This fall the University of Missouri at Columbia will welcome its smallest freshman class in nearly two decades. As of this month, just 4,009 first-time freshmen had made enrollment deposits, a decline of 35 percent from the 2015 class of 6,191 students.

The precipitous drop is striking for a public flagship with a prominent national brand, one that has seen enrollment grow almost every year since the turn of the century.

In 2015 the student population reached a record high of 35,448. Come August, Mizzou plans to enroll about 30,700 students over all. Seven of its residence halls will be closed temporarily.

What happened during that two-year period is common knowledge: the November 2015 protests by students of color, who criticized what they perceived as administrative indifference to their concerns about racism. Their demands for change inspired protests that are still reverberating on other campuses today.

**Turmoil at Mizzou**

Last fall student protests over race relations rocked the University of Missouri at Columbia. Now Mizzou's leaders are striving to meet students' demands while restoring stability and the public's faith in their institution.

After a graduate student’s hunger strike and a boycott by members of the football team, Timothy M. Wolfe, then the Missouri system’s president, resigned. So did R. Bowen Loftin, the Mizzou chancellor.

Then debates about campus free speech were sparked by Melissa Click, at the time an assistant professor of communication. Ms. Click was infamously videotaped calling for "some muscle" to block a student journalist trying to cover the protests. She was fired last year and now teaches at Gonzaga University.
University officials were bracing for a decline, given the national attention the protests attracted. Other factors have also put pressure on enrollment, such as fewer high-school graduates in Missouri.

But Mun Y. Choi, the new system president, said no one expected the fallout to be this bad.

The Chronicle spoke with administrators, faculty members, and enrollment experts to try to figure out why Mizzou has lost so many freshmen, what it means for the university, and what might be done about it.

A negative public perception of Mizzou is the main reason for the drop, university officials said.

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Missouri is not projected to grow much in population in the near future, said Pelema I. Morrice, Mizzou’s vice provost for enrollment management. Neither are bordering states like Illinois and Iowa, from which Missouri pulls many of its students.

In terms of its number of high-school graduates, Missouri is in the middle of a dip that will last at least a few more years, said Joe Garcia, president of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education.

The University of Illinois system is making a concerted effort to expand its enrollment, a move that has probably lured away some prospective Mizzou students, Mr. Gahl said.

Berkley Hudson, an associate professor of journalism, said administrators had been tentative over the past couple of years and had lacked a cohesive strategy to deal with many issues, including enrollment.

"They’re afraid Mizzou will lose state money if they don’t behave the way the legislature wants them to behave," he said. "Institutionally, there’s been a fear of being bold." He noted, though, that he’s had a good impression of Mr. Choi so far.

Another problem is not unique to Missouri: a loss of international students who are perhaps wary of the Trump administration and the president’s hard-line views on immigration and Islam. Mr. Morrice said Mizzou had "some international markets that we’ve got some concerns about."

On a positive note, Mr. Morrice said, student retention is good. About 85 percent of the 2015 freshman class enrolled as sophomores, he said, the third-highest rate in institutional history.

At least one member of the Missouri system’s board believes administrators got complacent after years of growth.

David L. Steelman, a former state lawmaker and lawyer who’s served on the system’s Board of Curators since 2014, said he didn’t think Mizzou had been proactive about recruitment for some time because it had had little trouble attracting students.

"Simply, the University of Missouri — it’s been over five, six, seven, eight years — got fat and happy," Mr. Steelman told St. Louis’s CBS affiliate this month.

Mr. Choi noted that he, Mr. Morrice, and Garnett S. Stokes, the Mizzou provost and interim chancellor, had come to the flagship campus recently, and that what administrators did before 2015 "is not something that we’re familiar with."

"It’s a new day," he said. "We now know that we have a system in place and a commitment to really focusing on enrollment."

Even for a large research institution like Mizzou, the enrollment drop is a big deal.
The loss of students means $16.6 million less in revenue for the campus in the 2018 fiscal year, and less tuition money for the next several years as the smaller classes advance. In addition, the state is reducing its funding for Mizzou by $14.7 million. So the university has to trim its overall budget by 8 to 12 percent.

Tuition will rise by 2.1 percent. In a memo on Friday, Ms. Stokes laid out a budget proposal that includes the elimination of about 330 positions, mostly through retirements, attrition, and not renewing the contracts of employees such as non-tenured faculty members. The memo says only about 84 employees will be laid off.

As state budget cuts have piled up over the past 15 to 20 years, the university has relied on enrollment growth to prop up its finances, said Mr. Gahl, the engineering professor. He serves as chair of the Faculty Council’s fiscal-affairs committee.

He said Mizzou couldn’t fill the entire state-funding gap with additional tuition revenue, as many other universities have done, because a Missouri law prevents public-university tuition from rising faster than the Consumer Price Index. So Mizzou’s leaders tried a different approach: "The concept was that we were going to beat this by just growing, growing, and growing."

The strategy seemed to work for a while, Mr. Gahl said. Overall enrollment at Mizzou increased annually from 2000 to 2015, with the exception of 2013.

But universities can’t grow indefinitely, he said, and now officials are having to do some right-sizing. "There is a view amongst the leadership that is, Look, for the foreseeable future, we’re not getting really big. We’re going to be smaller, and that’s what it’s going to be, and that might be OK."

It’s difficult to reverse enrollment declines quickly, said Don Hossler, an emeritus professor of educational leadership and policy studies at the University of Southern California. Institutions have two primary levers to try to bolster enrollment: how selective they are, and how much financial aid they award.

"Improving marketing alone," Mr. Hossler said, "is not going to have much of a short-term effect."

Officials said they have a plan to improve the bleak enrollment picture.

New leadership will help get the university back on track, Mr. Choi said. Mizzou will soon select a permanent chancellor, its first since Mr. Loftin stepped down 18 months ago. The university has also created a committee to foster strategic enrollment management.

Once people hear "our story" about student outcomes, academic offerings, and faculty research, and come to visit the campus, Mr. Choi said, the narrative will shift — and students will come back.
Spreading that message, he said, will involve a mix of ramped-up recruiting, increased marketing, and more engagement with prospective students and families during campus visits and throughout the year.

"We have a lot of capacity right now," he said, "and so we’re going to be very active in recruiting the best and brightest students."

But one expert said treating the enrollment slide primarily as a public-perception problem was misguided. "What are you going to do — deny that these things happened?" said Richard Hesel, a principal with the Art & Science Group, a firm that consults with colleges on enrollment-management issues.

The protests and racial tensions have caused many prospective students to question whether "it’s going to be a safe place to be," Mr. Hesel said. The solution? A focus on improving the campus culture, he said, through new programs and investments related to inclusion and safety. (Mizzou officials say they continue to make progress on the campus-climate efforts that began after the 2015 protests, such as increasing faculty diversity.)

"They don’t have an image problem," he said of Mizzou officials. "They have a reality problem."

In the end, it’s not necessarily a bad thing that Mizzou is losing certain kinds of students, said Mr. Hudson, the journalism professor. He pointed to people who might criticize the group that led the 2015 demonstrations, a collective named for the year the university admitted its first black students.

"Maybe," he said, "we don’t want students who aren’t open to the issues that were raised by Concerned Student 1950."
MU budget proposal calls for nearly $60 million in cuts

By Alan Burdziak

The University of Missouri plans to eliminate 328 full-time positions at its flagship Columbia campus as part of nearly $60 million in cuts to the fiscal year 2018 budget as it seeks to alleviate a massive budget shortfall caused by a drop in enrollment and a decrease in state funding.

Of the reductions, $40.6 million is slated to be cut in recurring costs and $18.9 million in one-time costs, according to a budget proposal MU interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes sent to UM System President Mun Choi and was published on the system’s website Friday night.

There will be 84 layoffs of the 181 occupied positions that are slated for elimination; the rest of those cut will be positions that won’t be filled when they are vacated, which total 43 retirements, 38 contract non-renewals and 16 voluntary separations. The plan calls for 147 full-time vacant positions to be eliminated. Eighty percent of the university’s costs are in personnel, Stokes wrote, and there was no way to fix the budget without reducing jobs.

“The proposed plan will unquestionably impact our workforce, facilities and the breadth of services we provide,” Stokes wrote. “Leaders were tasked with balancing between making decisions on investing in the most transformational opportunities for MU’s future and meeting budget reductions. Needless to say, these were difficult decisions.”

Other savings include moving the Truman School of Public Affairs into the College of Arts and Sciences, taking some facilities offline and deferring some expenses. The expected savings for 2018, roughly $59 million, are in short-term cuts, but Stokes includes in the proposal a plan for long-term cuts of roughly $21 million.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said most layoffs will be effective July 1, but it could vary depending on the school or college. Leaders at each subdivision of the university decided what would be cut from their budgets, Basi said, and made recommendations to Stokes.

“These decisions, decisions about individual budgets, were made at the department and the unit level. They were not made at the broad university level,” he said when reached by phone Saturday afternoon.
Basi said Stokes’ proposals are in the review process and the plan to fix the shortfall will be final by June 2, when Choi is expected to reveal his decisions on proposals to reduce costs at each of the system’s four campuses.

MU Vice Provost for Enrollment Pelema Morrice said at a forum last week that the system, and MU in particular, are in the budget crunch in large part because of public image issues it has had around the state and country since protests in fall 2015 forced the resignation of the MU chancellor and system president. The protests, which gained the support of the Tigers football team, garnered international media attention.

If projections turn out to be accurate, MU’s enrollment in the fall will be about 30,800, down 7.4 percent from 33,266 when the school year ended about a week ago. The projected enrollment is the lowest in nine years and the second consecutive year it is expected to dip, after fall 2016 was 6.1 percent below the previous year’s record number of students.

Law school professor and MU Faculty Council Chairman Ben Trachtenberg said it’s not clear yet what the exact effect the cuts will have on campus, but it will be noticeable, such as employees having to pick up the slack because another job in their division was cut.

“It’s not easy to cut tens of millions of dollars from the university’s budget on short notice,” he said, adding that the layoffs will make it more difficult for some departments or subdivisions to function as they previously did.

While these cuts were somewhat rushed, Trachtenberg said he expects more in the future, decreases that he hopes officials will have more time to decide and that could possibly include eliminating some programs altogether.

“This document is only the beginning of the difficult budget decisions that we have to make because you can’t use one-time money forever,” he said.

The 17-page document breaks down by school or college the expected savings in positions and other areas, such as operational costs and reorganizations.

MU’s College of Arts and Sciences, the school with the largest enrollment, will by far have the most positions cut, with 33.3 vacant spots and 35.1 occupied jobs slated to disappear. Other schools that will lose significant numbers of staff are the College of Education, which will lose 9.3 vacant and 19.2 occupied full-time positions; the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, which will lose 14 vacant and 12 occupied jobs; the School of Journalism, which will lose four vacant and 18.3 occupied positions; and the College of Engineering, which is expected to be down 9.3 vacant and 19.2 occupied positions.

Cutting sections of classes that nearly every student takes, such as low-level English and math courses, will help but are not a long-term solution, Trachtenberg said. There is hope that enrollment will go back up at some point, and bring much-needed revenue with it. First-time freshman enrollment is expected to be down by almost 18 percent in the fall.
"I don’t know exactly what the ideal enrollment for this university would be, but it’s probably more than 4,000 freshmen a year,” Trachtenberg said.

MISSOURIAN STAFF, May 19, 2017 Updated May 19, 2017

COLUMBIA — A draft budget for MU’s upcoming school year released late Friday night called for eliminating $40.6 million in recurring costs and $18.9 million in one-time costs, according to a memo from MU Interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes.

The proposal also eliminates 328 positions — 147 full-time positions that are now vacant and 181 full-time positions that are currently filled.

Those filled positions include 43 retirements, 38 people who will not have their contracts renewed, 84 people who would be laid off and 16 "voluntary separations," according to Stokes' letter.

"Facilities have been taken offline, expenses have been deferred, and contracts have not been renewed," the letter reads. "However, ultimately, the university is primarily a human institution: 80 percent of our costs are in personnel. There is simply no way to meet the requirements without reducing jobs."

Earlier this week, Stokes said in an email MU might cut as many as 400 positions.

In the letter, Stokes said the elimination of almost $60 million from the budget would "unquestionably" affect the university.
"This amount is equivalent to the entire general-funds budgets of the IT infrastructure for the whole campus, the Trulaske College of Business, the College of Engineering and the Sinclair School of Nursing combined," the letter reads. "The proposed plan will unquestionably impact our workforce, facilities and the breadth of services we provide."

The three other UM System members submitted budget drafts for fiscal year 2018 as well. UMKC must eliminate $10.6 million, while Missouri S&T is looking at $8.8 million in cuts mainly coming from the elimination of 36 vacant positions and 8 retirements. UMSL, which went through budget reductions prior to recent state cuts, plans to reduce fiscal year 2018 expenses by 2.5 percent.

In an email announcing the release of the budget plans for the four campuses, UM System President Mun Choi said he would review the proposals over the next two weeks with administrators.

"Ultimately, our collective plan must reflect how we can transform our university as well as strengthen our teaching, research, economic development and outreach mission," he said in the email.

The budget planning process is expected to be completed by early June.
MU budget proposal includes cutting graduate jobs, increasing police force


By Jordana Marie

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri-Columbia campus is looking at a nearly $60 million shortfall in its budget.

The proposal was written by Interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes. She's been on the job about two weeks while the university searches for a permanent chancellor.

Stokes' proposal includes cutting more than 300 jobs. 147 of which are currently vacant and 181 are occupied.

"The university is primarily a human institution: 80 percent of our costs are in personnel," Stokes wrote in a cover letter for the proposed budget. "There is simply no way to meet the requirements without reducing jobs."

The cuts include 64.5 Full Time Employee positions for faculty and 40.5 for staff. It also includes 13.7 currently filled part time positions.

Graduate student positions will also be cut. There are currently 20 open spaces that will be cut and 14.8 FTE positions that will be cut. Removing those graduate positions will save the university about $1.1 million they can then use to continue to pay for graduate student waivers and health care.

The departments that would lose graduate positions include 10 vacant graduate positions in arts and science; 8.3 vacant and 7.5 occupied graduate spots in education; 5.3 occupied graduate positions in journalism; 1.5 unoccupied and .5 occupied graduate positions in the Provost's office; and 1.5 occupied graduate positions in medicine.

State appropriations decreased more than $14 million as well as the removal of a "line item" that will cost MU about $5 million.
Enrollment is also expected to decrease, costing the university about $16 million. It will make some of that back with tuition increases, bringing in about $7 million.

For the long-term, Stokes proposed several cost-saving measures in colleges and departments across the campus.

One suggestion is for "additional reductions to operating expenses" for the Arts and Sciences Department with a targeted savings of $163,784.

Other suggestions included "operating cost restrictions/savings" for both facility operation and energy management "achieved through space and building review" with a total targeted savings of $5.8 million.

Stokes also outlined "strategic investment" plans for the university.

Increasing the police force was one investment Stokes included in her budget proposal. "We are interested in keeping the size of the police force in alignment with the overall campus size," Stokes wrote. "This is the second year of a three-year plan to change the size of the force." That investment is estimated at $500,000.

Stokes also included investment for doctoral student stipends. "The minimum stipends we had been offering for half-time doctoral students on assistantships had been lagging behind other research universities making it difficult for us to recruit as successfully as we would like to," Stokes wrote. "This is the second year of a two-year plan to bring our minimum stipend to a level consistent with the Excellence we are looking for in our graduate programs." That investment is estimated at $5 million.

Stokes also included a $1.6 million investment for student recruitment. "Through strategic hiring of additional recruiters we will work to increase the number of prospective students who are aware of the experience Mizzou offers as they consider their options for higher education," Stokes wrote.
Missouri's draft budget would eliminate 328 full-time jobs

A draft budget for the University of Missouri next year includes eliminating 328 full-time positions - 147 that are currently vacant and 181 that are filled.

A memo from Interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes released Friday says the draft budget calls for eliminating $40.6 million in recurring costs and $18.9 million in one-time costs.

The Columbia Missourian reports the filled positions that might be eliminated include 43 retirements, 38 people who won't have contracts renewed, 84 layoffs and 16 voluntary separations.

Stokes' memo says the university can't meet budget-reduction goals without cutting jobs.

Missouri System President Mun Choi plans to review the budget proposals from the system's four campuses with administrators during the next two weeks.

The budget process is expected to be completed by early June.

Similar stories ran on region wide, including the following broadcasts:

KTVI Fox- St. Louis
KSDK NBC- St. Louis
KTRS AM- St. Louis
KMBC ABC- Kansas City
KCTV CBS- Kansas City
KFJX Fox- Joplin
KOAM CBS- Joplin
KSNT Fox- Topeka, KS
KTKA ABC- Topeka, KS
University administrators don’t share the hard times

By Connor Lewis

On Tuesday, Interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes — the latest in a revolving door of interim upper administrators — held a forum with a room-capacity audience to address the University of Missouri’s budget crisis.

During the forum, Stokes announced what the university community had been waiting for: Four hundred jobs would be eliminated, with a mixture of open position eliminations, retirements, and layoffs. What she didn’t address — and what no university administrator has ever satisfactorily addressed — is why the university’s years of lean budgets seem so easy for the folks at the top.

 Asked whether administrators would share the burden by taking salary cuts, Stokes dismissed the idea, claiming that would result in negligible savings. But a cursory examination of campus-level administrative salaries — restricted to only administrators making $125,000 or above — indicates that a 10 percent pay cut would save about $2.6. More than a few jobs could be saved with that money.

It’s as though administrators learned nothing from March’s scandal when Missouri Auditor Nicole Galloway released a damning report detailing millions in unearned performance bonuses doled out to administrators. Car allowances, housing allowances, and exorbitant salaries have been the norm for the folks nominally in charge.

Newly-minted System President Mun Choi makes $530,000 per year — not including extensive perks, allowances, and deferred compensation — a substantial increase over Mike Middleton’s $477,544. A long list of Jesse Hall and University Hall functionaries rake in six figures, with little evidence that they’re worth the money.

When administrators are unceremoniously shown the door, they still collect hundreds of thousands for non-existent work. Former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin continued to receive a full salary of $459,000 and use of the Chancellor’s Residence for months after he was removed from office. Even now, his new and vaguely defined job includes an annual salary of $344,250 with a vast six-figure budget for travel, a car allowance, a stipend, and deferred compensation.

For administrators, life is still good at the University of Missouri.
Not so for faculty and staff, who continue to face layoffs, pay freezes, slashes in retirement and healthcare, and shrinking budgets. Department chairs are handed centralized mandates to make cuts while administrators wash their hands of culpability and cash their paychecks. Jesse Hall insists money has to be bled from the stagnant wages of hourly employees and the faculty teaching our kids, many of whom have worked hard at the university for decades.

So when the university talks about “hard times” and “tough choices,” take a long, hard look at whether the people doing the talking are sharing the burden.

Connor Lewis is a former co-chair of the Coalition of Graduate Workers and a doctoral candidate in the Department of History.

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**Students, faculty react to new MU camping and protest policies**


By Daniel Litwin

COLUMBIA - **MU is facing defiance over new and revised University of Missouri campus regulations focused on protesting, which go into effect June 1.**

MU students created a new hashtag on Twitter, #MutedByMU, to speak out against speech suppression, organizing a "last day of protest" on the day the rules go in to effect.

A Twitter user known as jaRReTT tweeted, "Mizzou will trying anything to silence our voices. The gag is, we're still going to resist #MutedbyMU."

Another user known as Zo tweeted, "If you weren't powerful, they wouldn't try to confine or silence you. #MutedByMU."
One student who participated in the 2015 fall protests says the new policies will not fully stifle protests.

"People are going to make sure that you hear them, so regardless of whatever policy you do to try and stop that, they're going to make sure that you're going to hear them," said Teanna Bass, a sophomore at MU.

One of the rules prohibits camping on university grounds, which was a notable part of the 2015 protests. For Bass, the camping demonstration was an important way to get the students' message across.

"We were trying to push this new list of demands, we were trying to push these things that we needed as students, minoritized students and marginalized students on campus," Bass said.

However, rules preventing camping are not new.

"The university system's collected rules have prohibited overnight sleeping, other than in places designed for sleeping like dormitories, literally for decades," said Ben Trachtenberg, chair of MU’s Faculty Council.

The new clarified rule defines camping as "sleeping outdoors between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m." and "establishing or maintaining outdoors, or in or under any structure not designated for human occupancy, at any time during the day or night, a temporary or permanent place for cooking, storing of personal belongings, or sleeping."

"People who are asleep are in danger of being attacked or having other problems. Frankly, in the fall of 2015, I was terrified that something bad would happen to the folks who were sleeping outside," Trachtenberg said.

Bass said she doesn't think much would have changed in 2015 if the rule had been enforced.

"The only that probably would've changed was the visual representation of us trying to get our point across," Bass said. "I'm pretty sure everyone would've still fought for what they believe in."

The Ad Hoc Joint Committee on Protests, Public Spaces, Free Speech and the Press crafted the revised rules and regulations over a period of 15 months.

Sandy Davidson, a journalism and law professor at MU, was brought onto the committee to make sure the policies were in line with the First Amendment.

"I was interested in following the lead of the U.S. Supreme Court. That's always the bottom line," Davidson said.

She said the policies needed to be aligned with the First Amendment.
"We did have to consider things such as safety and the use of facilities to which they've been dedicated. So, it's a balancing," Davidson said.

When suppressing freedom of expression, the important thing to look at is the intent of said suppression, she said.

"When you get into the notion of camping, are there valid reasons for wanting to restrict camping? The answer is yes. There's safety reasons, there's maybe hygiene reasons," Davidson said.

Trachtenberg said, "I have tremendous respect for the protesters who were out during the fall of 2015, and I understand that being outside helped them get their message, but nonetheless, the university has safety concerns."

Davidson said the best way to get a message across is to innovate.

"Protest, follow the rules, but also be creative," Davidson said.

The Missouri Students Association has created a Google form looking for feedback from students on the policies.
COLUMBIA — Carolyn Henry will become the interim dean of MU's College of Veterinary Medicine on Aug. 1. She will succeed Dean Neil Olson, who said earlier this week that he would step down.

MU Provost and Interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes announced Henry's appointment on Friday. She said a national search will begin in the fall.

Olson is leaving MU for a position at St. George's University in Grenada, he said Wednesday. He became the fifth dean within the last 14 months to announce a departure, according to previous Missourian reporting.

Henry said Friday that she is "very honored" to accept the interim role.

"It’s a big responsibility, but it’s truly an honor to represent folks that I’ve been working with for 20 years that I really consider my family,” Henry said.

Henry serves as associate dean for research and graduate studies at the College of Veterinary Medicine and as associate director of research at Ellis Fischel Cancer Center. She was the first One Health/One Medicine facilitator for Mizzou Advantage, an initiative of the University of Missouri to attract outside funding for university research projects.

"I am confident she will provide clear vision and direction for the College of Veterinary Medicine during her tenure," Stokes said in a Friday news release.

Henry said she plans to apply for the permanent job in the fall.
“Coming in the door, we’re faced with some pretty daunting budgetary decisions, so that’s going to be the first priority,” Henry said of the interim post. “But beyond that, I think we’ve got tremendous ability at this university to take advantage of how the vet school coordinates with the other colleges on campus, and I’d like to foster that as well as improve our overall reputation nationally and internationally.”

Common chemical found to change behavior, sex organs of turtles

This story was generated by an MU News Bureau press release: Exposure to BPA Potentially Induces Permanent Reprogramming of Painted Turtles’ Brains

By Rudi Keller

New findings from University of Missouri research showing a common chemical changes the behavior and sex organs of turtles will be the cover feature for a major academic journal.

The research, the latest in a series studying Bisphenol A, or BPA, used painted turtles, a semi-aquatic species common in Missouri and across the United States. Embryonic turtles were exposed to concentrations of BPA similar to levels found in the environment, said Cheryl Rosenfeld, associate professor of biomedical sciences, and research faculty member in the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurobehavioral Disorders.

When researchers examined juvenile turtles, they found males with sex organs that resembled females. The males also engaged in behaviors more typical of females, including improved memory and spatial navigation, Rosenfeld said.

“If you think of sea turtles, they have to return to their natal beach where they hatched, many, many years later to lay eggs,” Rosenfeld said. “The females have to have a memory, while males don’t have to have that ability because they don’t engage in that behavior.”

BPA is a chemical added to plastics in products as varied as compact discs to food can linings. It is banned for use in infant formula packaging. Because it is not broken down, BPA is entering
the environment through sewer systems, said Rosenfeld, one of eight scientists from MU, Westminster College and the St. Louis Zoo listed as authors of the latest research.

Rosenfeld also has worked on research that found male deer mice indirectly exposed to BPA in the womb had poorer navigation skills and less success mating.

The latest research will become a cover feature of the journal Physiological Genomics’ website. BPA producers have disputed research from Rosenfeld and others and the American Chemistry Council has a website devoted to countering public concerns. Spokesman Steve Hentges, in an email, wrote that numerous government studies have determined BPA is safe. The turtle research doesn’t change that conclusion, he wrote.

“This single study conducted at the University of Missouri provides little information or data relevant for human health,” Hentges wrote.

Painted turtles can warn humans of potential health risks because they are an indicator species that shows what is happening in the environment, Rosenfeld said.

“It does raise the issue, if it is happening in a turtle, it may be happening in people,” she said. “The same brain spaces that control spatial learning in turtles control it in us as well.”

Better spatial navigation can sound like a good thing. Rosenfeld said, when it means finding a car in a parking lot. For turtles, it could be a danger sign for the species.

“If the males are showing female behaviors now, they are not going to show classic male behaviors they need to do to attract females,” she said.

Because of the long time it takes for them to reach sexual maturity, researchers were unable to study mating in the altered turtles.

Rosenfeld and her fellow researchers studied how genes work in turtles exposed to BPA. Painted turtles do not have sex chromosomes; instead the sex of each individual is determined by temperature during incubation, with cooler temperatures producing male turtles and warmer temperatures resulting in females.

All animals of a species have the same genetic makeup. Individual characteristics depend on how those genes are expressed through creation of proteins. A skin cell becomes a skin cell instead of a liver cell because of the particular genes expressed, Rosenfeld said.

Turtles exposed to BPA were incubated at temperatures that would produce males in normal conditions. By studying the way the genes were expressed a year after exposure, researchers could identify individuals exposed to BPA with no difficulty, Rosenfeld said.

Whether the chemical should be banned is a question for policymakers, Rosenfeld said. But products containing BPA in the packaging, especially food and drink products, should be labeled so people can limit their exposure, she said.
Painted turtles are exposed to BPA because it gets into surface water through sewage systems. That means it also gets into drinking water taken from surface sources, Rosenfeld said.

“That is the problem. That is what I am trying to tell you,” Rosenfeld said. “It is not breaking down in the environment. They have looked over time and the concentrations are building.”

Editorial: Local hospitals

By Hank Waters

Boone Hospital Center trustees have begun public discussions about possible future management arrangements.

They have until the end of 2018 to inform BJC HealthCare of St. Louis whether they are willing to extend their management lease. By all indications neither party is interested. BJC does not regard Boone as favorably as in the past and the feeling is mutual. Under current lease terms a lot of money and control is ceded to St. Louis, and BJC will want to solidify or extend that situation. “No thanks,” local officials seem to be saying and for good reason, mainly to focus control and benefits of health care delivery to the local market.

Continued collaboration with BJC is antithetical to the growing sense we can do better building a world-class health delivery system attracting patients and money to Columbia. After all, we have the ingredients, a stable of doctors and other providers that hold their own against peers anywhere, and two very good hospitals whose assets can be blended into an even more competent and efficient whole.

So much for the lease with BJC, but what about the other three options Boone trustees are considering?

Two are lease solicitations from outside health delivery systems, Duke LifePoint of Tennessee and St. Luke’s Hospital of Kansas City. **On their face, these options would preserve damaging competition between Boone and MU and weaken rather than strengthen Columbia as a health care destination.** If BJC threatens to move patients toward St. Louis, St. Luke’s does the same for Kansas City perhaps even more aggressively. Lord knows how Duke wants to aggrandize its main operations in Tennessee.
The difference between an operating lease with an outside company and collaboration with MU is a difference in kind. By definition, if Boone trustees want to build a powerhouse local health delivery system their only real option is to work with MU.

The third option for Boone trustees is stand-alone management in which the trustees would try to compete in an ever more difficult health care environment. Wisely nobody, including a consultant hired by the trustees, thinks this is an option worth further consideration.

I’ve argued here before for a joint venture with MU HealthCare. The advantages are obvious. Patients, facility operators and health care providers all have much to gain from the kind of delivery powerhouse possible from local collaboration. Think of moving toward a Mayo Clinic holistic approach rather than the duplication and inefficiency of today’s parts-and-pieces competition. We have the ingredients to become the next big thing in health care.

Boone trustees are cautious in their public pronouncements. They are as yet unable to be decisive about their intentions regarding MU collaboration. To say MU is their preference is to say all other options are off the table. So far trustees are conscientiously denying a decision has been made, but let us hope quiet discussions are under way with MU on potential details of an agreement.

Trustees are obliged to spend political energy at this juncture convincing the world they are still open-minded, but soon enough their most diligent effort should turn to crafting a working arrangement with their obvious future partner across town.

When Boone and MU are thrust into an exclusive bargaining process both will have very strong reasons to make a deal. Short-sighted objections will be heard but positive arguments will be stronger. Boone trustees, university curators, physicians and other powers-that-be should dedicate their energy and intentions to a merger of unprecedented potential. We should all be excited about the prospect.
Mizzou touts progress of Springfield medical program after budget scare

By Will Schmitt

Fresh off surviving a budget scare, a Mizzou-backed medical program in Springfield is gearing up for its first birthday.

The Springfield Clinical Campus, which is a partnership between the University of Missouri School of Medicine, CoxHealth and Mercy Springfield, started last June and plans to see more than 60 MU medical school students through the end of their education by 2020.

University officials say they hope the program will help fill a shortage of doctors in rural areas, which is a problem in Missouri and across the country.

Scott Miller, who is in his fourth year at the University of Missouri's Springfield Clinical Campus, says he and his classmates have had a good experience in the two years he's been in the Queen City of the Ozarks studying to be a doctor.

"Throughout the year we've been so fortunate," Miller said. "We've worked one-on-one with doctors pretty much every day in various specialties at both Cox and Mercy.

The hope is that students like Miller stay in the area or at least in state, said Patrice Delafontaine, dean of the MU School of Medicine, who added that more than 60 percent of graduates stay in Missouri.

Delafontaine said the clinic represents the hopes of a long-term collaboration with both Mercy and Cox.

But in order to go "full-steam" next year, Delafontaine said, the program will need its funding restored.

The expansion was slated to receive $10 million, but Gov. Eric Greitens withheld $4 million in January, and his initial budget recommendations didn't fund the Springfield expansion at all.

$5 million dollars was eventually restored for next year, and the university drew on reserve funds to keep the program going this year. Delafontaine can't say whether the other half of the expansion's funding will be replenished, but he said he was optimistic.

The Springfield campus is tied into expansion plans in Columbia where the state's flagship university is located. A $42.5 million facility at MU is expected to open in July, according to a news release.
MU School of Medicine Celebrates 1st Anniversary for Springfield’s Clinical Campus

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=84d842bc-ee1b-4ab7-8444-cf27f520e7de

Telepsychiatry helps with mental health burdens in rural Missouri

By Michele Munz St. Louis Post-Dispatch, May 20, 2017

Holden Comer lives in Owensville, a town of 2,600 that is 22 miles from the nearest interstate highway in east central Missouri. When he was 5 years old, he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress and attention deficit disorders.

Holden saw his mom suffer domestic abuse, said his aunt Debbie Fischer, 52. He was mad all the time.

“He would lash out at other people. He tried to physically harm his mom at one point. He was getting into fights with his little brother,” said Fischer, who cares for Holden and his younger brother, Samual.
But like nearly all of rural Missouri, their county lacks a psychiatrist to treat him. Fischer takes Holden to a Pathways Community Health clinic five minutes away, where they talk to a psychiatrist each month through a television set up for live video conferencing.

The frequent virtual visits helped determine the medications Holden needed. At age 9, he is a different child, Fischer said. “Without these services, I don’t know where we would be. We would probably have to put him in a psychiatric ward.”

Missouri has seen a rapid growth in “telepsychiatry” services. Health providers see the technology as a powerful solution to the severe shortage of specialists able to diagnose and prescribe medications for mental disorders — a dangerous scenario that has contributed to higher rates of hospitalizations, emergency room visits, drug addiction and suicide in rural areas.

Compass Health Network, whose health care facilities serve rural residents across the state, provided more than 36,000 telepsychiatry sessions last year at its Pathways and Crider Health clinics in 26 cities. That is more than triple the 11,000 sessions provided just five years ago, officials say.

Mercy Health’s primary care clinic in Rolla began providing pediatric telepsychiatry to its patients five years ago and now reaches 650 children a year. Mercy is working to integrate the technology into more of its rural primary care clinics.

The state juvenile justice system has over the past three years equipped many of its residential facilities to receive telehealth care from psychiatrists at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, which is studying the impact in cost savings and health outcomes.

Whether it’s autism, depression, addiction or severe psychosis, providers say telepsychiatry allows them to intervene early and provide better care.

“Something that could be easily averted by treating a child early results in what becomes a huge issue socially, academically and financially,” said child psychiatrist Dr. Ujjwal Ramtekkar, who sees 70 percent of his patients using a computer from his West County home or the video conferencing equipment at the Crider clinic in Wentzville.
Fischer said with having to care for her elderly parents and Samuel, also just diagnosed with ADHD, the frequent visits that have been key to Holden’s success would have been impossible if she had to travel hours for care.

“It is a godsend,” she said.

Ending up in the ER

Federal data show one in five children have behavioral health problems. Most fail to get treatment because of issues such as cost, and lack of access and transportation.

In rural Missouri, where almost 40 percent of the state’s residents live, those problems are exacerbated. Of the 101 rural counties in Missouri, 98 lack a licensed psychiatrist.

Patients in rural areas would have to take off work or miss school to drive — if they had a car — several hours to and from an appointment, said Dr. Cathy Grigg, director of psychiatry services for Compass Health.

“We were putting our psychiatrists in the car and driving them to these very rural clinics, and that was really taking their time away from providing patient care,” Grigg said.

When treating mental health, timeliness is crucial, she said. Any lapse in medication can exacerbate symptoms. Medication may not work as well if a patient stops taking it and then starts again.

If a patient is referred to a psychiatrist but has to wait several weeks for an appointment, the patient may feel better by that time and not go — missing the opportunity for early diagnosis.

“They get worse if we don’t intervene,” Ramtekkar said. “We are missing that critical period of intervention.”

Problems can emerge between appointments, he said. “When there are red flags that a crisis is impending, we really want them to see a provider right away. Suddenly, things can get out of hand, and they end up in the ER.”
Telepsychiatry can also be used to fight opioid addiction, which killed more than 1,000 Missourians in 2015. Treating addiction requires careful monitoring and medication dosing to ease withdrawal, Ramtekkar said.

Rural residents fare worse than their urban counterparts when it comes to mental health. The Missouri health department looked at data between 2003 and 2013 and found that the rural rate of emergency room visits for behavioral disorders was 39 percent higher than the urban rate.

The suicide rate was 15.4 percent higher in rural areas, the report said. Overall, the suicide rate increased by 29 percent to become the 10th leading cause of death in Missouri.

Easier to talk to

Telepsychiatry has long been in the works to improve outcomes, Griggs said. Compass Health first provided the service on a small scale in 1992. Affordability and improvements in the technology have greatly increased access in recent years.

The Missouri Telehealth Network dates to 1994. The network educates providers about the technology, helps troubleshoot problems and connects patients to services. Over the past decade, the network helped leverage federal and state grants to purchase equipment and increase broadband Internet access across the state.

In a study released a year ago, the University of Missouri looked at how the network helped connect 179 rural children to pediatric psychiatrists, even fewer in number than psychiatrists, over a 10-month period. The study found the average distance a patient would have had to travel for care was 22 miles, and the farthest was 300.

“If it wasn’t for something like this, maybe they wouldn’t get any care,” said Mirna Becevic, MU assistant research professor of telemedicine.

Providers say psychiatry lends itself to the technology because it requires interviewing but little hands-on care.
“Most of the care is done verbally, by showing empathy and concern, showing your understanding, while guiding and coaching the person through the crisis,” Ramtekkar said.

Becevic said research shows patients are happy with the quality of care and some even prefer it. “They feel safer and feel like they can be honest and open,” she said.

Dr. Jasmine El Khatib, a pediatrician in Jefferson City, has been referring her patients to a telepsychiatrist since last fall. They get seen more quickly, she said, and the virtual collaboration enables her to better monitor their progress.

“If we can get them in as soon as possible and touch base with them and stay in contact with them, they are less likely to drop out of care,” El Khatib said. “I am able to keep tabs on them rather than things getting lost.”

How Virtual Therapy Can Lead To Real-World Healing

Virtual reality headsets and cameras can supplement and in some cases even improve occupational therapy.

By Evan Thomas

Watch the story: http://www.newsy.com/stories/medical-experts-test-virtual-therapy-s-real-world-benefits

Virtual reality's promise doesn't end with games and movies. Researchers and doctors are turning to VR for everything from neuroscience to psychiatry to occupational therapy.

Studies have found strapping on a headset can help treat phobias or post-traumatic stress disorder. In some cases, it can be just as effective as real-life exposure therapy.

But new research shows the benefits of virtual therapy go beyond the brain. Dr. Rachel Proffitt, assistant professor in the MU School of Health Professions, is exploring virtual reality games as a tool for occupational therapy, where patients rebuild everyday skills, like reaching for objects on high shelves or brushing their teeth.

"My focus is getting people back to that full normal-as-possible life after an injury, a disability, some sort of diagnosis," Proffitt said in a recent interview. "It involves the entire body — and I mean the entire body, brain included."

In her lab at the University of Missouri, Dr. Proffitt uses a Kinect camera and a virtual reality headset to gather information while the user plays games to help them recover.
The work patients do might be virtual, but they get the same real-world benefits as traditional therapy — and more. Research shows if you ask people to focus on an external goal, rather than on what they do to reach that goal, they perform better. That's what the game is for.

"It takes their mind off 'Oh, I just did 10 repetitions of this movement,'" Proffitt says. "They get immediate feedback from the game. They get sparkles and dings when they're successful."

Much of Proffitt's work probably wouldn't be possible if things like headsets and cameras weren't getting more capable and less expensive.

"It would take me two hours to gather all the data that I can get from just 30 minutes of somebody playing this game," Proffitt says. "Things are getting faster. You no longer need a large computer to run the Kinect. It runs on a regular laptop."

But VR as therapy is a new field, and VR as occupational therapy is even newer. A lot of Proffitt's early research is testing to see what's feasible and what's not, but the results already show her patients are making real-world gains. Eventually, she'd like to see VR therapy in hospitals, clinics and homes.

"I want somebody to get better; I want somebody to improve," Proffitt says. "'Now I want you to go into your kitchen and unload the dishwasher. Work on putting that cup up on the high shelf.' The game is sort of that stepping stone to get there."

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

MAY 19, 2017 12:22 PM

UMKC will cut about 30 jobs to counter drop in state support

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
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University of Missouri-Kansas City officials have announced that about 30 jobs are being cut in an effort to shave 3 percent from the campus budget.

The staff reduction — expected to be fewer than 30 posts — is in response to an announcement last month from University of Missouri System President Mun Choi. He said the four campus system needs to
cut 8 to 12 percent of its budget for fiscal year 2018 if it was going to manage an expected drop in state support.

Earlier this month the Missouri legislature passed a budget with a 6.58 percent decrease in core funding for universities statewide. That’s after a 7.6 percent withholding announced by the governor in January.

**At the University of Missouri Columbia campus, lost revenues would also come from a dramatic drop in enrollment. Earlier this week MU announced it would cut 400 positions.**

When asked for more details about whether jobs UMKC is cutting meant people were being let go or whether just positions being eliminated, spokesman John Martellaro said the university would not say more than what was in a statement released prior to the layoff announcement Thursday.

A statement released May 9 from UMKC leaders, including Chancellor Leo Morton, said the university’s plan to reduce spending would occur “over the next two years to produce the estimated $20-$30 million in savings that will be required by recent cuts to state funding and other pressures we face in the highly competitive environment of higher education.”

The statement said that as the university institutes its strategy to reduce spending, “some positions will remain unfilled. Others will stay open for at least 60 days to accrue savings.”

The only positions that would be considered for approval to be filled will be those that are “mission-critical and 100 percent grant/externally funded positions.”

UMKC leaders also asked campus department heads to look for other ways to save, including cutting unnecessary travel and memberships, and searching for efficiencies in services and purchasing.

UMKC and the other three campuses in the system will turn in their budget strategy to the UM System president next month. But UMKC leaders said that after that discussions about savings will continue for the foreseeable future.
UMKC to cut about 30 jobs to save money
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, May 19, 2017

KANSAS CITY — University of Missouri-Kansas City officials say the school plans to cut about 30 jobs as part of efforts to reduce the campus budget.

University of Missouri System President Mun Choi said last month the system's four campuses must impose 8 percent to 12 percent budget reductions for fiscal 2018 to prepare for an expected drop in state aid.

Missouri-Kansas City announced the layoffs Thursday but added no details about which jobs will be eliminated.

The Kansas City Star reports that the university said earlier this month that the only positions considered for hiring would be those deemed "mission-critical" and 100 percent funded by grants or external funds.

The four system campuses were scheduled to turn budget strategies in to Choi next month.
What's the 'greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history'? We asked the experts

By Matt Pearce

Who is the most unfairly investigated U.S. politician of all time?

According to President Trump, he is.

In response to the news that a former FBI director, Robert S. Mueller III, has been appointed to investigate Russia’s role in the 2016 presidential election, Trump made the declaration Thursday on Twitter:

“This is the single greatest witch hunt of a politician in American history!”

For another opinion, we decided to ask 10 historians and political scientists.

They disagreed with the president, starting with his characterization of the investigation as a witch hunt. Several thought there are enough signs that Russia interfered with the election to justify a thorough look.

Moreover, the academics said there are plenty of truly frivolous political investigations and ginned-up controversies.

First, though, a word about an actual witch hunt: the 1692 Salem witch trials, which focused on allegations of witchcraft — including the use of magic to torture villagers — and ended with the executions of 20 men and women.

An often-invoked modern parallel is the campaign by U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee to expose communists in the 1940s and 1950s.

Yet that effort for the most part did not target elected politicians.

Political witch hunts in the U.S. date back to the early days of the republic, the experts said.

“Jacksonians attacked [President] John Quincy Adams for buying a billiard table, saying that he was using the people's money to purchase a gambling device,” Mark Cheatham, a professor of history at Cumberland University, wrote in an email.

As one of Adams’ critics charged in 1826: "When we find the fathers and matrons of our country engaged in persuading young men from practices which lead to destruction, we greatly fear that the too frequent answer will be, 'Why, the President plays billiards!'"
Less than two decades later, “Whigs attacked [President] Martin Van Buren for acting like a dandy, spending an exorbitant amount of money to refurbish the White House, and landscaping the White House grounds in the shape of an Amazon's bosom,” Cheatham said.

That’s not a joke. Rep. Charles Ogle of Pennsylvania alleged in a pamphlet that Van Buren’s “clever sized hills” appeared “designed to resemble and assume the form of AN AMAZON BOSOM, with a miniature knoll or hillock at its apex, to denote the nipple.”  

Then there was President Andrew Johnson, who opposed Reconstruction programs aimed at supporting African Americans after the Civil War ended in 1865. **Johnson was impeached and almost convicted by Congress “for very good policy and moral reasons, but on nakedly political charges,” Jeffrey Pasley, a history professor at the University of Missouri, wrote in an email.**

But in conversations with academics, one politician emerged above all others as the most unfairly targeted.

“As to unfair investigations, [historians] would point to the Republican attacks on Bill Clinton in the 1990s,” said Robert A. Goldberg, a professor of history at the University of Utah.

“I think most investigations of presidents have not been witch hunts, though some would say Bill Clinton is the victim of that,” Julian E. Zelizer, professor of history and public affairs at Princeton University, wrote in an email. “Meaning endless investigations into whatever people could find with the purpose of just getting him.”

“[It] began with business dealings in Whitewater and after years and millions of dollars wound up with Monica Lewinsky,” said Cornell W. Clayton, a professor of government and public policy at Washington State University.

Lewinsky was the White House intern with whom Clinton had an affair. Whitewater was the name of a real estate company with questionable practices that had included Bill and Hillary Clinton as investors. While more than a dozen people were convicted in the real estate inquiry, the president was absolved.

Congress impeached President Clinton on charges of obstruction and lying about having the affair, but then acquitted him.

Many conservatives supported the investigation into the Clintons and still view the couple with deep suspicion. The broader public came to view independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr critically. One Gallup poll showed 53% of respondents said Starr was acting like a "persecutor" compared to 39% who said he was acting more like a "prosecutor."

As for Trump, one political scientist, Alison Dagnes of Shippensburg University, said he was part of a witch hunt — one that Trump himself led.

“The biggest ‘real’ witch hunt of this century was perpetuated by none other than Donald Trump himself — the witch hunt of President Obama being born in Kenya,” Dagnes said.

Trump perpetuated the myth that Obama’s birth certificate from Hawaii was fake, fueling a conspiracy that lives on despite Trump’s acknowledgment last year that he was wrong.
“If there’s ever been a witch hunt, there’s that,” Dagnes said.

Long-suffering MU columns to undergo preservation work this summer

IDA SOPHIE WINTER, May 21, 2017

COLUMBIA — The six celebrated columns on the MU campus were built in 1842, just as wagon trains were heading west on the Oregon Trail.

Since then, the stones have been lashed by rain, scorched by flames and battered by sun and humidity. They have been scaled by students and painted by football fans and engineering majors.

Now, MU is preparing to restore and protect this landmark on Francis Quadrangle at a cost of $550,000. Over the summer, cracks will be smoothed and sealed with grout, loose stones will be attached with tiny metal pins, and veins will be sanded to prevent additional scars.

Scaffolding went up last week and work will begin Monday. According to Jeffery Brown, senior director for campus facilities at MU, the columns are structurally sound, so workers for the Joplin-based Mid-Con Construction Co. will perform only preservation work.

They will waterproof and preserve the columns by grinding down and sealing water-absorbent cracks with five types of grout. Moisture has settled into some of the cracks, Brown said, widening them during extreme temperature shifts and releasing loose stones.

The university has decided not to use a protective waterproof coating in this year's efforts, he added, as it might prematurely fail and be more costly to maintain over time than simply targeting the cracks and loose stones.
"When you think about the columns, you can't think about 20 years," Brown said. "You've got to think about 100 years."

Workers will use masonry conservation, which protects stone from natural elements. They will fasten loose and fractured stones to the columns with glue-coated micro-pins, the same technique used to join concrete sidewalk or road panels together to keep them from sinking unevenly into the ground. The pins are similar to those used in surgical procedures, Brown said.

Attention will also be given to the decorative scrolls, some broken, at the top of the columns. They have suffered more damage because they extend beyond the columns, shielding them from the elements.

The scrolls are also exposed to more rising heat on a daily basis, Brown said, and their decorative carvings let moisture collect in crevices, causing cracks and loosening stones.

To monitor shifts and fissures, 20 workers on the project will install six prisms beneath lead-coated copper caps on the tops of the columns. MU will use the tiny GPS devices to provide precise measurements of elevation and position.

The information will be transmitted to a station set up on the quadrangle's south side to track the columns’ expansion and contraction due to heat and humidity, and make recommendations on future preservation efforts.

The north side is in the best shape, Brown said, but extra work is needed on the south surface of the columns — which sustained the most damage from the 1892 fire — and on the east and west sides, which have had more sun exposure.

Neither Brown nor Majid Amirahmadi, the principal architect on the project, could predict how long the repairs would last.

"It is difficult to predict the longevity of any masonry conservation," said Amirahmadi, owner and principal of the International Architects Atelier in Kansas City. "We can say with certainty that it will preserve the landmark for many years to come."
The 43-foot Ionic columns were designed by A. Stephens Hill, also the designer of the state Capitol. They were built of limestone blocks from Hinkson Creek, each weighing 9 to 18 tons.

The columns are all that remains of MU’s original Academic Hall on the quadrangle. (The cornerstone was saved and is on display in Jesse Hall.)

The hall burned down in 1892 during a fire sparked by defective wiring in the space between the building’s chapel ceiling and library floor. The fire was intensified by gunpowder from 14,000 rounds of ammunition stored in the dome of the building by the Cadet Corps.

After the fire, the columns were nearly hauled away in August 1893 by members of the Board of Curators, who considered them unsafe and ugly. When an inspection showed they were structurally sound, however, a group of supporters — including Gardiner Lathrop, the first university president's son — rallied to preserve them.

The board reconsidered, although there were temporary plans to move two columns each to the north, west and east entrances of campus. Ultimately, the university decided the removal work would be too difficult.

There was also a notion at one time to build an arch over the top of the columns to "improve their beauty." That, too, was abandoned.

Over the years, the columns have been the focal point of many MU traditions. Graduating seniors walked around the columns before commencement until 1950, and for a time, only the seniors could sit beneath them.

Today, they are the site of the annual Tiger Walk for freshmen in the fall, when students head toward Jesse Hall, and the Senior Sendoff in the spring, when students reverse the journey.

The columns have also served as an international symbol of the university's reach, gracing many photographs and souvenirs. In 1921, a geologist reported that he had found a postcard of the columns in the small Peruvian town of Ambo during his fieldwork.
The row of six pillars has also survived plenty of human pressure. KU football fans painted the lower parts of the columns in 1926, and Washington University fans painted them red and green before a football game 11 years later. The columns had to be sand-blasted in 1958 after engineering students painted them green during St. Patrick's week.

The Missourian reported that twice in the 1950s, students scaled the columns to perch on top. (One, "Perching Paul" Ferber, did so in a red cape.)

Over the years, the columns haven't just been the target of pranksters. They have been drawn by art students, measured by future engineers and adapted as a stage set by theater majors.

While the columns can be fragile, the bases are made of concrete and more resistant to use by students and others.

The preservation work is expected to end Aug. 4, two weeks before freshmen stream through the columns for the 22nd annual Tiger Walk.
MU professor's link to Cherokee community powers her research

ALEJANDRA ARREDONDO, May 19, 2017

COLUMBIA — Her father has long hair, doesn't wear nice clothes and never told her what she couldn't do.

Whenever he saw a situation he considered unjust — in a grocery store, the post office or a restaurant — he intervened. Melissa Lewis, associate professor at MU's School of Medicine, said as a child she felt embarrassed having a parent who was "an activist in every setting."

But then she grew up and realized he was right. "You're supposed to to step up and take care of people," she said.

Ronald G. Lewis, Melissa's father, was the first Native American to earn a doctorate in social work. He was recognized as a social work pioneer by the National Association of Social Workers in 1974 and a longtime advocate on Native American issues.

As a medical researcher and scholar, Lewis is following a similar path as she advocates for a more holistic way of providing health care. For her, health isn't just what happens at a microbiological level; it encompasses a person's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Native people, she said, are much more likely to see health in that way.

Lewis came to MU from the University of Minnesota -Duluth. Being here, she said, has allowed her to be closer to her tribe in Oklahoma — the Cherokee. Her current research is based on a bike ride the tribe has been doing since 1984 called Remember the Removal. She's evaluating the impact of the program from a physical and behavioral health perspective of those who have participated.
A deeply spiritual journey

The annual event brings together 18- to 25-year-old members of the tribe for a ride from New Echota, Georgia, to Tahlequah, Oklahoma. It follows one of the routes of the Trail of Tears which was etched painfully into memory in the summer of 1839 when an estimated 17,000 Cherokees were forced by the U.S. government and military to leave their homeland in Georgia for Native American territory in Oklahoma, according to the Cherokee nation website. More than 4,000 Cherokees died on the journey.

In 2015, Tennessee Loy, 24, rode over the footprints of his ancestors, symbolically.

"It's a spiritual journey," he said. "You're tracing (Cherokees') steps, seeing what they could've seen."

Before going on the bike ride, participants train for four months. They learn how to ride a bike, exercise, eat healthy and gain the physical skills needed to endure the ride, said Will Chavez, 50, who participated in the first bike ride in 1984.

They also learn about their own history, culture and language.

Loy, who is finishing his sophomore year studying sociology at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, said after months of practice and training, the physical part wasn't the the real challenge for him — the mental element was.

"It opened my mind a little bit more," he said. "You realize how big of a life-changing event (the Trail of Tears) was for thousands of Cherokees."

When Remember the Removal started as a youth leadership program in the 1980s, one of its goals was to keep young people away from substance abuse and pave their way through high school, Lewis said.

Substance abuse among Native Americans is higher than the national average. In 2013, about 12 percent of Native Americans reported having used an illicit drug, according to a U.S. Department of Health report on drug use and health. The national average was 9.4 percent.

Missouri appeals judge's blocking of abortion restrictions

BY JIM SUHR/ASSOCIATED PRESS, May 19, 2017

KANSAS CITY — Missouri is asking a federal appellate court to put on hold a judge's order blocking abortion-restricting rules in the state, arguing the judge "categorically refused even to consider the state's evidence justifying its regulations."

The state's challenge Thursday to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals came a day after U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs refused to delay enforcing the preliminary injunction he issued last month in favor of Planned Parenthood affiliates with Missouri health centers.

The law requires doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals and that clinics meet hospital-like standards for outpatient surgery — restrictions Planned Parenthood protested as "medically unnecessary."

Only one licensed abortion clinic remains in the state — a Planned Parenthood center in St. Louis — partly as a result of Missouri's restrictions. The organization has said Planned Parenthood health centers in Kansas City, Columbia, Joplin and Springfield would provide abortions if the restrictions were scrapped.

Sachs has said he was bound by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in a Texas case and that the state has been denying abortion rights "on a daily basis, in irreparable fashion." He added that relief sought by Planned Parenthood "should be prompt, given the needs of women seeking abortions and the need for available clinics to serve their needs."
In his three-page ruling Wednesday, Sachs said abortion-seeking women in central and southwestern Missouri are limited to driving to a distant clinic, trying to abort the fetus themselves or with the help of a non-professional, or have an unwanted birth.

Sachs dismissed the state's insistence that it is protecting abortion patients' health in the litigation, writing that "the converse is demonstrably true."

"It is hard to believe that the state defendants would urge desperate women who reject the birthing option to avoid a clinic and seek the 'safety' of self-abortion or back-alley abortions, but they offer no logic or argument to the contrary," Sachs wrote. "They are asking the courts to maintain these unsafe options pending litigation."

Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley's office fired back Thursday, pressing to the 8th Circuit that Planned Parenthood, with the "sweeping" injunction, intends to offer abortions at sites "that do not satisfy the state's health-and-safety standards, posing an imminent threat to women's health and safety."

"The district court refused even to consider this evidence. This was plainly erroneous," Thursday's appeal read. By granting the injunction, "the district court ruled that it could not and would not consider the state's evidence."

Planned Parenthood has said that 1.2 million women of reproductive age live in Missouri. The agency's Kansas City center has offered medication-induced abortions and has said it would resume doing so if Missouri regulations in question were deemed unconstitutional.

Its Columbia center stopped offering the procedure — a nonsurgical type, induced with a pill — in 2015 after its only doctor performing medication-induced abortions lost needed privileges with University of Missouri Health Care.

Spokespeople for the regional Planned Parenthood affiliates told The Associated Press on Friday that the agencies have applied for licenses for their clinics in Kansas City and Columbia. They're hoping to offer abortion services there by this summer and are preparing to submit related applications to the state for the Joplin and Springfield sites.