an expected loss of state funding.

There are about 7,000 to 8,000 staff employed by MU, said Chrissy Kintner, chair of the council. That number jumps to 13,000 when you include employees of University Hospital.

Members of the panel emphasized that conversations about layoffs are ongoing and nothing has been finalized. But the panel confirmed that, in the event of layoffs, the transition assistance program, which provides temporary income and benefits, would remain in place.

That's the answer Kintner expected.

"I think we knew that it was still too early," she said. "And I also don't know that this would've been the appropriate place to announce that."

Some layoffs have already been decided. Earlier this month, the MU division of operations informed 20 administrative employees they would be laid off, effectively July 1, MU spokesman Christian Basi confirmed. These layoffs, in addition to five retiring employees that won't be replaced, will save MU \$1.75 million for the 2018 fiscal year.

Staff also raised the issue of dwindling morale in light of the budget crisis facing both MU and the four-campus UM System.

Rhonda Gibler, vice chancellor for finance, has been hearing about morale issues for a long time.

“I have heard people say morale is at an all-time low for 23 years,” Gibler said.

Morale isn’t just about how much people get paid, she said, but also job security and the relationships staff members have with their coworkers and MU.

“All that said, I would suspect that perhaps we are at an all-time low,” she said.

The general anxiety was a consistent theme throughout the forum.

A staff member asked about whether vacancies in the Student Affairs Division, which handles campus dining, the counseling center and the Student Recreation Center, among others, would be filled. In an April 3 email, Jennifer Hollingshead, MU Interim Vice Chancellor for Marketing and Communications, said those positions might not be filled, MissouriNet reported.

Hollingshead called the email a “slice of time,” and said it is not indicative that administration was targeting certain divisions.

Others questioned whether cuts to the salaries of university administration were a possibility to mitigate budget woes. They said some departments are still offering raises and making hires.

Nothing is off the table, Gibler said. Each division is responsible for its own budget, she said, so there is some discretion allowed.

Gibler also encouraged attendees to be hopeful. MU may be going through tough times, she said, and it may take a few years to get better. But it will get better, she said.

"You can't do my job if you don't start from hope," she said.

The full panel included Gibler; Hollingshead; Gary Ward, Vice Chancellor Operations; Patty Haberberger, Vice Chancellor Human Resources; Kevin McDonald, UM System Chief Diversity Officer & MU Interim VC for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity; Cathy Scroggs, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Kelli Holland, Human Resources Director and Ellen Eardley, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Civil Rights and Title IX.

An open forum with administrators is held twice each year. The last forum took place in the fall.



## Did Obamacare Increase Voter Turnout?

This story was generated from an MU News Bureau press release:

<http://munews.missouri.edu/news-releases/2017/0314-states-with-expanded-medicaid-program-saw-higher-voter-turnout/>

By Vann Newkirk

It's becoming increasingly clear that Medicaid is the center of the health policy universe.

Medicaid is the largest single insurer in the United States, covering north of 70 million people with low incomes and disabilities, and is responsible for most of the 20 million additional people covered by Affordable Care Act. The ACA expansion established Medicaid as the bedrock of public insurance and public assistance in America. Now, there's evidence that it not only expanded health insurance coverage, but the electorate itself.

While disgruntlement among people with subsidized private plans on the exchanges over premiums and cost-sharing has provided much of the political ammunition for attempts to repeal Obamacare, Medicaid's popularity and its guarantee of coverage formed much of the backbone of the opposition to Republican plans to repeal the law. But even before then, Medicaid played a role in the 2016 election, and may have helped reshape the electorate as we know it, increasing turnout among members of both parties.

**That finding comes from new research by Jake Haselswerdt at the University of Missouri, which suggests that the ACA's Medicaid expansion in 2014 increased political participation.** The study, which will be published in the *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* this month, "find[s] that the increases in Medicaid enrollment associated with the expansion are related to considerably higher voter turnout." More specifically, the research indicates that for every increase in Medicaid enrollment in a district in 2014, there was a corresponding decrease in the "midterm dropoff" in turnout from 2012 to 2014.

The most immediate conclusion is that President Obama and the states that chose to expand Medicaid—perhaps inadvertently—found a way to solve the doldrums of mid-term elections that have bedeviled politicians forever. The problem has been most significant for Democrats, who often face significant turnout dropoffs in midterms and as a result have hemorrhaged legislative seats at every level across the country. Unfortunately for them, although turnout increased in 2014, the data suggest no party gained a clear advantage from it.

Democratic leaders probably never intended a turnout bump, but they did embrace the Medicaid expansion much more broadly and earlier than Republican governors and state legislatures—indeed, all of the states that haven't yet expanded are run by Republicans—and they implemented reforms and rollouts that were much more likely to increase coverage. Haselswerdt's paper emphasizes this last point: the reduction in midterm dropoff in a district was not related directly to the state's decision to expand per se, but to its gusto and effectiveness at getting new people signed up.

It might be surprising then that Haselswerdt did not find that the turnout effects of expanding Medicaid were a boon for liberal candidates. In fact, "there's no evidence that this effect had any benefit for Democrats at all," he told me. While he found that the liberal-minded reforms from mostly Democratic officials did increase turnout, the partisan share of the vote did not increase for Democrats, and 2014 was a bloodbath for the party. That means that the Medicaid expansion increased Republican turnout at least as much as it did Democratic turnout.

The paper offers up a compelling theory for this effect. Haselswerdt conjectures that the most obvious partisan effect of the Medicaid expansion was not the mobilization of people to protect their newly-gained coverage, but of Republican-leaning voters who were opposed to it. And the opposing increase in turnout came from Medicaid's "resource effects," or its downstream effects on things like time, money, transportation opportunities for voter registration, and ability to participate in civics among a low-income population that skewed towards Democrats.

"I am skeptical of the idea that there was self-political mobilization among recipients," Haselswerdt says. Rather, he believes the data shows that the increase in turnout among new Medicaid beneficiaries was more indirect.

There are a couple pieces of research that complicate these findings. For one, Haselswerdt cites research noting the long depressive effect that Medicaid has seemed to have had on turnout among beneficiaries. While it's well known that poor people generally have low turnout, especially in midterm elections, research from Teresa Toguchi Swartz and colleagues at the University of Minnesota found that means-tested, "stigmatizing" forms of social assistance like welfare are associated with depressed civic participation, while non-means-tested "non-stigmatizing" forms of assistance are not. While that research does not include Medicaid in the realm of "stigmatizing" aid, Cornell University's Jamila Michener found that Medicaid was also associated with decreases in participation through the same mechanism of social stigmatization.

The study from Haselswerdt could be a short-term blip or an outlier against this field of study that shows that expanded Medicaid should decrease turnout, and Haselswerdt told me that he needed more data from more elections to be sure. But it also could indicate that Obamacare's reforms fundamentally altered the stigma around Medicaid, either by its expansion to a much larger, whiter, and able swathe of mainstream America, or through its injection of the program into the heart of political discourse.

Focus groups conducted with Trump voters by the Kaiser Family Foundation indicate that it might be the former. As my colleague Olga Khazan writes about the research, "many

beneficiaries of the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion didn't realize their free health insurance was the result of Obamacare.”

Since some state Medicaid expansion programs are branded as unique state products, and many plans are administered by private managed care companies, many new enrollees don't even know they are on Medicaid. Thus many of the new Medicaid enrollees, though enabled and empowered to vote by the “resource effects” Haselswerdt cites, were not stigmatized by their new receipt of public assistance and participated in politics accordingly.

A final irony is that many of those newly empowered and aided Trump voters did not associate their *own* coverage with the coverage they voted to repeal and replace. While Haselswerdt doesn't have data on the 2016 election, it's possible that the pathways he mentions enabled low-income Republican voters to potentially vote away their own health care.

It's important not to read into that point as necessarily self-sabotage, because as Khazan notes, health care might not have been a primary election concern for Trump voters, and some may have expected replacement plans to iron out any disruptions in coverage they predicted. And the data for two election cycles, with one coming just months after the Medicaid expansion, cannot be extrapolated far enough to know for sure. But at the least it is very possible that the Medicaid expansion not only motivated, but enabled both defenders and supporters of the law to go to the polls in 2014 and 2016.

If that dynamic holds—and Haselswerdt is interested in pursuing research to discover if it does—future health policy decisions by both parties will have to reckon with the voices of newly-mobilized low-income people.

It's been more than half a century since Medicaid was passed, and back then it was seen as a bit of a backup player to the massive guarantee of Medicare to elderly people. But the program has come into its own, and in a post-Obamacare world seems to command almost the same kind of party-dogma-bending influence that the more venerable program does. If its current form affects turnout the way Haselswerdt's research claims, Medicaid might be an unexpectedly empowering agent for people who've long struggled to be involved in American politics.



## How controlled fires shape forests over time

This story was generated from an MU News Bureau press release: [Prescribed Forest Fire Frequency Should Be Based on Land Management Goals](#)

Scientists have examined the effects of burning forests at different intervals over a 68-year period in order to determine how fire alters forest landscapes over time.

While researchers and land managers have come to understand the beneficial effects of controlled forest fires over recent decades, questions regarding how frequently to use forest fires remain.

Researchers have studied forests subjected to different frequencies of fires to determine what effects fire can have on oak forests over long periods of time. They found that the frequency of prescribed forest fires should be determined based on the long-term goals of land managers.

**Benjamin Knapp, an assistant professor in the forestry department at the University of Missouri College of Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources, examined forest fire data collected since 1949 from the University Forest Conservation Area in southeast Missouri.**

Throughout the course of the study, three areas of forest were subjected to varying frequencies of prescribed forest fires. One area has been burned every year since 1949, the second area has been burned every four years, and the final area has never been burned.

Knapp found that in the areas that were burned regularly (every one or four years), small trees up to 12 cm in diameter died, resulting in open woodland ecosystems that are easy to walk through and include a diversity of small, herbaceous plants.

In the area that was burned annually, small trees and brush were eliminated, leaving tall canopy trees with wide spaces between them. In the area that was burned every four years, small trees re-sprouted and persisted but did not grow into the canopy.

This created tall canopy trees with a slightly more closed structure due to regrown brush. Finally, the area that never experienced fire was dense with vegetation and abundant underbrush. Knapp says these different resulting forest structures show the need for land managers to carefully plan how they burn their forests.

“The open structure with tall canopy trees and herbaceous plants on the forest floor may be desirable for recreational spaces or certain wildlife habitats, in which case it would make sense for land managers to burn their forests more frequently,” Knapp says.

“However, frequent burning without fire-free periods can prevent forest regeneration from becoming canopy trees, so land managers should be strategic in their use of fire,” he adds. “In addition, fire can scar trees and potentially reduce their timber value, so land managers who hope to maximize timber value may want to refrain from the frequent use of fire.”

Knapp says fire effects on forest ecosystems are complex and vary with many factors, so further research is necessary to better understand how much burning is necessary for various forest goals.

The study appears in *Forest Ecology and Management*.

## ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

### Francis Howell alum one of top 39 seniors at Mizzou

Generated from News Bureau student honors press release.

**Paulina Owens, of St. Charles, was recently named to the University of Missouri’s “Mizzou ’39,” according to a press release.**

Given annually by the Mizzou Alumni Association Student Board to 39 seniors across all academic disciplines, the award honors scholastic achievement as well as leadership and service to Mizzou and the community.

Founded in 1839, Mizzou owes its existence to the 900 citizens of Boone County who together pledged more than \$117,000 in cash and land in support of the university. This spirit of service, which remains at the heart of the university, is the inspiration behind “Mizzou ’39.” Honorees are chosen through an extensive selection process that includes applications and interviews with Mizzou faculty, staff and alumni. Those chosen for this award are regarded as the top of their graduating classes and join an exclusive group of alumni.

“I am very honored to be recognized as one of Mizzou’s most distinguished seniors,” Owens said. “The University of Missouri has provided me extensive leadership opportunities that have ultimately shaped me into the person that I am today.”

A 2013 graduate of Francis Howell High School, Owens currently is majoring in health science with a business minor. Throughout her years as an undergrad, Owens has established herself as a

leader on campus, serving as the president of the sorority, Zeta Tau Alpha, vice president for the Panhellenic Association Executive Board, a site leader for Mizzou Alternative Breaks and co-director for the Women's Leadership Conference.

After graduating in May, Owens plans to attend graduate school for business and health administration. She is the daughter of Traci Sheridan. Owens is one of 2,000 St. Charles County natives attending Mizzou, which is the largest and oldest university of the state's major public, land-grant research institutions.



## **Bringing Psychologists Into Schools Can Help Vulnerable Kids When They Need It Most**

By Rebecca Smith

As the outreach counselor for Battle High School in Columbia, Missouri, Dana Harris's job is connecting students with services when they have mental and emotional troubles such as ADHD, anxiety or depression.

This used to mean hours of calling community organizations and service providers, looking for available appointments, calling in favors, trying to get students the help they needed.

"You could spend a whole day trying to get those services met," Harris says.

Today, she just has to make one call: to a case manager. That's thanks to an innovative program, the MU Bridge Program, that essentially brings comprehensive psychiatric care into the school. It got its start at Battle High in 2014 and now is available to all school-age children in Boone county.

The MU Bridge Program provides case managers who come to the school, meet with the child and their family, and a psychiatrist to perform evaluations. The case manager will also help connect the child to long-term services.

There's a growing interest in programs that bring mental health care into schools, as schools around the country struggle to tackle the unmet mental health needs of students, says Darcy Gruttadaro, the director of advocacy at the National Association for Mental Illness. She says when kids can "walk down the hall and see a mental health professional" that removes many of the barriers to care.

Often, children's mental or behavioral health issues are first identified in school, by teachers and counselors. But few schools have the resources to help the kids get professional care.

"These conditions start quite young. We typically far under-identify the number of children that have a mental health condition and need help and need care provided," Gruttadaro says. "So this presents an opportunity to really address that."

**The MU Bridge Program was created at the University of Missouri School of Medicine by Dr. Laine Young-Walker, chief of child and adolescent psychiatry, and nurse case manager Carol Schutz.**

Schutz is one of the case managers for the program. She goes to schools throughout Boone County, and meets with students and their families. She sets up the psychiatric evaluation, helps families get medication and schedule therapies, and then follows up with the families over the course of several visits.

After the child is stabilized, Schutz makes sure a child is connected to adequate emotional and behavioral help outside of the Bridge program.

"I think that we're catching children before their emotional, behavioral issues become so entrenched that they're not able to make any progress," Schutz says. "Not only in schools, but in their personal lives as well."

Young-Walker, the head of the program and a psychiatrist, says bringing the initial evaluation and case management into a school can provide better care by eliminating the middle-man and letting school staff communicate directly with care providers about issues they observe in the kids.. Without the Bridge program, it was like a game of telephone.

"So it closes the loop that we often have in an outpatient clinic. Where a school has a concern, so they tell the parent to go see a doctor, [but] the doctor has no idea why the school referred," Young-Walker says.

She says it's also can be less disruptive to a student. It reduces the amount of class time a student misses, removes transportation costs for families, and increases communication between the families, doctors and school.

Gruttadaro says the interest in school-based mental health services continues to grow because, anecdotally at least, it has been shown that early identification of mental health issues leads to better long-term outcomes and less costly long-term care.

"There's been a lot of interest in school-based care," she says. "It makes so much sense because that is where children are - children and families are in schools, and it really is a wonderful way to ensure early identification, ensure early intervention and produce far better outcomes."

Minnesota and Ohio have programs similar to Bridge throughout parts of the states - that bring mental health support and services directly into schools.

Gruttadaro says that it seems likely school-based programs will continue to grow and become more common as “statewide, local, [and] county-based leaders step up to say ‘This is right for our community.’”

In Boone County the funding for the MU Bridge Program comes from the Children’s Services Fund which was created in 2012 when county voters decided to tax themselves to support the needs of children in the community. The tax is a quarter of a cent sales tax. Bridge is one of dozens of programs funded by the tax. And many of the services Bridge connects students to are also funded by it.

Similar taxes have been passed in eight other Missouri counties since the passage in 2000 of a law permitting such taxes to be levied.

Young-Walker says in the nearly two years that the MU Bridge Program has been operating, it has worked with more than 400 kids in Boone County. She says in the future she wants to reach more kids and make sure that no child in Boone County is falling through the cracks.

# MISSOURIAN

## Search for new dean of MU School of Public Affairs put on hold

By Tom Coulter

**COLUMBIA — The search for a new dean of the Truman School of Public Affairs at MU has been suspended after two of the three finalists for the job declined invitations to be interviewed.**

“During the search process, we received some feedback, and based on that feedback, the provost wanted to have further discussion about the future direction of the school,” MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

Basi said the job attracted a strong candidate pool. In an email sent last week to colleagues within the School of Public Affairs, MU Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Garnett Stokes said she plans to schedule small group meetings within the school.

“I will confer with various groups in the school, on campus and externally, to get thoughts about the best path forward,” Stokes said in the email.

Stokes said the next step will be to identify an interim leader for the school. Barton Wechsler, dean of the school since 2012, plans to retire Aug. 31.

# The Chronicle of Higher Education

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## Trump's New Order on Visas Could Make American Colleges Less Appealing Overseas

### NO MU MENTION

*By Karin Fischer* APRIL 19, 2017

Yet again a Trump-administration executive order has the potential to roil American campuses and their recruitment of international students.

President Trump on Tuesday signed a [measure](#) that would target fraud and abuse in overseas guest-worker programs and increase federal oversight of the H-1B visa program for highly skilled foreigners.

Higher education ranks third behind technology-related occupations as the largest industry sponsor of recipients of H-1B visas. But colleges' chief concern is not likely to be the visa holders — typically, professors, researchers, and postdocs — on their payrolls.

Rather, the order could have an impact on American colleges' recruitment of students from abroad. For many international students, the opportunity to stay in the United States, even temporarily, after graduation and gain work experience is [almost as valuable as an American degree itself](#). Any policy that might erect hurdles on the pathway from college to work could depress international enrollments.

Colleges already had been bracing for a potential "Trump effect" on foreign-student numbers next fall after the president signed a pair of [earlier executive order](#), since challenged in the courts, that would temporarily bar the issuance of U.S. visas to travelers, including students and scholars, from six Muslim-majority countries. A recent global survey of prospective students found that one in three potential applicants was [less likely to want to study in the United States](#) because of the political climate there.

Many people overseas had interpreted the proposed travel bans as a first step by the Trump administration to tighten American borders and close off the country's job market to outsiders. [Headlines in India](#), for example, have been sounding the alarm for weeks about possible restrictions on H-1B and other visa programs.

India is second only to China as a source of the more than one million international students now on American campuses.

The new executive order may only reinforce the perception of the United States as unwelcome to people from other countries.

## A Long Process

But Mr. Trump, echoing the "America First" themes of his presidential campaign, said at an event at a Wisconsin toolmaker that the measure was needed to "restore the American dream" and to prevent the "theft of American prosperity."

For too long, he said, companies have used and abused the H-1B program to fire Americans and replace them with lower-cost foreign employees. Instead, the president said, the H-1B program, in which demand regularly outstrips the limited supply of visas, should be limited to "only the most skilled and highest-paid applicants."

That emphasis, on the most highly skilled workers, could actually have the potential to benefit foreign graduates of American colleges.

While it is unclear exactly what shape reforms of the H-1B program may take, in [a background briefing](#) before the president signed the order, an unnamed senior administration official indicated that it could be modified to favor workers with advanced degrees. But whether preference might be given to graduates of American universities was far from clear.

The order instructs the secretary of state, the attorney general, the secretary of labor, and the secretary of homeland security to suggest, "as soon as practicable," new rules and guidance for the H-1B program. New regulations, however, can take months, and sometimes even years, to put in place.

American colleges have long advocated broader reforms of the immigration system, saying that the government [should make it easier for the brightest foreign-born graduates to stay](#) and work in the United States, particularly in high-demand science and engineering fields.