



MU News Bureau

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MISSOURIAN

Task force to review MU academic programs

CONNOR LAGORE

COLUMBIA — MU has created a task force to conduct a "top-to-bottom analysis" of all MU academic programs in order to recommend areas of future investment, identify potential consolidations and possibly discontinue programs.

The Task Force on Academic Program Analysis, Enhancement and Opportunities, announced Thursday by Provost Garnett Stokes, will be led by Cooper Drury, professor and chair of the Department of Political Science, and Matthew Martens, professor and Faculty Fellow for Academic Programs in the Office of the Provost.

Stokes said in a news release that “the current critical challenges related to budget and enrollment provide the University of Missouri with the opportunity to make strategic decisions that will define MU’s overall future direction in the coming years.”

Forming the task force is part of this process, the release stated. Work of the task force will be separated into three phases:

- The first phase comprises a report due Sept. 1 that will concentrate on “synthesizing relevant data, identifying principles, guidelines and metrics that will inform additional discussions regarding our academic programs, and determining strategies to facilitate engagement with faculty, staff and students across campus.”

- The second phase will take place during the bulk of the fall semester while task force members gather data, input, feedback and recommendations from the campus-wide community regarding academic programs.
- The last phase will be a final report due Jan. 15 that will provide more specific recommendations regarding MU's academic programs.

The task force is made up of 17 faculty and staff members.

Stokes said in the release that “this will be a time-intensive process, but one that is important in defining the future direction of our university.”



NAACP's warning of racial profiling, abuse in Missouri gives would-be travelers pause

BY IAN CUMMINGS

icummings@kstar.com

AUGUST 03, 2017 5:10 PM

A recent travel advisory issued for Missouri by the NAACP has people around the country questioning whether they want to move to the state, or even visit Kansas City.

The advisory made national news this week after the civil rights group warned of racial discrimination and abuse in Missouri, where Gov. Eric Greitens recently signed Senate Bill 43 into law, making it harder to win workplace discrimination lawsuits.

It was the first time the NAACP had ever issued a travel alert labeling one state as dangerous.

Those worries echoed the warnings of the travel advisory, which noted an attorney general's report showing black drivers in Missouri were 75 percent more likely to be pulled over than whites.

The NAACP also raised the issue of racial slurs made against black students at the University of Missouri and the death earlier this year of 28-year-old Tory Sanders, a mentally ill black man from Tennessee who took a wrong turn while traveling and died in a southeast Missouri jail even though he hadn't been accused of a crime.

Such concerns aren't limited to minorities.

James Jacewicz, who is white, wrote to The Star from Connecticut to say he was canceling his plans for a week's vacation in Kansas City.

Jacewicz had hoped to enjoy eating some ribs in Kansas City, he said, but will instead travel with his family to Memphis.

"Good luck with racial slurs, profiling, etc.," he wrote. "I don't need that around my family."

The travel advisory caused a storm on social media, where civic leaders weighed in and others debated Missouri's place in the national landscape of prejudice.

Missouri state Rep. Jon Carpenter, a Kansas City Democrat, posted a news story about the travel advisory on Facebook, writing, "This should be concerning to all Missourians who care about equality."

On Twitter, some people sarcastically wondered whether it was time to bring back "The Negro Motorist Green Book," a Jim Crow-era guidebook for African-American travelers published from the 1930s to the 1960s.

Many pointed out that Missouri's problems were neither new nor unique in the United States. But the travel advisory, first issued in June by the state-level Missouri NAACP before being taken up by the national organization, had brought attention to the issue.

The travel advisory was voted on last week by national NAACP delegates and is scheduled to go to the group's national board for ratification in October.



Local NAACP Pushes Back Against Missouri Travel Advisory

NO MU MENTION

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

A St. Louis-area branch of the NAACP is pushing back against an advisory supported by state and national NAACP members that urges caution while traveling in Missouri.

St. Louis County NAACP President Esther Haywood said in a statement Thursday that the advisory could end up hurting workers in the state's hospitality industry.

The Missouri NAACP issued the advisory in June to warn travelers to be careful because of what it called a danger that civil rights won't be respected, and national delegates also voted in favor of it. The advisory cites a new law to make it more difficult to sue for housing or employment discrimination, among other things.

Haywood says the local branch doesn't approve of the legislation but cautioned the travel advisory could harm NAACP members.

Similar stories ran statewide

MU Health executive change, insurance limitations affect trustees' decision

By BRITTANY RUESS

The University of Missouri Health Care's proposal for the Boone Hospital Center Board of Trustees was largely unappealing to the trustees until a top official left the university earlier this year, changing the conversation between the parties from a hospital takeover to a partnership.

Trustees were also attracted to a Boone Hospital-MU Health partnership because it could open up the possibility for university employees to again seek health care at Boone Hospital. This was a major factor that set MU Health apart from three other companies vying to operate the hospital, said Brian Neuner, chairman of the trustees.

The trustees announced Monday that they are entering exclusive conversations with MU Health about forming a collaborative arrangement, which could also include lease of Boone Hospital. Negotiations with the other companies interested in operating the hospital are on hold until an agreement is finalized with MU Health.

Neuner said during a news conference Monday that the trustees were leaning away from MU Health until a "reset button" was pressed, which changed the negotiation process.

That reset button, he said in an interview, was the departure of former MU Health CEO Mitch Wasden, who Neuner said wanted MU Health to have more control over Boone Hospital than what the trustees were comfortable with. Under Wasden, MU Health pitched a proposal that gave it total control over Boone Hospital, Neuner said.

"I would say that" Mitch Wasden's "approach to an arrangement with Boone was more of a takeover approach and we wouldn't let that happen," Neuner said. "MU was not very appealing with that approach."

The county-owned hospital is under lease until 2020 with St. Louis-based BJC HealthCare. The trustees and BJC must notify one another if they wish to continue, modify or terminate the lease by 2018. The board sought proposals from companies to operate the hospital, and received responses from MU Health, BJC, Kansas City-based St. Luke's Hospital and Duke LifePoint, a for-profit company based in Brentwood, Tenn.

Wasden left the university in late February to become the executive vice president of Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, which included the title of chief executive officer of OHSU Healthcare. An assistant to Wasden on Thursday said he had no comment.

Once Wasden left MU Health, Neuner said MU officials came to the trustees again, but with a new pitch. MU Health CEO Jonathan Curtright and Patrick Delafontaine, dean of the university's medical school, had a different vision than Wasden and sought a partnership, Neuner said.

A conversation with Maurice Graham, a university curator, was also convincing.

“Graham said, ‘I want to reset this, this has to be a win-win situation,’” Neuner said. “I said it has to be a win-win-win situation. Boone has to win, MU has to win and our community has to win. And with everyone in agreement that was the approach, the tone changed and that was the factor right there.”

The trustees and their consultants revealed details of each company's proposal to the public in mid-May during a public forum in Columbia. Responses to the MU Health proposal were mixed.

Some MU Health officials and physicians spoke positively about collaboration while local residents expressed concerns about diminished quality of care and receiving care from medical students.

At the moment, MU Health's proposal includes the university changing its insurance policies to consider Boone Hospital in network, which is a major incentive for the trustees. Insurance for university employees covers services with MU Health, but not Boone Hospital, which creates a narrow network.

The exclusion of Boone Hospital takes away a base of local patients as the university and MU Health are the two largest employers in Boone County.

“The other options are still very viable options,” Neuner said. “It's just MU Health Care separated itself on a couple key fronts — local governance, fiscal obligations to our community and an opportunity to be a part of the narrow network.”

Local patients express concerns over partnership

Boone Hospital has also lost out on patients who have insurance through the Affordable Care Act marketplace. Anthem was the only health insurance provider in the marketplace this year and excluded BJC from its network, which was another hit for Boone Hospital. MU Health accepts Anthem health insurance.

Columbia resident Margaret Booker, who has health insurance through the ACA, said she has an agreement with Boone Hospital for a self-pay discount because she has to pay out of pocket, but she refuses to switch certain doctors with whom she has good relationships. She paid \$75 for a recent visit with her neurologist.

If the university brings Boone Hospital into its network, Neuner said patients who formerly sought care from Boone's physicians might be able to seek care from them again.

“This opens it up for them to go back to that doctor and that’s where the choice really comes in,” Neuner said. “People say, ‘Well if the two hospitals get together you’re going to eliminate choice,’ but there’s going to be choice within a system.”

Columbia resident Ellis Benus created an online petition at change.org against the partnership. The petition had 536 signatures, including Booker’s, as of 7 p.m. Thursday.

Benus said he’s worried Boone Hospital’s quality of care will diminish in a partnership with MU Health. He said he also has had poor experiences with MU Health, waiting nearly four hours once in a waiting room to do allergy testing on his son, he said. Benus said MU doctors poked and prodded his oldest niece too long before starting her appendectomy.

Benus said there’s a saying in Columbia: “If I had a car accident in front of MU’s hospital, I would take me to Boone.”

Southern District Commissioner Fred Parry wouldn’t say the same.

His son suffered traumatic injuries from a car crash in 2014 and was taken to University Hospital’s emergency department. Parry, who was the former chairman of the trustees, said he was skeptical when he first walked into the emergency room, but was eventually impressed by the care his son received.

“It’s a different hospital than what it was 20 years ago,” he said. “There is amazing potential for something much greater than what we have right now, so we are better together.”

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Are MU and Boone heading for a happy marriage?

Editorial by HANK WATERS

Anyone who has paid even passing attention to these ruminations knows I have been an eager supporter of collaboration between the two major local hospitals. It has seemed apparent for some time the two could become a much more powerful health care delivery apparatus working together instead of at cross purposes. Now the stage seems set for seriously pursuing that goal.

Tuesday Boone Hospital trustees chairman Brian Neuner announced his board is entering an “exclusive discussion” with MU Health to form a collaboration. **MU officials quickly followed suit, expressing strong support for the process and the benefits a serious collaboration can bring.**

Even BJC HealthCare, the St. Louis company that currently leases Boone Hospital, is positive, saying it supports the potential move and will help Boone employees find other jobs if necessary.

For some time both BJC and Boone trustees have indicated they are ready to curtail the lease. Of the options for Boone working with MU clearly is best. Details of an agreement will have to be finalized, but comments from both sides could not be more positive, expressing a common belief both can benefit from close integration.

Some have questioned whether a Boone-MU merger would trigger restraint-of-trade questions. I have been much less concerned about this for two reasons. An unfair monopoly must show the public will be harmed by losing services and suffering higher costs. Everything in this possible collaboration indicates the opposite. And a merger between Boone and MU would entail a decision by two public agencies created and managed for the benefit of the public under public processes, not something done to the public by rapacious private entrepreneurs with nothing but private profit in mind.

And some might question whether a competitive health care delivery system can thrive in a city the size of Columbia, but to answer this one only need notice Rochester, Minn., home of the fabled Mayo Clinic. Rochester is no larger than Columbia and not as centrally located. Columbia already is home to two very good hospitals and an impressive array of physicians and other providers. Our primary threat is destructive competition sure to produce local losers as well as gainers. A local enterprise blending and enhancing facilities and expertise already here can become a powerhouse benefiting providers and patients, making Columbia an even more serious health care destination. Providers can stay busy with increasing business rather than carving into neighborhood competitors.

This is wonderful news, folks. Let us encourage officials at Boone and MU in their quest for mutually beneficial ways to work together. Health care already is a huge local economic enterprise. It can become even larger if our two local hospitals work together.

T COLUMBIA DAILY **TRIBUNE**

MU sells fewer parking permits, amps up enforcement

By TESS VRBIN

Justin Edwards was certain he would get a parking permit in the Hitt Street Parking Structure for his senior year at the University of Missouri. He didn't get his wish.

Parking permits for Hitt Street and all other garages in the core of campus sold out before seniors were allowed to start buying permits at 9 a.m. Monday. MU reduced the number of available core campus permits from 3,025 to 2,625, and graduate and professional students bought them all last week. Core campus is the area within Providence Road, Elm Street, College Avenue and

Stadium Boulevard. Parking lots outside this perimeter were the next available options for undergraduates to buy parking permits.

Edwards ended up with a permit for the SG7 lot next to the football stadium, almost a half-hour walk from his apartment complex downtown. He is one of many students who are frustrated about having to park so far from where they live and where they attend classes. Several students have expressed their discontent on Twitter since Monday.

The university has 23,298 parking spaces in 80 parking lots and seven garages. MU spokeswoman Liz McCune said the total number of campus parking spaces has not changed. The MU parking and transportation department used to sell more permits than there were spaces in core campus structures, and students sometimes could not find a parking space in structures they had paid to use, McCune said.

Edwards said he had a parking permit for the AV14 lot east of College Avenue the past three years. It was easier for him to park on campus and risk getting tickets last year, he said, and he knows other students have done the same.

McCune said students who could get away with parking on campus without a permit are now incentivized to buy permits or find other ways to get to campus. All parking meters on campus now cost \$1 per hour. Some campus meters used to cost 60 cents per hour.

Parking is no longer free to everyone in all garages and lots after 5 p.m. and on weekends. Overnight parking is prohibited in the Tiger Avenue Parking Structure, Residential Life parking lots and surface lots marked as restricted. Open public parking is allowed in the Conley Avenue, Turner Avenue and University Avenue garages between 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. every day. Levels 1-3 of the Virginia Avenue garage and levels 1-4 of the Hitt Street will also be open to the public during those hours.

The parking management changes come from a review of MU parking operations by the company NuPark. McCune said NuPark manages the permit system and helped MU implement its enforcement policy. According to previous Tribune reporting, NuPark uses car-mounted cameras to read license plates and run them through a database of permit holders. If a car is not in the database or its assigned lot, enforcement staff will issue a ticket if necessary.

MU got rid of parking permit tags and adopted the NuPark system in the fall of 2016. NuPark was supposed to increase fine collections by 25 percent and permit sales by 5 to 10 percent. The increases were expected to add \$366,000 to \$498,000 in revenue. McCune said in an email that the university does not have data to properly test this hypothesis because it made several adjustments during its first year using NuPark. MU expects to gain more revenue via stricter parking enforcement even though it reduced its permit sales, McCune said.

The university encourages students to carpool, walk, bike or take public transportation to campus, McCune said. Some apartment complexes provide shuttles to and from campus. MU provides the Tiger Line shuttle between campus and the perimeter parking lots in partnership with the City of Columbia.

City councilman Michael Trapp was a member of the recently disbanded Parking and Traffic Management Task Force. He said the decrease in the number of core campus parking permits might increase traffic congestion downtown if students decide they still want to drive to campus. If they do not find the parking they are looking for downtown, he said, they will soon find other, more efficient ways to get to their classes.

MISSOURIAN

MU clarifies parking permit details

GINA BALSTAD

COLUMBIA — **Tiger Avenue Parking Structure and Parking Structure 7 are the only garages on MU campus where parking regulations will be enforced 24/7 on all levels, MU spokeswoman Liz McCune wrote in an email.**

Surface lots that are labeled restricted and that are used by residential life will also be enforced at all hours, as well as particular levels of other garages on campus.

Additionally, from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m., Virginia Avenue Parking Structure will be open for public parking on levels 1–3 and Hitt Street Parking Garage will be open for public parking on levels 1–4, McCune said.

The other parking structures — Conley Avenue, Turner Avenue and University Avenue — will also be open from 6 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Students who have odd work hours are able to apply for A.M. and P.M. options for their parking permits. If a student normally has a pass for a garage or lot far away from their workplace, they can apply for one of these options through the MU Office of Parking and Transportation or online, McCune said.

After students apply for A.M. and P.M. permits, they are interviewed about their employment and the information is confirmed with their supervisors. Employees at the MU Student Recreation Complex and University Hospital are eligible for these permits if they have late-night or early-morning shifts, McCune said.

Recent calls for clarification came as students dealt with MU's new parking management system for the first time.

MU students were frustrated as they tried to purchase permits from the new system and were faced with fewer available core-campus permits. On Thursday, juniors, sophomores, freshmen and transfer students experienced site crashes as they tried to purchase permits.

the maneater

Frustrations arise for graduate students and seniors with attempts to buy parking passes

Gary Ward, vice chancellor of MU Operations, said MU P&TS is working with MSA, the Campus Parking & Transportation committee and others to resolve issues.

By KYLE LaHUCIK

With three weeks until the fall semester begins, students are already frustrated with their inability to park where they'd like.

Senior Danielle Katz, who had purchased three campus parking passes prior to this fall, said in an email that she had more issues with Monday's process of purchasing a parking permission via the Tiger Park online portal than in previous years.

MU Office of Parking and Transportation Services, part of MU Operations, received criticism on Twitter on Monday when rising seniors complained of not being able to secure the parking spots they wanted, the lack of transparency from MU in relation to the new regulations and policies set forth by MU P&TS and the amount of time that it took to get a parking permission via the online portal.

The senior priority period was scheduled to open 9 a.m. on Monday. It accidentally opened at 7:30 a.m.

“We were updating some information in the portal and the box was inadvertently checked to open,” Karlan Seville, communications manager for MU Operations, said in an email. “It was closed shortly thereafter, within 15 minutes, when we realized the mistake.”

At least one student claimed he was able to get a parking permission during that time.

Out of the 24,000 spaces — located in about 80 lots and seven garages across campus — offered to students, faculty, staff and visitors, all of whom can purchase parking permits, more than 1,000 were purchased by seniors on Monday, Seville said.

Some students said they were unable to get the spots they wanted. They also said they didn’t realize some of their preferred options would be unavailable because of spots that were already purchased by graduate and professional students and because of updates in [traffic and parking regulations](#) that they were not made aware of prior to Monday.

“There has been some confusion as to parking permissions for students who live in private downtown student housing,” Seville said in the email. “Parking priority is given to students who live on campus in residence halls and to graduate students who teach or work on campus.”

Some students expressed on Twitter that they thought parking spaces were going unused.

“In order to reduce the amount of congestion on campus and create a safer environment for pedestrians we will be reducing the number of cars that have access to core campus parking,” the P&TS website states.

Though the wording may sound confusing, Seville said no spaces will go unused. Seville said “core campus parking” is defined by the boundary of Stadium Boulevard, Elm Street, Providence Road and College Avenue.

“We are selling all available parking spots within the core of campus except those reserved for visitors,” Seville said.

The visitor parking section of the traffic and parking regulations says that “MU shall furnish visitor parking, including vendors and service technicians, provided that priority is given to staff and students. Limited visitor parking space may be provided in prime location areas of campus.”

Visitor spaces are being reserved in Hitt Street Garage. Changes have recently been made near Hitt Street Garage.

“Meters have been removed along Tiger Avenue in order to create a bike path onto campus as well as reduce congestion,” Seville said in the email. “Additionally, we have a new system in place that more closely tracks permits in each garage. Previously, garages were oversold, which

meant that there were times permit holders could not find a spot in the garage for which they had purchased a pass. Our new system eliminates this problem.”

In an email sent to students — which some interviewed students said they never received — Monday afternoon, Gary Ward, vice chancellor of Operations, said P&TS is “working with representatives across campus, including the Missouri Students Association and the Campus Parking & Transportation Committee.”

Last year, MSA elected no student members to the committee, which is one of many [Chancellor’s Standing Committees](#), Seville said.

“Unfortunately, in many of the past years it has been common for these standing committees to go unfilled, as was the case for the Campus Parking & Transportation Committee during the 2016-2017 school year,” MSA President Nathan Willett said in an email. “Going forward, MSA Vice President Payton Englert has made it a priority to fill every undergraduate position on the various standing committees, including Campus Parking & Transportation.”

Before the committee reconvenes for the 2017-18 school year, Willett said he will be “presenting the concerns raised to the appropriate administrators.”

Sophomore Solomon Davis filled the vacant student position on the Campus Parking and Transportation Committee Thursday afternoon, according to an [MSA Senate tweet](#).

Questions sent to Ward, MU spokesman Christian Basi and professor Tanya Christiansen, chair of the Campus Parking and Transportation Committee, were redirected to Seville.

Christiansen wrote in the committee’s [2016-17 annual report](#) that “a measured expansion of reserved parking areas” was recommended by the committee. However, “a number of the most significant changes will not be implemented now because of the fiscal situation.”

“This recommendation will not [be] implemented until details are clearly defined,” Seville said.

However, some “relatively inexpensive recommendations,” such as encouraging carpooling and adjusting bus routes, will be implemented, Christiansen wrote.

Casey Edwards, a senior who will be living downtown in the fall, wanted to park close to downtown. She said in an email that it was “unbelievable” that only lots behind the stadium and parking lot AV14 were available to her early Monday morning.

“I felt uncomfortable and unsafe thinking about parking so far away from where I lived when I will need to get to and from my car, often late at night,” Edwards said in an email.

Senior Abbie Bliss said she decided not to buy a parking permission yet because she didn’t get the option she wanted.

“I did not purchase any spots yet due to wondering what my friends and other students’ options are,” Bliss said in an email.

Seville mentioned other options for getting to campus in her email.

“It should be noted that there are many ways to get to campus, and we encourage students, faculty and staff to carpool or use alternate means of transportation whenever possible,” Seville said. The Tiger Line shuttle, which Seville said has existed since the late 1980s, “ensure[s] that students have safe transportation from commuter lots to campus, downtown and other locations.”

Off-campus parking is an option. As of Aug. 1, the City of Columbia still had a few spaces available in the Fifth & Walnut Street Garage, Seville said.

“MU Operations manages Mizzou’s climate action plan reporting, and it is important that we address the greenhouse gas emissions of the vehicles that come to campus each day,” Seville said in the email. “Our sustainability manager Raghuram Raghavan met with the parking consultant and sits on the Parking & Transportation Committee. In the years to come, we will learn from sustainability leaders such as Colorado State University to determine how we might offer discounts for those who walk, bicycle, carpool or ride a shuttle or city bus to campus.”

Seniors aren’t the only ones who had issues with obtaining parking permissions; there are many more students yet to have access to purchase them. Juniors, sophomores, freshman and transfer students can begin purchasing permissions Aug. 3.

Graduate and professional students, whose priority period was July 24-28, also experienced difficulties. Seville said about 2,200 parking passes were purchased from 9 a.m. July 24 to 4 p.m. July 28.

in science education, said his colleagues lost permits to park in garages that are close to the teaching/research buildings where they study.

“This will significantly impact those grad students who now will have to carry teaching and research materials in from the commuter lots,” Kinslow said in an email. “The inequity of some students receiving notification [of the portal opening for graduate and professional students] and others not, plus the total lack of communication is very frustrating.”

Bliss said her brother, who is an MU law student, was only given the option of parking on the top level of Hitt Street Garage. She said law students were previously able to reserve spaces on the lower levels of Hitt. She said he “does not want to complain about getting garage parking when others do not have the option,” but it is “frustrating” because the top floor of Hitt is “pretty small” compared to other floors and it may become overfilled.

Both Blisses, senior Marlee Baldrige and other students said they tried calling and emailing MU P&TS. Some received no responses, while Kinslow received only a “sorry for the inconvenience” response.

In his mass email to students on Monday, Ward wrote, “Our parking permissions vendor has been processing up to 10 permissions per minute during early morning hours.”

Katz said she would have been less frustrated about Monday’s struggles had MU warned her ahead of time about garages already being filled and the changes to where students can park.

“Mizzou P&TS had enough time to tweet to remind us about the portal opening up for seniors but not enough sense to mention that the parking was not what people expected,” Katz said in the email. “I’m still wondering if there was any foresight at all, because if there was, did they just not care enough to say something and be transparent?”

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

University of Missouri embezzlement investigation turned over to feds

By RUDI KELLER

The investigation of possible embezzlement at the University of Missouri is now a federal case, MU announced in a short statement issued Thursday.

On July 25, the university issued a news release that the MU Police Department was investigating “suspected misappropriation of funds from student organization accounts affiliated with Greek Life.” The latest release stated the investigation has been turned over to federal authorities “because the former employee’s actions might have violated federal laws.”

MU spokesman Christian Basi said he could not reveal the name of the federal agency contacted to take over the investigation. The university is determined to prosecute the case if criminal action is found, he said.

The name of the person under suspicion has not been released. The missing funds were from a student organization that maintains accounts outside the regular university banking system. The employee involved had authority from the student organization to spend money in the absence of the organization’s student leaders.

Greek Life oversees the activities of fraternities and sororities on campus as well as three affiliated organizations: Greek Week, Greek Allies and Greek Foundation.

In response to the missing funds, which staff discovered in mid-July, the university has implemented new protocols requiring two approvals for spending money held on behalf of student groups. Employees with authority to sign checks on student organization accounts must have all spending approved by their supervisor and the vice chancellor for student affairs.

In the latest statement, the university said it “will continue to review policies and procedures related to the oversight and management of external accounts.”

MISSOURIAN

MU police turn over misappropriation case to federal authorities

CONNOR LAGORE

COLUMBIA — The MU Police Department has forwarded an investigation into possible misappropriation of money to federal authorities. The former employee’s actions might have violated federal laws, according to an MU news release Thursday.

The case involves possible misappropriation of funds from student organizations affiliated with Greek Life. It was brought to campus police July 25 after an internal audit discovered the possible misappropriation. The accounts involved are external, not university, accounts.

A July 26 email said the audit found “suspicion of criminal activity.”

The discovery led MU to begin an internal review of policies surrounding accounts associated with student organizations on July 26.

The email also stated that MU fired the employee after the violation of university policies was determined.

Although these accounts are managed by student organizations, the authority to sign checks and use funds can be given to MU employees, the email said.

After the case was turned over to campus police, MU administrators issued a directive requiring MU employees who have access to these accounts to get approval from the employee’s

supervisor and the vice chancellor of student affairs before they can direct money from the account.

University officials will continue to review policies and procedures related to the oversight and management of external accounts, according to Thursday's release.

Because the investigation is ongoing, the name of the person involved has not been released nor have other details about related organizations or people.



Feds take over investigation on MU misappropriation of funds

COLUMBIA – The University of Missouri Police Department has forwarded the investigation into the possible misappropriation of funds to federal authorities because the former employee's actions might have violated federal laws.

Additionally, university officials will continue to review policies and procedures related to the oversight and management of external accounts.

MU said the former employee misappropriated funds from an external account related to Greek Life.

The investigation began in July, and the public became aware after the university sent an informational email to students, faculty, and staff. According to a Q and A released by the MU News Bureau, the former staff member was fired after it was confirmed that they violated university policies.

Similar stories ran statewide

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mizzou police turn over possible embezzlement case to the feds

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch

A week after announcing that an internal investigation into possible embezzlement by a former employee had been turned over to police, the University of Missouri-Columbia says the matter is now in the hands of federal investigators.

The details about the incident are still limited.

According to previous university statements, an employee in the Office of Greek Life reported "suspicious activity," which spurred an internal review. That review was turned over to Mizzou police.

University officials announced Thursday that they have handed off the investigation to federal authorities with concerns that the person involved "might have violated federal laws."

The university declined to disclose which former employee was involved in the case, or how much money is involved.

The Office of Greek Life recently experienced a few layoffs that were said to be part of the ongoing effort to address campus budget issues, related to declining state funds and tuition revenue. A question-and-answer page posted after the investigation was announced says the employee involved was fired.

School leaders are continuing to review the way external accounts for student organizations are managed.



Federal authorities given case of possible misappropriation of funds at MU

Watch the story: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/crime/investigation-of-possible-misappropriation-of-funds-at-mu-given-to-federal-authorities/599003398>

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The MU News Bureau announced on Thursday that the University of Missouri Police Department has handed off the investigation into the possible misappropriation of funds at MU to federal authorities.

"The former employee's actions might have violated federal laws," said the MU News Bureau. "University officials will continue to review policies and procedures related to the oversight and management of external accounts."

ABC 17 News reported in July that spokeswoman Liz McCune said the alleged misappropriations came from student organization accounts associated with Greek Life.

The accounts are thought to be external to the school. McCune said these accounts are owned by the student organizations through private banks, but some school employees are given "signatory authority" to spend money from those accounts.

MUPD spokesman Major Brian Weimer did not say why the department forwarded the case to federal authorities. Weimer said MUPD would assist those investigators if requested.

A case gets forwarded to the federal level after discussions between state and federal prosecuting offices, said Bill Tackett, a former Cole County prosecutor and criminal defense attorney. The decision to send it to the higher level is often dictated by the suspected crime, and the level of punishment. If federal crimes offer tougher sentences, then that case will often get sent to federal prosecutors, Tackett said.

"If it's complex, if it's high profile and the federal prosecutor calls the local prosecutor, then they can agree that this needs to be a federal prosecution," Tackett told ABC 17 News.

Those higher offices also have entire divisions dedicated to crimes like fraud and embezzlement. The police and prosecutor's available resources often play a part in the decision.

"You have to draw a line from the crime all the way back to the person in terms of paper," Tackett said. "It's a paper trail, and that takes time."

McCune said that employees in the Office of Greek Life noticed the possible misuse of money in mid-July. A follow-up audit showed that the misuse might have been criminal, sparking a police investigation on July 25.

Greek Life was one of several offices that underwent an administrative shake up this summer. MU announced several cuts to the department due to the lower budget this fiscal year, including the elimination of seven administrative positions.



Downtown Columbia construction won't be done in time for fall semester

Watch the story: <http://www.komu.com/news/downtown-columbia-construction-won-t-be-done-in-time-for-fall-semester>

COLUMBIA- The City of Columbia said many construction projects going on downtown and near the MU campus won't be finished by August 21.

That Monday will be particularly hectic in Columbia, as it's also the date of the total solar eclipse, expected to bring large crowds to the area.

"The downtown area is going to be filled to the brim with first time students and people here for the eclipse. The construction is just going to make it that much more difficult to get around here," said Cail Evans, an employee of downtown Columbia restaurant Seoul Taco.

Many eclipse watchers will be in the downtown area due to the University renting out many vacant dorm rooms to tourists.

The project site which affects both campus and downtown activity is the Flat Branch Relief Sewer Project, and it is not expected to be completed in time for the start of the fall semester. The project aims to improve the sewer system, storm water drains, and steam tunnels for the downtown area.

Construction work for the project has taken most of Elm and 6th streets out of commission for the majority of the summer.

"The original pipes that we are replacing are over 100 years old, and it's definitely time to replace them. By doing this we are reducing the amount of maintenance that needs to be done and making sure they can handle to growing population downtown," said City of Columbia community relations specialist Patricia Hayles.

Hayles said most of the roads the sewer project is blocking should be open for driving by the end of August, with the project wrapping up entirely shortly after.

The other construction project impacting campus transportation is the steam tunnel repairs underneath Lowry Mall.

Most of that project is expected to be completed by October.



[University of Missouri responds to Todd McNair records request](#)

By: Zachary Farwell

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **The University of Missouri has filed an objection to a subpoena to produce records in Boone County Circuit Court.**

On [July 20](#), the university was issued a subpoena through the legal counsel that represented Todd McNair to release documents that involved the investigation of Reggie Bush and the University of Southern California in 2010. School officials were also ordered to appear in Los Angeles, California for court on July 25.

An attorney for the UM System argues that another subpoena served to University of Missouri Law Professor Rodney Uphoff on May 23 sought the same documents as the records requested in the subpoena issued against the school last month.

Prof. Uphoff had previously served as a volunteer committee member for the NCAA. The subpoenas request documents and records from that committee.

On June 30, lawyers for the NCAA responded and agreed to give the records requested in the May subpoena.

the maneater

Gov. Greitens nominates Courtney Lauer to fill student representative position

If approved by the Missouri Senate Lauer will serve as the student representative on the Board of Curators until January 2018.

By KYLE LaHUCIK

For the first time since February, the University of Missouri System has a student representative to the UM System Board of Curators.

The board, which consists of nine voting curators, had two curator vacancies and the student representative vacancy for over five months months, until Gov. Eric Greitens announced his appointments on Monday.

The new student representative will be, pending approval, Courtney Lauer, an MU Law School graduate who is currently working toward an advanced law certification this fall.

Lauer fills a position that was previously occupied by Patrick Graham, a School of Music student who will be continuing his senior year this fall.

Lauer said she has been swamped with media requests in the past couple of days, so she sent a prepared statement.

“I am very grateful and humbled to receive this appointment,” Lauer said in the emailed statement. “The University of Missouri System has a distinguished past, and I am thrilled to be able to contribute to its bright future. I look forward to serving all students of the university system. I’m excited to get to work!”

Lauer won’t be a voting member of the board by nature of the [student representative position](#), but Graham said that didn’t inhibit his abilities to serve in the capacity.

“Most of what the board publicly votes on is very non-controversial,” Graham said in an email. “The debate and discussion happens before the vote, both in public and private sessions. I never

felt like my opinion was listened to less because I didn't have a vote to cast. On the contrary, I felt like many curators intentionally sought my opinion since I was the only student at the table.

Pending Missouri Senate approval, Lauer will be the only student at the table at the board's next meeting in September on the UM-Kansas City campus. While there, and throughout her term as student representative, Lauer will act as the voice of the over 77,000 students who make up the four campuses, MU Extension and the rest of the UM System.

Lauer's term is slated to end in January 2018, which is when Graham's term was supposed to end. Graham was nominated by former Gov. Jay Nixon, with his term scheduled to start January 2016, but he didn't officially serve on the board until June 2016 because the Missouri Senate did not confirm Nixon's nomination. As a recess appointment, he was then, in February, not renominated by Greitens.

Thus, Lauer will finish out the term designated for an MU student. The position rotates among campuses, with the next student scheduled to be from the Missouri University of Science and Technology campus.

Steven Chaffin, executive director of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, a student lobbying group that represents student interests at the Missouri Capitol in Jefferson City, said he has gotten to know Lauer recently.

"I have had the pleasure to work with her over the last couple of months, during which her appointment seemed likely but was not yet confirmed," Chaffin said in an email. "In my brief period of working with Courtney, she has always exuded the greatest sense of professionalism, self-confidence, and open-mindedness."

Chaffin said he has worked with Lauer on the Intercampus Student Council, which is made up of student leaders from all four campuses. It mainly consists of the student government presidents and vice presidents.

"I have no doubt she will be able to provide effective leadership to a group consisting of our university's top student leaders," Chaffin said of the ISC in the email. "Moreover, I cannot think of anyone who will more readily earn the respect of her fellow curators, providing students with an advocate in board meetings who can effect change."

From February till July 31, Chaffin served as the interim chair of the ISC, but Lauer will now serve as the chair, a position that comes with being the student representative to the board, according to ISC bylaws.

"It is entirely up to Courtney what strategy she employs to engage with students," Chaffin said in the email.

During his term, Graham made visits to the UM campuses.

“I thought of myself in many ways as an ambassador – I frequently spoke for students when interacting with administration and would speak on behalf of administration when students had questions or concerns,” Graham said in the email.

According to Lauer’s [LinkedIn page](#), she received a Bachelor of Arts in communication from Columbia College in 2011, where she was Student Government Association president for a year. She received a Juris Doctor degree from MU in 2017 and is currently working toward a Master of Law in dispute resolution. On her page, she lists being a student representative for another organization, the BARBRI Group. According to its website, “The BARBRI Group leadership team is dedicated to providing comprehensive support to life-long learners – young students and seasoned professionals, alike – on a global scale.”

Like Chaffin, Graham said he believes Lauer will be a good fit for the position.

“I think she will do a fantastic job as our student representative,” Graham said in the email. “She is passionate about higher [education], is politically savvy, and has experience working in the political and legal spheres. Governor Greitens made an excellent choice in nominating Courtney – it’s just a few months later than we all would have liked!”

Lauer has served in multiple intern positions for various people in the Missouri government, such as Judge Karen King Mitchell, the Missouri Attorney General’s Office and Chief Justice Mary Russell, according to her LinkedIn profile.

Lauer has a background in litigation and lobbying. Chaffin said Lauer will work with ASUM.

“Ideally [ASUM and the student representative] work in tandem,” Chaffin said.

Chaffin said the student representative focuses on the UM System, while ASUM concentrates its efforts in Jefferson City.

“So as we encounter issues and devise our strategy, undoubtedly we will want to keep Courtney involved in this process,” Chaffin said in the email. “We are currently working on mental health issues, sexual assault prevention, and college affordability, and there is certainly a role for the UM System leadership in this regard. So once Courtney settles into her role, those conversations will need to be had.”

Once students return to campus for the fall semester, which begins Aug. 21, Lauer will have the opportunity to meet with students and advocate for them.

To prevent future lengthy vacancies of the student representative position, Chaffin said that ASUM will need students to be more involved.

“Simply encouraging students to call their local lawmakers and asking them to press the issue would make a big difference,” Chaffin said in the email. “From February through May of 2017, ASUM liaised with the Governor’s office in attempts to get the nomination process moving more

quickly, and the UM System was doing the same with respect to its nominees for the Board of Curators.”

Chaffin said multiple factors were at play in the delay in nominating Lauer.

“There are innumerable factors that can complicate a nomination, but certainly the fact that this is the Governor’s first year and there were a number of controversial bills being considered—employment discrimination legislation and right-to-work, for example—made issues worse,” Chaffin said in the email.

[Greitens’ other appointments](#) on Monday included his picks for curators, Julia Brncic from St. Louis and Jon Sundvold from Columbia.



Express Scripts gave \$10,000 to help fund Eric Greitens’ inauguration

BY JASON HANCOCK

jhancock@kcstar.com

AUGUST 03, 2017 8:53 AM

JEFFERSON CITY - A St. Louis-based company that received a no-bid contract with the state has disclosed that it gave \$10,000 to help fund Gov. Eric Greitens’ inauguration.

Greitens’ administration recently gave the pharmacy benefit management company Express Scripts a \$250,000 contract to help administer a prescription drug monitoring program, arguing that a competitive bidding process was not required.

The contract drew scrutiny because Express Scripts was listed among a group of corporations and lobbyists that paid for Greitens’ inaugural festivities. The governor has steadfastly refused to disclose how much he raised and spent for his inauguration or how much each corporation contributed.

Express Scripts had also declined to tell The Star how much it gave. But the donation was included in a list of political contributions the company disclosed on its website.

In addition to the no-bid contract for Express Scripts, Greitens this week appointed Julia Brncic, the company's vice president and deputy general counsel, to the governing board of the University of Missouri System.

Greitens' decision to hide how much he paid for his inaugural is a break from Missouri tradition. His predecessors — Republican Matt Blunt and Democrats Bob Holden and Jay Nixon — each provided details on how much they raised and from whom.

The only other detail on Greitens' inaugural fundraising came earlier this year when the Osage Nation tribe in Oklahoma admitted to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that it contributed more than \$50,000 to “establish a good relationship with the governor” in the hopes he'd look favorably on the tribe's goal of building a casino in Missouri.

Express Scripts' donation to the governor's inauguration was the company's largest contribution this year and the only one it has made in Missouri. Last year the company donated thousands of dollars to a bipartisan swath of Missouri candidates, including \$25,000 to Greitens and \$15,000 to his Democratic opponent, former Attorney General Chris Koster.

Asked about the state contract by The Star, a spokesman for the company said the state is looking into potential partners to “help it better detect and address overprescribing and overutilization of opioids. We have technology and data analytics capabilities that are relevant and that is why state officials reached out to us.”

The governor's senior adviser, Austin Chambers, previously said accusations of impropriety involving the Express Scripts contract were “ridiculous.”

MISSOURIAN

MU research centers to perform experiments during eclipse

CONNOR LAGORE

COLUMBIA — **MU research centers will use the upcoming eclipse to their scientific advantage. Bradford and South Farm research centers will host visitors for the total solar eclipse on Aug. 21, according to a news release from the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. Visitors will also get to watch research experiments in progress via livestreams.**

Each research center will open about 11 a.m.

South Farm Research Center is home to the MU Equine Teaching Facility, the subjects of one experiment during the day, the release said.

For the other experiment, South Farm will team up with MU professor of biological sciences Bethany Stone to focus on plants and crops, namely mimosa, purple clover, corn and soybeans. They will be monitored for their movement and behavior during the eclipse.

Tim Reinbott, assistant director of the Agricultural Research Centers, said the results should be interesting.

‘We’re not sure how plant and animals will react,’ Reinbott said in the release. ‘Will they think that it’s nighttime and react as though it’s time to shut down for the day? Or will they go about things as if nothing is changing?’

Although the Equine Teaching Facility will be closed to the public for the safety and comfort of the horses, the South Farm Research Center will livestream them. It will also have a livestream of the plants being studied.

Bradford Research Center will have both livestreams as well, to be shown in the John Poehlmann Education Center there.

In addition to the horse and plant livestreams, the research centers will also pay attention to fish, bugs and chickens and how their habits change as the eclipse occurs.

Bradford Research Center is at 4968 Rangeline Road, and the South Farm Research Center is at 3600 E. New Haven Road.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

[Avoid fake eclipse glasses if you want to see after Aug. 21](#)

BY ANDY MARSO

amarso@kstar.com

AND MARK DAVIS

mdavis@kstar.com

AUGUST 03, 2017 11:14 AM

Put on your eclipse glasses. Can you see anything, anything at all?

If you can, then they are fake, and you will damage your eyes as you watch the moon move in front of the sun on Aug. 21.

“If you look through them and you see any light, they’re not strong enough,” said Dr. Justin Marsh, a pediatric ophthalmologist at Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City.

That’s also the latest advisory from the American Astronomical Society, which has been updating consumers about the gear needed to safely watch the eclipse and about the phony stuff to avoid.

Safe eclipse glasses carry certification credentials printed on the inside of the cardboard ear piece. It shows they meet ISO 12312-2, according to NASA’s website on viewing the eclipse safely.

“When the first round of fake glasses came on they didn’t have the ISO number, so you were sure they were a problem,” said Angela Speck, director of astronomy at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Speck serves as co-chair of the American Astronomical Society Solar Eclipse Task Force. She has been giving talks and handing out safe eclipse glasses in preparation for the big day. And, she has watched the scammers adapt.

“They started catching on and said, ‘We need to put the ISO number on,’” Speck said. “So they do that.”

Looking directly at the sun without the proper protection will damage your eyes. Marsh said the portion of the retina that is used for “central vision,” or focusing on something up close, is particularly vulnerable.

The briefest glance at the sun can inflict permanent harm, and there’s not much doctors can do.

“There’s no real treatment,” Marsh said. “So if there is damage, it’s done, and you just sort of have to wait and watch if there’s going to be improvement.”

Marsh said certified, authentic eclipse glasses should work for any age, but children should be supervised to ensure they use them.

In the Kansas City area, the eclipse will not be complete enough to ever watch without the glasses, Marsh said. Farther north, in St. Joseph, there may be a minute or two when glasses won’t be needed, but even then Marsh advised taking great care to put the glasses back on promptly before the sun begins to move into view again.

NASA recommends eclipse glasses made by any of five manufactures that have met its review process, and these makers include their names and contact information on the glasses. The American Astronomical Society has listed retailers it said offer safe glasses, including Walmart, Lowe’s and Circle K.

Much of the scrutiny about fakes has hit online sales of eclipse glasses.

The website Quartz checked out eclipse glasses it found at Amazon.com, including a pair marked as made by American Paper Optics. It learned that the company had squared off the curve in the earpiece, meaning the APO pair Quartz bought online, which had rounded off curves, was fake.

Which brings Speck back to the practical test.

A mere sliver of the sun, the last few specks of light called “Baily’s Beads” or the final “diamond ring” image that disappears just before the total eclipse are too much.

Even these moments require eclipse glasses so nearly opaque that they allow only 1 millionth of the Sun's light to reach the wearer's eye, Speck said.

She has tested legitimate glasses against an extremely bright spotlight during a Girl Scout event at Stephens College in Columbia. She barely saw it.

Speck tested eclipse glasses against her eye-damaging laser pointer and none of the light shined through to the other side.

Another safety tip is to get your eclipse glasses from a science museum or planetarium, astronomy trade show, university astronomy departments and similar groups that take pains to secure proper eclipse glasses.

Science City and the Arvin Gottleib Planetarium at Union Station are selling safe eclipse glasses, said Jeff Rosenblatt, director of exhibits at Science City and director of the planetarium. It will provide free eclipse glasses as part of its ticketed Aug. 21 program and a pop-up event at City Market.

Speck said she has seen others offer safe eclipse glasses. Schlafly Beer, for example, included safe eclipse glasses with its Path of Totality beer packs.

"I know where they got them from," Speck said.

Even safe eclipse glasses can hurt – financially. As eclipse day approaches, supplies have begun to run short. Walmart on Blackbob Road in Olathe was out on Wednesday.

And prices have gone up.

A 10-pack of Soluna Solar Eclipse Glasses sold on Amazon for \$16.95 on July 22. As of Aug. 2, the price had gone up to \$24.45.

That's \$2.45 a pair, high but not unreasonable, said Speck, adding that the Mizzou bookstore is selling eclipse glasses at \$1.49 a pair. A pair purchased at the Hy-Vee in Shawnee, Kan., cost \$2.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Reports of crop damage resurfacing since Missouri dicamba ban lifted

By Bryce Gray • St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Since mid-July, Missouri farmers have resumed spraying dicamba after a temporary ban on the controversial weedkiller was lifted by the state Department of Agriculture. Now, some farmers are reporting that damage to sensitive crops is reappearing — a lag time that suggests the injury occurred soon after the ban ended.

Tom Burnham, a Blytheville, Ark., grower who farms thousands of acres in Arkansas and across the state line in Missouri, says that “every acre” of his Missouri soybeans is showing symptoms of damage incurred since that time. He blames the recent applications of the herbicide, which can be prone to vaporizing — or volatilizing — and drifting off-target.

“We’re just now seeing the fallout,” said Burnham on Tuesday, noting that signs of damage, such as cupped leaves, take a week or two to emerge. “This has raised its head again in the last three days.”

In comparison, Burnham says the bulk of his acreage in Arkansas — where a similar dicamba ban remains in place — has been spared the same recent damage, with some fields near the state border standing as an exception.

In places, he says his injured crops are “at least a mile away” from the nearest possible point source of dicamba. To him, that distance helps underscore that newly approved forms of the herbicide can’t be safely used alongside farmers whose crops aren’t genetically modified to tolerate the chemical.

“We just can’t coexist,” he says. “It’s just so volatile and unpredictable.”

This year, well over 1,000 official investigations into reported dicamba damage have flooded officials in more than a dozen states, according to the University of Missouri’s Division of Plant Sciences. Missouri and Arkansas are two of the states hit hardest by damage complaints, and [each announced bans](#) of dicamba on July 7 in an attempt to stem the surging epidemic of cases.

Arkansas' ban will remain in effect for a 120-day window. But Missouri's was lifted less than a week later, on July 13, when the state Department of Agriculture issued stricter conditions for applying new dicamba products made by agrochemical companies Monsanto, BASF and DuPont. Those rules — which target factors such as wind speed at the time of application — will be in place until Dec. 1.

Critics suggested Missouri's ban may have been short-lived because officials are wary of companies such as Creve Coeur-based Monsanto, which introduced dicamba-tolerant seed varieties.

“I think Monsanto's got too much political power in the state of Missouri,” Burnham said. “I'm surprised the ban got implemented at all.”

The state Department of Agriculture did not address those claims but said it would “continue to monitor (the dicamba) situation for the remainder of the growing season to determine the appropriate action moving forward.”

Representatives from both Monsanto and BASF said the companies continue their own investigations into reported damage attributed to their new dicamba formulations. Officials at Monsanto and throughout the industry “absolutely continue to stand by the technology,” suggesting that this year's complaints may result from illegal use of unapproved, more volatile forms of dicamba or lack of compliance with proper spray procedures.

Those claims, however, are challenged not only by farmers such as Burnham but by a growing chorus of experts at universities and extension offices who have levied harsh criticism toward the agricultural industry for what they say is a failure to acknowledge an obvious problem of off-target dicamba movement.

Kevin Bradley, [a University of Missouri plant sciences professor](#) tracking the issue, concluded a [recent post](#) on the subject with rhetorical questions suggesting that those alternative explanations couldn't account for the soaring totals of damage being reported.

“Can you look at the scale and the magnitude of the problem on these maps and really believe that all of this can collectively be explained by some combination of physical drift, sprayer error, failure to follow guidelines, temperature inversions, generic dicamba usage, contaminated glufosinate products, and improper sprayer clean-out, but that volatility is not also a factor?” Bradley asked.

“I know what my perspective is, what's yours?”

MISSOURIAN

Researchers host first field day for growers

SADIE LORRAINE COLLINS

COLUMBIA — **In the middle of a large field at the MU Bradford Research Center, research specialist Steven Kirk wore a straw hat and laughed about watermelons.**

"The kind we use is called Moon & Stars," Kirk said of the watermelon seeds. People sitting in wagons around him nodded. "And, actually, they're heirloom."

On Thursday, the research center hosted its first Vegetable Grower's Field Day. The event is a way to instruct commercial vegetable farmers on how to improve their techniques, as well as informing home gardeners about the importance of seed variety.

Seed variety is where heirloom crops come in, according to Kathy McFarland, a representative of the Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Co.

Heirloom vegetables are vintage varieties that have been passed down for generations and are usually open-pollinated, meaning they will naturally end up identical to their parents, [according to a crop profile](#) by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment. Heirloom farmers look for flavor potential, whereas farmers of hybrid vegetables breed them for uniformity and durability.

That is, heirlooms are selected for how good they taste on the plate rather than how pretty they look in the kitchen.

Hybrid variations can withstand the rough shipping required to take vegetables from farm to store, something that heirloom crops can't.

However, the trend of growing heirloom plants has boomed in recent years, McFarland said. Beginning around the turn of the 21st century with the scare of Y2K, there was a resurgence of people interested in the idea of 'seed saving,' which is what heirlooms rely on.

"We always want people to save seeds," McFarland said. "The main goal is to save seed diversity. If we were all eating the same kind of tomato and some disease came to wipe them out, we wouldn't have any tomatoes left."

As McFarland talked, she would occasionally ask the audience to raise their hands if they grew a certain beet, were familiar with a certain technique or understood a joke she just said. Almost everyone would raise their hand.

Unlike some of the research center's other events, Thursday's field day was focused on people who already knew how to seed save and rotate crops. They were gardeners and farmers who understand the importance of seed diversity and experimental farming research better than anyone.

"We're going on our [13th Tomato Festival](#)," Kirk said. "Over a thousand people show up. There's a lot of people who come to taste but really have no interest in the plants themselves. So, I thought, let's have a field day about a month before the tomato fest where we can actually show off the plants in the field. This'll be a preamble to the tomato fest."

Marty and Pam Hackler, married biologists from Holts Summit who've been gardening as long as they could remember, came to the event as a way to learn more about their own crops. They use almost exclusively heirlooms.

"Heirlooms aren't necessarily better, but you can save the seeds," Pam Hackler said. "If you get a hybrid and save the seed, there's a pretty good probability that you won't get the same type of fruit. If you save an heirloom tomato seed, you'll get that same tomato the next year."

The event was extremely helpful, the Hacklers said. It was a great way for them to fix some of the mistakes they made this year and help prepare for next year.

The discussion about the heirloom trend accompanied several wagon tours, where the crowd could see how researchers were working to improve the balance of watermelon and cover crop, as well as sweet potatoes affected by fungi.

Kirk, surrounded by sweat bees, dust motes and acres of lime green grass, spoke about the importance of continuous research to improve farmers' techniques and the food itself. It's an ongoing process filled with experimentation, Kirk said. There isn't always a right answer.

"Heirlooms and hybrids all have their place," Kirk said, surrounded by over 100 types of tomatoes and peppers in long rows. "They really do."



Sneak Peek at Residential Life Halls Open to the Public

Watch the story: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=ebe9a715-ceaf-405d-b59f-2c7b8d794146>