



MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

July 19, 2017

University of Missouri in a ‘very critical period,’ Choi says

By Rudi Keller

The latest round of bad press about the University of Missouri has system President Mun Choi worried.

A July 9 New York Times report that the administration blames fallout from the November 2015 protests for a 35 percent drop in new freshman enrollment touched off a new round of stories nationally about the university’s problems. A July 10 article in the Washington Post about a “culture war” targeting universities used a photo of the Concerned Student 1950 protests.

The university remains in the spotlight and must get its image corrected and market itself properly to regain its footing and start rebuilding the lost enrollment, Choi said Tuesday. That means being more inclusive, more welcoming and having all university functions, from campus to extension, working together, he said.

“If we don’t do that, we are going to have another New York Times article, another Washington Post article, and we won’t recover,” Choi said. “This is a very critical period.”

Choi made his remarks during a Board of Curators development meeting at the Bradford Research Farm. The session began at noon Tuesday with a general discussion of what excellence means for the university and included sessions on engagement, student success and enrollment. The meeting concludes Wednesday with a look at research plans and how to unify the 52-year-old system.

The measures Choi chose to determine whether system campuses are meeting his standards for excellence suggest they are not. Choi took over March 1 and has spent most of his tenure deciding on budget cuts to cover lower enrollment and state support while freeing money for new investments.

Many of the institutions the Columbia campus chose as its peers in a 2012 Chronicle of Higher Education survey did not choose MU, Choi said. And in U.S. News and World Report rankings, the Missouri University of Science and Technology fell to 164th this year from 128th in 2010. The reasons include larger classes, a decline in the freshman-to-sophomore retention rate and lower rankings for faculty pay and overall finances.

“When you add more students but don’t increase appropriations or increase tuition, you will have this ratio going down and the rank going up,” Choi said. “It becomes a situation where the university cannot maintain its quality.”

Engagement is the process of making people aware of the university and what it provides to the state. Officials hope the results will be seen in greater support from lawmakers and more alumni contributions.

The session was led by Marshall Stewart, who said the university must be seen to be putting Missouri first as it provides economic and educational opportunities. And the entire system must think of itself as the university. One change he's making, he said, is to have the phone answered "University of Missouri" instead of "MU Extension" at county extension offices.

The university needs to know how to brand itself, Curator David Steelman said.

"Over the years, somehow the extension got divorced from the university," he said.

And most people don't know what the UM System means, Steelman added.

"The word 'system' doesn't mean diddly to the people of this state," he said.

Work on engagement should go where it will do the most good, said Curator Phil Snowden.

"To think we are going to engage legislators and get a 3 percent increase seems to me to be a little Pollyannaish," Snowden said.

Only 10 to 15 percent of alumni give annually to the university, while other SEC schools achieve rates closer to 30 percent, he said.

The enrollment issue is both how many students to accept and how much to charge them. The discussion included consideration of offering in-state tuition in adjacent states, joining the 15-state Academic Common Market of southeastern states and charging more for high-cost, high-demand programs.

State law limits tuition increases to the cost of living. The university is studying whether it can increase one program by more than inflation without having to cut prices for other programs, Choi said.

One solution might be to charge additional fees to enroll in programs, system finance officer Ryan Rapp said.

Another might be to eliminate in-state tuition and out-of-state tuition altogether, said Rick Baniak, vice chancellor for administration at UMSL. As the competition to fill classrooms accelerates, he said, the move could be forced on the university.

"We are not going to have the luxury of competing in a rational-priced market," Baniak said. "We should be prepared to evaluate whether we are going to jump off this two-tier tuition train."

rkeller@columbiatribune.com



UM Curators meet, discuss strategic goals of UM campuses

By: Casey Edwards

COLUMBIA - The UM System Board of Curators will meet over the course of July 18 and 19 to discuss new strategies for future research, academic goals and potential funding for its campuses.

UM System President Mun Choi showed a list of universities that named MU as a peer compared to the ones MU had named a peer. The list showed many of the schools MU chose did not consider MU a comparable peer.

Choi said the UM schools need to improve on their standing with other well-performing universities.

“It matters more when people in academia say you’re a great university,” Choi said.

Some administrators recommended focusing on a “Missouri First” mindset when it comes to improvement.

The MU Vice Chancellor of Extension and Engagement Marshall Stewart spoke on how the system could earn community support. He provided examples of steps campuses, faculty and students could take to be better engaged and reconnect with local communities in the state. Currently, over two-thirds of MU’s undergraduate students are from Missouri. One of the examples Stewart recommended is to increase in-state enrollment over the next few years. He also suggested building relationships with state officials and requiring students to complete a certain amount of hours in public service within the state.

“It’s all about them, not about us, because we serve them,” Stewart said.

Stewart presented the idea from a model used by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The university increased its engagement with urban and rural counties in the state, and then marketed to those counties based on each area's interests and needs.

According to Stewart, working with Missourians in the way they most need it and putting state needs first could help increase funding for the UM system.

Stewart recommended administrators and faculty “partner campuses with local stakeholders to create sustainable solutions.”

Choi also showed data that compared UM's Rolla campus to other universities like University of Massachusetts as a way to measure excellence. The data showed where UMass had improved in areas such as national ranking and small class sizes. In those areas, Rolla had gotten worse from 2010 to 2017.

US News and World Report [ranks](#) MU highest of the campuses at 111 out of 310. Missouri S&T is ranked 164 out of 310 schools, UMKC is ranked 210 and UMSL is ranked 220.

The agenda for the board on July 19 is discussing research and economic development as well as creating partnerships between campuses to encourage “system-ness.”



[University of Missouri system leaders explore ways to increase engagement, enrollment](#)

By: Sara Masler- Donar

Watch the story: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/university-of-missouri-system-leaders-explore-ways-to-increase-engagement-enrollment/589462406>

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri system curators and leaders met Tuesday in Columbia to hear and discuss strategies and goals to improve the image and better establish the mission of the university system.

System president Mun Choi kicked off the two-day development session with a presentation that

highlighted the need for an improvement within the system. Choi pulled statistics and examples from other universities across the country to compare to each of the four schools within the UM system to illustrate the work to be done.

The next presentation came from Marshall Stewart, the vice chancellor of extension and engagement at Mizzou. He focused on how the system could reach out to prospective students, elected leaders, alumni and Missouri citizens.

During his presentation, curators and system leaders broke up into small groups to brainstorm ways to foster that engagement. One example Stewart presented was to push for a 3 percent average growth to funding for the university system from the legislative level. Another idea would be to work on finding more paid internships for students.

Stewart also introduced the idea that Mizzou will start a new branding effort, similar to one done at University of Wisconsin - Madison.

A concrete plan Stewart presented was a new working group that he thinks can facilitate new ways to engage the greater Missouri public. He said it will be a way to come up with actionable ideas.

There will also be a presentation on new enrollment strategies to increase the number of students that MU has lost in the past few years. Enrollment at the University of Missouri dropped almost seven percent from fall 2015 to fall 2016.



University of Missouri research institute closes amid cuts

COLUMBIA (AP) — The University of Missouri System has closed its \$10 million medical research institute as part of an effort to cut costs.

University spokesman Christian Basi tells the Columbia Missourian that the decision to close the International Institute of Nano and Molecular Medicine will affect 17 full-time and part-time employees through layoffs and contract non-renewals.

The institute studied how to apply nanotechnology to fighting diseases. The university expects to save about \$1.5 million annually with its closing. Basi says the building will likely to be used as a research facility.

The school is still recovering from students protest in fall 2015 over the administration's handling of racial issues and the subsequent resignations of the system president and chancellor of the Columbia campus. Freshman enrollment subsequently dropped.

This story also ran in the following newspapers, websites and broadcasts:

Kansas City Star

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

KMBC- Kansas City, MO

KMOV- St. Louis, MO

KRCG- Columbia, MO

KBIA- Columbia, MO

KOMU- Columbia, MO

Springfield News Leader- Springfield, MO

Diverse Education

Charlotte Observer



UM System closing \$10 million research facility

By: Josh Matejka

Watch the story: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/um-system-closing-10-million-research-facility/589706258>

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri System has closed a \$10 million research facility in Columbia.

The International Institute of Nano and Molecular Technology closed as a result of continuing budget cuts throughout the system. The university says it expects to save around \$1.5 million annually because of the closure.

"A lot of our research programs are sustained by the grants that they bring in," said Christian Basi, a University of Missouri spokesman. "It's imperative that these research programs continue to be competitive for grants. We had to make a decision based on the productivity that was going on, and this was the decision that was made."

The closure is expected to affect 17 full-time and part-time employees at the institute. The university will make those cuts through layoffs and contract non-renewals.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

MU Health to sell 35 percent stake in Fulton Medical Center

By **Brittany Ruess**

MU Health Care has decided to sell its stake in the Fulton Medical Center, which reportedly has been experiencing financial trouble for years.

MU Health and Nueterra, now NueHealth, purchased Fulton Medical Center, formerly Callaway Community Hospital, in 2014. MU Health paid \$1.15 million in cash and provided a loan guarantee for \$2.75 million for a 35 percent stake in the \$6 million deal. NueHealth has 65 percent ownership.

Mary Jenkins, a spokeswoman for MU Health, said the local health care provider notified NueHealth on Tuesday that it is selling its minority interest in Fulton Medical Center.

"We made the decision after two months of discussion with NueHealth and our concern is that despite MU Health's investments, the hospital continues to have low in-patient volumes and lose money," Jenkins said.

As an example, Jenkins said Fulton Medical Center had 12 out of 37 of its in-patient beds filled on July 12.

MU Health's outpatient clinics in Fulton, located near the hospital, see 15,000 patients annually, Jenkins said.

“Our intent when we, in 2014, made the agreement was to help make the Fulton hospital sustainable financially,” Jenkins said. “Low patient volumes and an aging” hospital “made it difficult.”

Since the joint venture was formed, MU Health has invested about \$1.6 million into the acute care hospital and has not seen any return on that investment, Jenkins said.

Under terms of the agreement, Jenkins said, MU Health should be reimbursed for that money by Fulton Medical LLC, the limited liability company MU Health and NueHealth created. If Fulton Medical Center LLC has insufficient funds for the reimbursement, NueHealth will cover the costs, Jenkins said.

Nueterra and MU Health planned to open a 10-bed, \$40 million surgical hospital in south Columbia, but the state’s Health Facilities Review Committee voted 5-2 against granting a certificate of need during a July 2015 hearing. The new hospital was intended to generate enough revenue to sustain it and Fulton Medical Center.

A NueHealth spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday evening.

Fulton and Callaway County officials met with Fulton Medical Center CEO Mike Powell and a NueHealth representative last week to discuss the possibility of public financing to support the hospital. A tax, hospital district and a not-for-profit organization are ideas that have been pitched, officials said.

The money would go toward offsetting costs of Fulton Medical Center’s indigent care, or uncompensated care. Hospitals accrue indigent care when patients cannot afford to pay their bills after receiving care.

When reached Tuesday, Callaway County Presiding Commissioner Gary Jungermann said he was unaware of MU Health’s decision and felt blindsided by the news. MU Health has not been a part of conversations between city and county officials and Powell, with the exception of a conversation in which an MU Health spokesperson coached local officials on how to address the media, he said.

“The university has not communicated well with Callaway County, in my opinion,” Jungermann said.

Internal discussions about a possible tax started late last year, Jungermann said. But it wasn’t until their meeting last week that Jungermann said he felt something drastic needed to happen for the hospital.

Jungermann said losing the hospital is a concern. He said he worries not having a local hospital would put citizens in immediate need of medical attention, including those who could be later transferred to another nearby hospital, at risk.

“I hate it for our community. To me, it’s detrimental — no matter what your thoughts are of the hospital,” Jungermann said. “What’s relevant is can we lose the hospital?”

Fulton Mayor LeRoy Benton said he's "not heard a word" from MU Health and all of his communication has been with NueHealth.

Benton said he's unsure whether putting public money toward a for-profit hospital with financial instability is a good idea, but added the focus should be on what's best for the community.

"That is definitely a consideration," Benton said. "That's one of the arguments against not doing anything, but of course, the biggest thing is not so much about the company or the method, but what we'll be losing — emergency health care at least, for 20,000 people in the Fulton community and surrounding area. I think that's where as community leaders we have to keep our focus."

bruess@columbiatribune.com



(Local paper in Hannibal, Mo. – Downes County)

[Human in vitro fertilization could evolve following MU study with piglets](#)

Generated from News Bureau press release: [Piglets Might Unlock Keys to In Vitro Fertilization in Humans](#)

It is estimated that parents seeking to have children through in vitro fertilization (IVF) spend between \$12,000 and \$15,000 each session plus the cost of medications, which could average between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

[Now, researchers at the University of Missouri publishing in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science have made a discovery that could decrease the costs associated with IVF in humans—and it all started with piglets.](#)

[R. Michael Roberts, an MU Curators Distinguished Professor of Animal Sciences and an investigator in the Bond Life Sciences Center, and Randall Prather, distinguished professor of animal sciences in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, work with pigs to research stem cells and the mechanisms these cells use to proliferate, communicate and grow in the](#)

body. During an attempt to improve how they grow these cells, researchers in their labs discovered a method that uses a special liquid medium and improves the success of IVF in pigs.

“It was a serendipitous discovery, really,” said Roberts. “Generally, there are multiple steps to producing viable embryos that we can then implant in pigs and cows involved in our research; however, it’s costly and sometimes yields very little return. We were seeking a way to do that more efficiently and stumbled upon a method that may have implications in human fertility clinics as well.”

In IVF involving pigs, scientists first extract oocytes, (“eggs”) from female pigs as well as the “nurse” cells that surround them and place them in a chemical environment designed to mature the eggs. The eggs are then fertilized to create zygotes, or single-celled embryos that are allowed to develop for six days. These embryos are then transferred back into a female pig with the hope of achieving a successful pregnancy and healthy piglets.

“The chance of generating a successful piglet after all those steps is very low; only one to two percent of the original oocytes make it that far,” Roberts said. “Normally, researchers overcome this low success rate by implanting large numbers of embryos, but that takes a lot of time and money.”

Ye Yuan, a former research assistant professor in Roberts’ lab, and Lee Spate, a senior research specialist in Animal Sciences, were tasked with increasing the efficiency and quality of piglet embryos before they are implanted.

In one study, the team analyzed various special growth factors used when culturing pig stem cells and added two factors — fibroblast growth factor 2 (FGF2) and leukemia inhibitory factor (LIF). They found that this combination, when added with a third factor — insulin-like growth factor — created the special fluid environment the oocytes needed to become competent for fertilization and further development to embryos that could provide a successful pregnancy.

Together, the three compounds create the chemical medium called “FLI,” which could revolutionize both piglet and human IVF treatments; a patent application has been filed through the MU Office of Technology Management and Industry Relations to encourage commercialization of the new method.

“It improved every aspect of the whole process and almost doubled the efficiency of oocyte maturation,” Roberts said. “Whenever you’re doing science, you’d like to think you’re doing something that could be useful. When we started it wasn’t to improve fertility IVF in women, it was to just get better oocytes in pigs. Now it’s possible that FLI medium could become important in bovine embryo work and possibly even help with human IVF.”

The study, “Quadrupling efficiency in production of genetically modified pigs through improved oocyte maturation,” was supported by the National Institutes of Health (R01HD069979 and U42OD01140) and the University of Missouri Food for the 21st Century Program. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the funding agencies.



[MU to shut down city's on-street meters on Tiger Avenue for one year](#)

By: Eva Cheng

Watch the story: <http://www.komu.com/news/mu-to-shut-down-city-s-on-street-meters-on-tiger-avenue-for-one-year>

COLUMBIA - People who frequently park their cars on Tiger Avenue may need to look for other options starting next month. The City of Columbia is considering a suggestion from MU to replace the 37 city-owned on-street parking meters with bike lanes for a one-year trial period.

Currently, there are signs prohibiting parking on the west side of the road. According to Transit and Parking Manager Drew Brooks, once the plan starts, the city would cover both sides of the road with striped bike lanes.

Brooks said MU brought the idea to the city earlier this summer in hopes of reducing vehicle traffic while encouraging people to walk and bike. He said MU has performed a parking and transportation study over the last couple of years.

“I think their observation was that there was a lot of vehicles that are kind of circulating, looking for parking, whether it’s on-street parking or garage parking or parking lots,” Brooks said. “So they’re looking for ways to kind of reduce that kind of constant circulation of folks, and I’m thinking it’s primarily students and visitors to the campus.”

MU spokesperson Christian Basi said, “We were concerned about the congestion on that stretch of road. We have a lot of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on that road. Safety is our No. 1 priority on the campus, and this was one way we could address a safety concern.”

Brooks said one big question is where those drivers are going to park without metered spaces.

He said, “The university has ample parking, it just might not be what you would call close to campus. It might be on some of their satellite lots. So someone who would maybe park daily on that street might want to look at some other options, maybe permanent parking either on campus or in a city garage, and then perhaps taking public transportation into campus.”

Brooks said MU also has the thought of removing all city-owned parking across campus, but because of high costs, the current plan is only limited to that one stretch of road.

According to a staff report to the city council, MU has agreed to reimburse the city for the loss of revenue during the one-year period for \$66,374.

Basi said it’s still too early to decide if MU will extend the project after the trial period.

“We’ll review the situation after the program and determine if it will continue,” he said.

Brooks said the plan would not impact the daycare on Tiger Avenue, the Children’s House of Columbia, as it has a loading zone in front of its property now for parents to drop their children off.

“They can just pull over into that bike lane to park whenever they’re loading and unloading. So there should be no impact on the daycare,” he said.

Brooks said the plan will help the city move in the direction of creating a car-light downtown area. He said before the one-year period officially begins, a 90-day trial period will start right away in August.

“The city manager has the authority to begin the pilot for 90 days,” he said. “So he can change, I guess you would say, parking ordinance or whatever for 90 days as a pilot.”

Brooks said the council showed support for the proposal at its meeting July 17, and it will direct the staff to prepare an ordinance to make Tiger Avenue a no-parking zone for one year in the next few meetings before the 90 days expire.

MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: Case review set for Missouri football's Howard

KELLYN ALISE NETTLES, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — After Missouri defensive end Nate Howard pleaded not guilty to class D felony charges of possession of a controlled substance Thursday, Boone County Court has scheduled a case review for Aug. 9.

Attorney Christopher Slusher entered the not guilty plea for Howard, a request for documents from the state and a motion to withdraw the warrant for Howard's arrest.

According to a report from Dave Matter of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, online records show that Howard failed to appear for his court date Wednesday. Prosecutors moved for a warrant to be issued with bond set at \$10,000, but the warrant was recalled the next day in court when Slusher filed an appearance waiver and entered Howard's plea.

The court canceled Howard's bond forfeiture hearing and scheduled a case review for the second week of August, which means he will unlikely be available for the start of preseason camp next month.

Howard, a rising junior, was arrested June 14 on suspicion of drug possession. He was stopped on Providence Road around 7 p.m. for driving with expired license plates.

Campus police proceeded to find marijuana and psilocybin mushrooms in the car, according to [previous Missourian reporting](#).

Both Howard's attorney and the prosecuting attorney requested more documents for the case.

Howard was suspended from the Missouri football team indefinitely, head coach Barry Odom said at the SEC Media Days.

"We'll see what's best for Nate on what he can do, but we're still internally handling that," Odom said to [reporters at SEC Media Days](#). "Hopefully we can get to a conclusion sooner than later on this."

Without Howard, Missouri is short on depth and experience at defensive end. Seniors Marcell Frazier and Jordan Harold, who split time as starters in 2016, are both listed as starters. The seniors will be backed up, respectively, by redshirt freshman Tre Williams and redshirt sophomore Franklin Agbasimere, two players who have never appeared in a college game. Agbasimere moved from linebacker to defensive end during the offseason then missed most of the spring with a foot injury. The Tigers have two newcomers who could work into the rotation, freshman Chris Turner and junior college transfer Nate Anderson.

Moore, Fatony named to national preseason watch lists

Senior wide receiver J'Mon Moore was named to the watch list for the Biletnikoff Award, which is given annually to most outstanding receiver in college football, while junior punter Corey Fatony was named to the watch list for the Wuerffel Trophy, which honors the FBS player that best combines exemplary community service with athletic and academic achievement. Both lists were announced on Tuesday.

Moore is one of 45 candidates up for the Biletnikoff Award and joins Fatony, Frazier and Damarea Crockett as the fourth Missouri player to make a national award watch list this preseason. The winner will be selected by the Biletnikoff Award National Selection Committee and announced on Dec. 7.

Fatony has been a member of the SEC Academic Honor Roll each semester since arriving at Missouri and is one of 29 candidates for the Ray Guy Award, given annually to the country's best punter. Semifinalists for the Wuerffel Trophy will be announced on Nov. 2, and finalists will be announced on Nov. 22



Prayer service held for people affected by MU layoffs and budget cuts

By: Kevin Ko

Watch the story: <http://www.komu.com/news/prayer-service-held-for-people-affected-by-mu-layoffs-and-budget-cuts>

COLUMBIA - People of different religions gathered to pray Tuesday for MU employees affected by recent cuts.

[The St. Thomas More Newman Center](#) hosted a prayer service for MU employees following the university's recent layoffs and budget cuts. Anyone from any faith was welcome to attend at the Newman Center Chapel.

The pastor, Father Richard Litzau, said the church wanted to find a way to help the community through its struggles.

"Because we're located on campus, we have a lot of awareness of what's happening," Litzau said. "The staff and I sat down and said we really need to do something from our faith perspective, in terms of being able to help people, give them support or a place to be, and remind them that we are on campus."

MU education professor Rosa Marra, who is a member at the Newman Center, said she wanted to show her support.

"I think that bringing to bear a spirituality to the situation can maybe help some of us cope," she said. "I am blessed that my job was not affected directly, but certainly in our college, we downsized by a significant number of persons and we all need to work on having a compassionate response those situations."

[Hundreds are affected](#) by the cuts and layoffs made by MU this past June. A total of 171 administrative, faculty, and staff positions were (or will be) eliminated, and 136 vacant positions will remain unfilled. 86 positions in auxiliary units of Student Affairs and Athletics were also eliminated.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Man sentenced to 18 years for MU campus rapes

A Columbia man who pleaded guilty to rapes on the University of Missouri campus was sentenced to 18 years in prison Monday.

Circuit Judge Kevin Crane sentenced Zachery R. Jones, 23, to 13 years in prison for first-degree rape and five years in prison for first-degree attempted rape, court documents said. The sentences are to be served consecutively with credit for time served. Jones originally was charged with first-degree rape, first-degree sodomy and first-degree attempted rape. Prosecutors agreed to drop the first-degree sodomy charge if Jones pleaded guilty to the rape charges, Boone County Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Jessica Caldera said. Jones will have to serve at least 85 percent — approximately 11 years — of the 13-year rape sentence, Caldera said.

Jones' public defender was out of the office Tuesday when called for comment.

According to a probable cause statement, Jones sexually assaulted two women on March 5 near the University of Missouri campus. One of the women hit Jones repeatedly and called authorities when she escaped, the statement said. The other woman led Jones back to a residence hall after being raped, which allowed prosecutors to identify him from security footage, the statement said. During the investigation Jones admitted he sexually assaulted both women, the statement said.

INSIDE HIGHER ED

The Culling of Higher Ed Begins

The number of colleges and universities eligible to award federal financial aid dropped by 5.6 percent in 2016-17. The vast majority of disappearing institutions were for-profit colleges, but more than 30 private nonprofits were among them.

NO MU MENTION

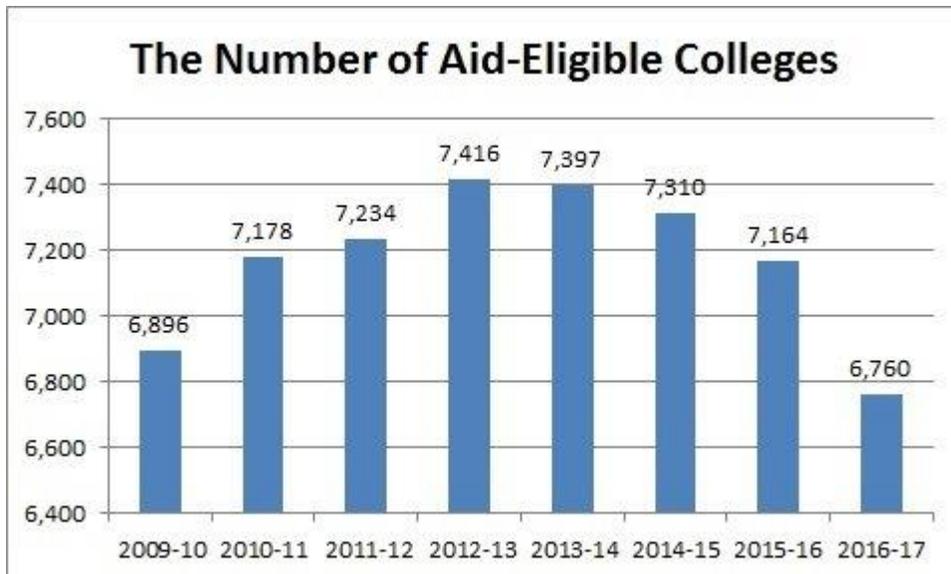
By [Doug Lederman](#)

July 19, 2017

It has become trendy to predict that higher education is on the verge of a major collapse, what with enrollments falling as loan debt and rising tuition cause students and families to ask harder questions about the value of a college credential.

The [most extreme predictions](#) envision hundreds and even thousands of colleges and universities [closing over a decade or so](#). But more even-keeled analysts also have foreseen increases in the number of failing institutions: Moody's Investors Service in 2015, for instance, [said closures and mergers of small institutions would triple and double](#), respectively, in the coming years.

New federal data suggest the increasing financial pressures may be starting to take a toll on institutions. [An annual report](#) from the Education Department's National Center for Education Statistics shows that the number of colleges and universities eligible to award federal financial aid to their students fell by 5.6 percent from 2015-16 to 2016-17. That's the fourth straight decline since a peak of 7,416 institutions in 2012-13. It is also by far the largest (the others were 0.3, 1.2 and 2.0 percent, in order).



There's a giant asterisk on the data for those predicting the decline and fall of traditional higher education: as in the past, the vast majority of the vanishing institutions are for-profit colleges. Some of that sector's problems are shared with nonprofit institutions (declines in the number of traditional college-age students, concerns about debt and price), but for-profit institutions also have encountered aggressive regulation from the federal government and self-inflicted wounds from misbehavior and poor performance.

That combination of factors contributed to a one-year drop of 11.2 percent (from 3,265 to 2,899) in the number of Title IV-eligible for-profit institutions, according to the federal data, and a sharp decline of more than 20 percent since the 2012-13 academic year.

While for-profit colleges' woes may be driving the numbers, public and private nonprofit colleges have not been immune.

The number of public colleges edged down to 1,985 in 2016-17, from 1,990 in 2015-16 and 2,009 in 2012-13.

These are likely to include the several institutions in Georgia that were part of mergers.

The number of private nonprofit institutions, meanwhile, fell by 33, or 1.7 percent, from 2015-16 to 2016-17, from 1,909 to 1,876. But the 2015-16 number had risen by almost that amount the year before, so it's not entirely clear how significant that drop is, or how representative it is of what is to come.