University of Missouri System begins layoffs at headquarters

By Ashley Jost

ST. LOUIS • The University of Missouri System began a major round of layoffs at its Columbia headquarters Wednesday in a cost-cutting move that appears to at least initially be affecting its lobbying and public-relations operations.

As of Wednesday afternoon, several sources confirmed numerous employees had been let go in the university relations department. However, the extent of the job losses at the headquarters was not clear.

The 18-person university relations department houses federal and state lobbyists, the custodian of records and nine communications employees.

The layoffs precede a big announcement expected Friday from system president Mun Choi on the final decisions about budget cuts at the system and all four campuses: Columbia, Rolla, St. Louis and Kansas City.

A representative for the university system declined to comment Wednesday but said that layoffs would be part of Friday’s announcement.

Earlier this year, Choi instructed all campuses to propose cuts of 8 percent to 12 percent of their budgets, be it program elimination, layoffs or any other means.

Campus proposals became public in May so leaders could collect input from faculty, staff and students. But there was never a public proposal about cuts or changes to the university system. The entire budget process wraps up Friday with Choi’s anticipated announcement on Mizzou’s campus.

Choi came to the system in March from the University of Connecticut.

The system and particularly the flagship campus, Mizzou, have battled a politically charged climate after protests centered on issues of race rocked the leadership and led to the resignation of former system president Timothy M. Wolfe, after which then-Mizzou chancellor R. Bowen Loftin stepped down.
The Legislature has battled internally about funding for the university since then. Higher education across the board saw cuts after this past legislative session.

That, coupled with an anticipated drop in enrollment and tuition revenue at least the Columbia campus, have increased budget pressures on the system.

Choi has expressed multiple times that these cuts aren’t intended to meet the current budget constraints, but to go beyond that so the system and campuses can make “strategic” decisions in funding and hiring moving forward.

President Choi to address MU budget Friday as university faces $60 million in cuts


By Alyssa Toomey

**UM System President Mun Choi is inviting the MU community to attend a budget address Friday.**

In an email sent to campus Tuesday, Choi said he will share "key rescissions as well as strategic investments for the short term." He also said he will share "consolidations and centralization efforts to streamline our operation to support teaching, research and outreach."

The email came fewer than two weeks after a budget draft proposal for the University of Missouri was sent to President Choi. In the proposal, Interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes said MU is facing approximately $60 million in cuts for fiscal year 2018. She said the university has "identified strategies to reduce the FY18 budget by $40.6 million in recurring costs and $18.9 million in one-time costs."
"The proposed plan will unquestionably impact our workforce, facilities and the breadth of services we provide," Stokes wrote in a letter to President Choi. "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."

The proposal called for the elimination of more than 300 jobs, including 84 layoffs. Dr. Stokes also asked each college, school and division to cut their budgets by 12 percent, according to an email sent to campus on May 10.

President Choi's budget address will be livestreamed Friday. ABC 17 News will have full coverage.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**UM budget decisions to be released Friday**

*The decisions on $120 million in budget changes throughout the University of Missouri System will be revealed at 1 p.m. Friday when President Mun Choi makes an address at MU’s Stotler Lounge in the Memorial Union.*

On May 19, each campus submitted its plan to cover current budget shortfalls and create a pool of money for long-term investments. The largest totals were submitted by the Columbia campus, with $59.6 million in short-term cuts that include eliminating 328 jobs and long-term plans worth $21.4 million.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis campus has identified $14.7 million in cuts, the University of Missouri-Kansas City has proposed $15.5 million and the Missouri University of Science and Technology is cutting $8.7 million.

In Columbia, the job cuts include eliminating 147 vacant positions and laying off 84 employees. The remainder will be made up from retirements, non-renewal of contracts and voluntary separations. The largest number of payroll jobs to be cut in any academic area is in the College of Arts and Science, which will lose 66.8 positions, including 12 open and 17 filled faculty positions and 17.5 open and filled staff positions.

The presentation will be livestreamed on the UM System Budget and Planning webpage.
New petition filed in campus concealed weapons case

By Rudi Keller

The latest petition in a case pushing the University of Missouri to allow concealed weapons on campus is intended to better organize the lawsuit and speed up its resolution, Assistant Attorney General Ryan Bangert wrote in a motion filed Tuesday.

The new version of the lawsuit does not raise any new issues and no trial date has been set in the case, originally filed in August. It does, however, lay out in detail three demands that would resolve the issues.

Neither the UM System nor Attorney General Josh Hawley’s office would say whether any negotiations are underway to settle the case, a move that would require the university to rewrite its regulations governing guns on campus.

“We are continuing to litigate the case to enforce Missouri constitutional protections,” said Loree Ann Paradise, spokeswoman for Hawley.

UM spokeswoman Kelly Wiemann wrote in an email that the university would not comment on pending litigation.

The university’s policies were first challenged in court by School of Law Professor Royce de R. Barondes, who accused UM of violating state law and the state and federal constitution by its restrictions on firearms. Then-Attorney General Chris Koster in August filed a case on behalf of the state and intervened in Barondes’ lawsuit on his behalf. Hawley has continued the litigation.

The case, Bangert wrote in the latest petition, is intended “to vindicate the rights of University of Missouri Professor Royce Barondes and all other Missouri citizens whose right to keep and bear arms ... have been compromised by the President of the University of Missouri and the Curators of the University of Missouri.”

UM’s attorneys have not responded to the latest version of the lawsuit. In an answer filed in February, signed by attorney Robert Thompson, the university argued that it has not violated anyone’s rights. Instead, it has designed a rule to preserve safety on campus, he wrote.
“The rule is narrowly tailored to achieve its compelling interest in preserving the safety of the University’s sensitive environment and is consistent with both the state and federal constitutions,” Thompson wrote.

Hawley’s lawsuit does not ask the courts to make a blanket determination that concealed weapons should be allowed on campus. Instead, it asks the court to recognize that UM employees are state employees, covered by a law that allows them to have a firearm concealed in their locked, parked car while at work, that armed employees can move the weapon from the cab of the vehicle to the trunk when they arrive at work and that there should be a process for seeking individual permission to carry a weapon on campus.

In 2014, Missouri voters approved new rights for gun owners requiring all limits on the right to “bear arms, ammunition, and accessories typical to the normal function of such arms” to be subject to a “strict scrutiny” standard requiring a compelling interest to make them legal.

Missouri law allows people with concealed weapons permits to take them into most locations where concealed weapons are otherwise prohibited but that does not include higher education campuses. To carry a concealed weapon onto a college campus, a permit holder must have permission of the governing board, a law that is not being challenged in the lawsuit.

Barondes wants to keep a firearm in his locked vehicle, move it to the trunk when he arrives at work and he would “request permission from Defendants to carry a concealed firearm while at work but for the regulation and Defendants’ failure to establish a process for receiving and granting such requests on a case-by-case basis,” Bangert wrote.

Not allowing Barondes to keep the firearm in his car means he cannot possess a gun while on “an after-work service project in a high crime area” or attend a firearms course without returning home to retrieve it, Bangert wrote. That restriction, he wrote, “burdens substantially more constitutional rights than necessary.”

Bangert’s court filing includes hypothetical examples of people who may feel the need to carry a gun – an employee who obtains an order of protection against an abusive spouse or a faculty member “whose protected speech sparks country-wide vitriol and even threats ...”

The law allowing those individuals to carry a concealed weapon with permission if the university “provides no meaningful process for them to request and receive such permission in the first place,” Bangert wrote.
Curious Louis: Missouri’s term limits blamed for short-circuiting legislative relationships

By Jason Rosenbaum

Mike Meinkoth vividly remembers how term limits were sold to Missourians in 1992: By limiting lawmakers to eight years in the House and eight years in the Senate, proponents contended the General Assembly would become more responsive — and consistently get new members with fresh ideas.

More than 25 years after voters approved the constitutional amendment, Meinkoth wanted to know if those promises were kept. He asked

Curious Louis: “It’s been 25 years since term limits went into effect for state legislators. Has there been a study to determine the effect of these limits?”

“Let’s look at the data that’s been collected over 25 years and look back and run the data to see ‘Did this approach address that purpose?’” said Meinkoth, a Jefferson City resident who is a state employee.

The short answer: Yes. In 2013, David Valentine with the University of Missouri’s Institute of Public Policy concluded term limits did little to increase gender diversity in the legislature, and often attracted younger people to run for seats as they became open.

But lawmakers from both parties say the impact of term limits goes beyond data or numbers, making it harder for politicians to get along with each other, which in turn affects whether bills pass or fail.

Missouri is one of 15 states with term limits. Most of its neighbors, like Illinois and Kansas, allow senators and representatives to serve as long as voters will keep them.
With the limits, nearly every current member of the Missouri House and Senate started their legislative service after 2002 — a big change from when lawmakers hung around for decades.

Tracy McCreery doesn’t believe that’s a good thing. The Olivette Democrat worked for former Gov. Bob Holden and as a staffer to former Democratic state Sen. Joan Bray before winning election to the Missouri House.

McCreery, who has spent about four sessions in the House, said term limits give lobbyists more power because they’ve often been around longer than representatives or senators and know more about the issues.

Term limits make it harder for lawmakers forge close relationships, too, she said.

“When you start a new job anywhere, you’re motivated to get to know people that you work with. Because you’re like ‘this is a great company, I want to work here for a while. I want to be happy at work.’ And you’re motivated to find out about family and what their hobbies are and things like that,” McCreery said. “With term limits, there’s absolutely no motivation to get to know people.”

A less social legislature may not seem like that big of a deal. But many lawmakers, including Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin, said term-limited senators were more inclined to filibuster bills, especially because they didn’t have to go before voters again.

Richard, who was first elected to the Missouri House in 2002 and won an open Senate seat in 2010, said personality clashes affect the flow of legislation.

“I think that’s why I’m a little bit jaundiced about term limits,” the Joplin Republican said. “You can’t make a deal with somebody, because everybody knows you’re going to be gone, so people don’t need to keep their word.”

Others see an upside to what Richard was describing.

Because he’s barred from running for the legislature after 2018, St. Joseph Republican Sen. Rob Schaaf said he has more freedom to oppose some of his party’s leadership. He also hasn’t taken a political donation in years, which he says reduces the amount of political influence on his decision-making.

Richard and McCreery’s complaints are not new. But efforts to significantly change how term limits work haven’t gone very far, with the exception of allowing lawmakers elected in special elections to serve longer terms.

This year, lawmakers didn’t pass Rep. Dean Plocher’s proposal that would increase from eight to 12 years the maximum amount of time someone could spend in a legislative body. After they’ve hit the 12-year mark in the House or Senate, that person could serve four more years in the other chamber.
The Des Peres Republican still believes term limits are a good thing, but said lawmakers may gain expertise if they’re allowed to serve in the House or Senate for longer periods of time.

“Now I don’t know what percent might serve 12 years, certainly not everybody,” Plocher said. “But what we have now, there are accusations that lobbyists have a greater influence with term limits. And this, if that were true, would help cut back on that.”

As former Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder pointed out last year, voters would have to approve any change to the current system, and that could be a tough climb.

“The people grafted this onto constitution by a … supermajority, and it’s not going anywhere,” said Kinder, who served 12 years in the Missouri Senate and 12 years as lieutenant governor. “I understand the arguments against term limits, but I’ve seen it move some awfully capable people into public office that might now have ever had a chance.”

There’s more turnover to come: More than 25 percent of the members in the Missouri House and the Missouri Senate will depart in 2018 due to term limits.

MU releases new policies on protests and use of public spaces

By Marie Bowman

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri released new policies about how the campus community and visitors can use public spaces and protest.

The committee that was responsible for these policy changes, the Ad Hoc Joint Committee on Protests, Public Spaces, Free Speech and the Press, met in Feb. 2016. After an extensive approval process, the policies were approved on April 20 of this year and go into effect June 1.

"It’s often said that out of challenge comes opportunity. After the stressful events our campus experienced in the fall of 2015, our campus – students, staff and faculty – has exercised leadership in developing policies that promote free expression, celebrate peaceful protest and
Sheena Greitens: A one-on-one interview with Missouri's First Lady


JEFFERSON CITY — She is known as the woman who is married to the Governor of Missouri, but, Sheena Greitens has her own list of accomplishments.

Besides holding the title of Missouri's First Lady, Sheena is also a college professor, and the proud mother of two young boys.

How she juggles her multiple roles is similar to many working moms, "One day at a time! Definitely," she said.

Regardless of their tight schedules, both Sheena and Eric are clear on their priorities, "We really try to make sure that our kids and our family come first," Sheena said.

Sheena and her family realize the privilege of living in the Governor's Mansion.

"This is the house that belongs to all of the people of Missouri," Sheena said with a smile.

To make certain Missourians know the home belongs to them, Sheena and the governor have invited people to the mansion who may not have visited before.

"We've had dinners with special needs teachers and foster families. The Easter Egg hunt is a long tradition here we were happy to continue," she said.

Their boys, nearing ages three and one, are always on the go in the mansion.
"They're a little bit young to be sliding down the banisters yet, so as mom I'm relieved about that," she said.

But the boys certainly have their much-needed play areas, "They love the yard in particular. They love to go spray things with the hose and help with the watering and chores."

Missourians know Eric Greitens from a political aspect, but to Sheena, he means something different.

"I mean to me, he's a husband and a father, so when I think about who he is, I think about Joshua seeing him and the way his face lights up when his dad walks through the door and is running over 'daddy daddy' and wants to tell him about 'I saw a flatbed truck on the way home from preschool today which is one of the things he was really excited to tell his dad about last week,' Sheena said." Or the way Jacob, our baby, will sort of see his dad come in and will start banging on the high chair or go crawling over to see his dad," Sheena said.

**Besides her role as a mom and the First Lady of Missouri, Sheena is a professor at the University of Missouri in Columbia.** She teaches classes on democracy and dictatorship, as well as American Foreign Policy in East Asia.

"East Asia's a part of the world where a lot has gone well," Sheena said. "When you look at economic development you look at how many countries have transitioned in democracy, and then there's also some real serious things for the United States and the countries in the region that they need to grapple with, whether that's what's happening inside North Korea, North Korea's missile program, some of the things going on in China and the South China Sea."

She has a personal reason for the interest, "when I was in third grade, my parents adopted my younger sister from Korea."

And while she has many accomplishments of her own, Sheena Greitens along with her husband Governor Eric Greitens share the same hopes for the future of Missouri.

"When we think about our vision and what we're trying to do for the next four years, a lot of it has to do with what do we want for our kids and for all of the kids in the state," Sheena said. "What kinds of community, what kind of homes, what kind of state and country do we want for them?"
Non-tenure-track faculty members at Northwestern University have narrowly voted to form a union represented by the Service Employees International Union Local 73, the Chicago Tribune reports.

In June 2016 a group of instructors petitioned the National Labor Relations Board to hold a union election, citing concerns that the university was assigning too many teaching duties to non-tenured faculty members and relying less on tenured professors.

Instructors voted on whether to unionize in July 2016, but the election results were delayed because the number of ballots was contested. This month the ballots were finally counted, and unionization was approved, 229 to 219. The university now faces collective bargaining with faculty members in the union about their pay and employment conditions.

The union could include more than 675 part-time and full-time faculty members at some but not all constituent schools and colleges at Northwestern.