



MU News Bureau

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MISSOURIAN

MU-UM BUDGET ROUNDUP: Laid-off IT workers locked out of HR info

By Nadav Soroker and Gabriela Velasquez

COLUMBIA — UM System and MU information technology employees who were laid off due to budget cuts were locked out of the myHR website, which houses information about all their paid-leave balances, payroll and compensation, retirement and benefit information, and links to information about other jobs in the UM System.

Christian Basi of the MU News Bureau said human resources officials and Division of IT supervisors made a joint decision to lock out the employees "due to the sensitive nature of the information they had access to previously."

Employees can get their information or perform other tasks normally accomplished through myHR by contacting human resources or their former supervisors to do it for them, Basi said.

Brennan Hobart, a graphic designer who was laid off from a job in IT, said he has no former supervisor to contact because the entire marketing/communications department has been dissolved. The human resources division employees he has talked to have given him conflicting information about what kind of access he still has and what to do next, he said.

Ag journalism alumni want to save program

Students in the MU Science and Agricultural Journalism Program were told Monday that it is going away. Current students will be able to finish their degrees, program chair Sharon Wood-Turley said in an email.

"I need to share the news with you that due to the severe budget crisis the University is in, they have made the decision to 'phase out' the Science and Ag Journalism Program," Wood-Turley said.

By Wednesday, the news had riled alumni of the program who said they would fight to save it from the budget ax.

The 95-year-old program is a cooperative effort of the School of Journalism and the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. One of its top faculty members, Bill Allen, retired in May after 13 years at MU.

Of the program's 16 graduates in 2016-17, nine found employment, four are attending graduate school, and two were interviewing, with one reporting uncertain plans, Wood-Turley said.

Thirty students are enrolled in the program, and three have been admitted for the fall semester. Two of those admitted have paid their deposits, Christian Basi of the MU News Bureau said in a Wednesday email.

Marilyn Cummins on Wednesday described the news as a punch to the gut. An associate editor at Red Barn Media Group and 1980 MU graduate, Cummins praised the specialized knowledge she gained through the agriculture journalism program and said it was the reason she was hired straight out of college.

"I truly believe that there is a value to the state and to the university and to the general public to keeping this specialized training going," Cummins said.

Tyne Morgan hosts the U.S. Farm Report, a nationally broadcast weekly show about agriculture, and graduated from MU in 2008. Agriculture journalism, she said, is the only reason she chose MU.

"I had a wide array of agriculture knowledge as well as the experience from being in the journalism school," Morgan said.

Cummins and Morgan also emphasized the value of the networking they were able to do through conducting their studies in both the agriculture and journalism schools.

"I still have those relationships today. I still utilize those relationships today," Morgan said.

Although small, the agriculture journalism program produced a Truman Scholar, a Truman Scholar finalist and a member of Mizzou '39 in 2017. Graduates of the program consistently go straight from school into a career.

"Try to find an unemployed agricultural journalism student. Just try," Mike Deering, executive vice president of the Missouri Cattlemen's Association, said in a Wednesday e-mail. Deering graduated from MU in 2004.

"When I graduated from ag journalism, every other person with that major had a job lined up," said Morgan, who graduated from MU in the midst of the Great Recession.

A group of ag journalism alumni are in the process of drafting a letter to MU administration asking them to save the program. Alumni also have taken to Twitter to voice their support, using the hashtag #SaveMUAJ.

"I understand budget cuts more than anyone, because right now I'm reporting on budget cuts that are impacting farmers and ranchers throughout the country," Morgan said. "I just don't want to see ag journalism be on the chopping block."

Alumni plan to continue to organize their efforts through social media.

"There comes a time when you have to speak up and make a little noise," Deering said. "I join a lot of alumni in that effort."

MU emergency management director laid off

Eric Evans, the director of emergency management at MU, confirmed Tuesday that he no longer has a job. Basi said in an email that his responsibilities are being absorbed by employees in the MU Police Department and in Environmental Health and Safety.

Heiman to lead MU-UM communications

Suzette Heiman, director of planning and communications and professor of strategic communications at MU, has been appointed interim executive director for a new UM System and MU campus communications office.

Heiman will take over as head of the new Joint Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing immediately.

According to a UM news release, the office is part of "a series of reorganizations and consolidations across the four-campus UM System that are expected to streamline operations and free resources that can be reinvested in the university's highest priorities."

Heiman said that in her new position, she plans to strengthen UM's branding presence and streamline communications.

"Students are doing so many incredible things" on this campus, Heiman said. "We need ways to be able to really share those stories with people."

In the release, Heiman was called a "recognized national leader in strategic communications" by UM System President Mun Choi, MU Provost and Interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes and MU Chancellor-designate Alexander Cartwright.

Heiman has worked for MU since 1989, when she joined the MU School of Journalism as a faculty member. She is a 1973 graduate of the School of Journalism.



City Manager: enrollment drop, cuts will have "noticeable, negative impact" on Columbia's economy

Watch story: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/city-manager-enrollment-drop-cuts-will-have-noticeable-impact-on-columbias-economy/531282696>

By Taylor Petras

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Columbia city leaders are facing several challenges as they finalize next year's budget. That includes a continuing decrease in sales tax revenue and a university that just announced millions of dollars in budget cuts, layoffs as well as a drop in enrollment.

"These problems will have a noticeable, negative impact on Columbia's economy as a whole," said City Manager Mike Matthes during the annual State of the City address Wednesday. "What do these problems mean to city government? Well, we have and will continue to have a serious revenue problem."

Total undergraduate enrollment at Mizzou dropped 6.8 percent from the Fall 2015 to Fall 2016 semesters. As of May, 4,009 freshman students had submitted their deposits for the Fall 2017 semester, making it the smallest freshman class in at least the past decade.

Matthes said the drop in enrollment will mean less students shopping in Columbia and renting apartments or houses.

"The student housing boom is over, for now," he said. "Thank goodness we had a pause in that development."

Matthes also noted the more than 300 positions being eliminated at the university having an impact on the city's economy.

Mayor Brian Treece compared the jobs cuts at Mizzou to a major factory closing in Columbia. Treece told ABC 17 News he met with university leaders recently to brainstorm ways to work together to build an economic development relationship.

"We need to reinvigorate the university and keep bright minds here," he said.



(AAAS science news website; more than 690,000 unique visitors per month)

Buzzing ‘bee song’ tells farmers which crops will produce

By Michael Price

Jun. 7, 2017, 2:00 PM

Generated from News Bureau press release: [Bee Buzzes Could Help Determine How to Save their Decreasing Population](#)

Candace Galen, professor of biological science in the MU College of Arts and Science, led the study.

Like jets radioing in their call signs to air traffic control, bees’ buzzing could help scientists know who’s pollinating what over large swaths of land, leading to better farming methods and more productive crops. In the past, farmers have relied on visual surveys for insight into pollinator activity—a time-consuming and expensive process. But one team of researchers thought the bees’ buzzes might do a better job of giving them away. So they cataloged the body traits of different bees—like tongue length, wing length, and body size—that influence both which plants they pollinate and the acoustic frequency of their buzzing. The researchers then nailed down the acoustic signatures of two bumble bee species near Boulder, Colorado, *Bombus balteatus* (above) and *B. sylvicola*.

The researchers used field recording equipment to listen for those frequencies in different wildflower patches over two flowering seasons. The buzzes alone allowed the researchers to [estimate the number of bees in a given area](#), they report today in *PLOS ONE*. What’s more, by systematically excluding certain bee traits—like shorter tongues—and then tracking which plants got pollinated in a given area, they were able to link certain acoustic frequencies to the successful pollination of different flowering clovers, including *Trifolium dasyphyllum* and *T. parryi*. That means that they could—in theory—figure out which bees are where, and what work they do, during each pollinating season. And by actively monitoring the soundscapes around their fields, growers could know whether they have the right bees for the job—or whether they need to call in reinforcements.



(AAU science news website; more than 1 million unique visitors per month)

[These speed limit signs could make roads safer](#)

Posted by [Jeff Sossamon-U. Missouri](#) June 7th, 2017

Generated from News Bureau press release: [Variable Speed Limits Could Reduce Crashes, Ease Congestion in Highway Work Zones](#)

Using variable speed limits in construction zones may reduce the number of crashes, decrease traffic congestion, and make work zones safer for travelers and workers alike, new research suggests.

With assistance from the Missouri Department of Transportation, researchers tested the use of variable advisory speed limit (VASL) systems and the effect they may have on lessening congestion and reducing rear-end and lane-changing accidents on a fairly dangerous stretch of I-270, a major four-lane highway in St. Louis.

[“The idea was to see if warning drivers of slower speeds ahead helped reduce crashes,” says Praveen Edara, associate professor of civil and environmental engineering in the University of Missouri College of Engineering.](#)

“Where there is queueing, if drivers are not aware of the queue downstream, they don’t have enough time to hit the brakes to slow down or stop, thus, increasing the likelihood of a crash,” Edara says. “Instead of posting a message asking them to slow down, the VASL system posts an advisory speed limit based on the actual downstream traffic speed, so drivers would know that if they’re driving 50 mph, they should slow to 30 mph downstream.”

Edara’s data collection and simulation analysis uncovered a few key pieces of data. First, the use of VASL systems is effective in gradually slowing drivers as they enter work zones. VASL use resulted in a 39 to 53 percent decrease in average queue length, and just a 4 to 8 percent increase in travel time.

Additionally, using VASL meant that maximum speed differences also decreased by as much as 10 mph, and the chance of rear-end collisions dropped by 30 percent. Researchers also noted a

20 percent decrease in lane changing conflicts. Essentially, travel time was slightly longer, but lines were shorter and collisions were less frequent.

“You can get both safety benefits and mobility benefits by deploying variable advisory speed limit systems in work zones,” Edara says.

The study appears in the *[Journal of Transportation Safety and Security](#)*.



(Kansas City Public Radio “Central Standard” program)

[MU researcher discusses oldest fossil of human spine](#)

Generated from News Bureau press release: [3.3 Million-Year-Old Fossil Reveals the Antiquity of the Human Spine](#)

Listen to the story: <http://kcur.org/post/science-fiction-novella-spine-fossil-research-and-new-soul-revival-ep#stream/0>



CBCradio

(Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; More than 5 million unique visitors per month)

Why therapists shouldn't approve their own patients' emotional support animals

Emotional support animals do not have any training requirements under U.S. law

Generated from News Bureau press release: [Study Reveals Recommendations for Certifying Emotional Support Animals](#)

A growing number of therapists are certifying their patients' pets as emotional support animals, allowing people to take their cats, pigs and birds on planes and into rental homes even though it may not be medically necessary, a recent study suggests.

Researchers asked 87 mental health professionals to review current laws and policies for determining when animals may qualify as emotional support animals in the U.S., including federal transportation requirements for air travel. Then, researchers questioned these professionals about how support animals should be certified.

Overall, about 31 per cent of the survey participants said they had previously recommended emotional support animals for people. However, 36 per cent of them said they didn't feel qualified to make these recommendations, including two practitioners who had done so in the past.

Study co-author Jeffrey Younggren of the University of Missouri explained the difference between service animals and emotional support animals.

"Service animals are formally trained to perform specific healthcare duties/function and their training matches the patients' needs and they are not considered pets," he told Reuters Health by email. "This is a formal process."

"However, emotional support animals do not have any training requirements under the law nor

are these certifications limited to dogs," Younggren said. "Ducks, turkeys and potbelly pigs have all been certified by somebody as emotional support animals."

Unconditional support

Federal and state laws regulating emotional support animals (ESAs) often are convoluted and constantly changing, Younggren and his colleagues note in a report of their study, which is scheduled for publication in the journal *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*.

For example, landlords who normally prohibit pets must allow ESAs and waive any fees or pet deposits.

Airlines are required to allow ESAs to accompany their owners in the main cabins of aircraft.

The mental health professionals in the survey believed certifying emotional support animals can sometimes be appropriate, the survey found.

But to sidestep potential legal and ethical problems, clinicians should not certify animals for patients they are already treating, the researchers argue. Mental health professionals who work in courts of law and who don't have a prior relationship with a patient may be better able to make an impartial decision on whether an emotional support animal might actually benefit that person.

These evaluations should be done with the same thoroughness and impartiality that is found in evaluations for any disability, the researchers also argue. This may require the development of professional guidelines for what assessments are done, who conducts them and how they are completed.

Many mental health professionals may not understand that a conflict of interest exists when a patient asks for an animal to be certified because they want to make the patient satisfied and keep the patient engaged in therapy, said Dr. Paul Cherniack, a researcher at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine who wasn't involved in the study.

Another issue is that clinicians may rely on subjective reports from patients about how animals help them, especially in the absence of objective ways to measure the therapeutic benefits of these animals, Cherniack said by email.

"I believe there is no evidence yet that emotional support animals benefit people's health," Cherniack said. "Other service animals like seeing eye dogs are different."

While better guidelines and standards for certifying emotional support animals is needed, there is

some evidence to suggest that pets do have the potential to comfort people with mental health problems, said Dr. Helen Brooks of the Mental Health Research Group at the University of Manchester in the UK.

"Pets helped their owners manage feelings by distracting them from symptoms and upsetting experiences such as hearing voices and suicidal ideation and provided a form of encouragement for activity," Brooks said, who wasn't involved in the current study, said by email. "Pets provided secure relationships and unconditional support which were often not available elsewhere."

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

When Fraternities Go Underground, Problems Surface

NO MU MENTION

BY KATHERINE MANGAN June 7, 2017

Fifteen years ago, Alpha Tau Omega's American University chapter had its charter yanked after a long string of hazing and alcohol violations. But instead of disbanding, the brothers of Epsilon Iota — the name given to the chapter — went underground. They continued recruiting and hazing new members and hosting raucous parties, but now with even less oversight than before. In short, the fraternity went rogue. And like other offshoots that spring up after national organizations or colleges try to shut Greek groups down, Epsilon Iota became more reckless once it was freed from the rules that apply to others.

In 2014, some 70 pages of lurid [emails and text messages](#) surfaced in which people who were believed to be members [bragged about](#) abusing drugs and raping drunk women.

Students [demanded](#) that the university crack down. Until recently, the most it determined it could do was to warn students and their parents year after year to stay clear of Epsilon Iota.

The Washington, D.C., university isn't alone.

A national furor over sexual assaults, dangerous drinking, and hazing is putting pressure on colleges to shut down problematic chapters. But administrators often struggle to contain groups that revive themselves after the hammer falls.

Some colleges have tried to ban participation in the groups, which include sororities, and the national organizations blame the breakaway chapters for sullying their reputations. Aside from issuing caution, everyone says their hands are tied.

Underground fraternities "are recruiting students and actively thumbing their noses at the universities," said Gentry R. McCreary, a consultant with the Ncherm Group, a firm that advises colleges on risk issues, including behaviors like hazing and problem drinking.

If these groups are hard to control at private universities like American, "they're impossible to regulate at public schools," said Mr. McCreary, who is a former director of Greek affairs at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. "You can't restrict people from associating with anyone they want to associate with."

And for some students, there's a certain cachet to belonging to an underground frat.

"The way they see it, no one's checking IDs at the door and they have a lot more freedom," said Hank Nuwer, a professor of journalism at Franklin College and a national expert on hazing. "As a grandparent, they scare the heck out of me, but they aren't going to scare an undergraduate."

A few years ago, a fraternity humor website listed the pros and cons of ["going rogue."](#) Among the pros:

"Dry rush enforcement and hazing allegations and all that other garbage superiors hold over your heads like a guillotine would be a thing of the past."

Warnings and Monitoring

Colleges face a huge range of challenges when trying to crack down on unauthorized groups, but that hasn't stopped them from trying.

Officials at the University of Pennsylvania announced in April that they would begin [monitoring behavior](#) at unrecognized fraternities and sororities that operate off campus. Those groups, some of which formed after Greek chapters were kicked off campus, will have to adhere to the same hazing and alcohol standards as recognized Greek groups.

Story [continues.](#)