



MU News Bureau

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T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

At MU, first-day numbers better than expected

By Rudi Keller

First-day enrollment counts included some encouraging news for the University of Missouri, with an incoming freshman class slightly larger than expected and overall enrollment meeting a key psychological level.

The incoming class is about 4,100, the university said in a news release. That would be the smallest incoming class in about 20 years but 100 more than estimated in May. Overall first-day enrollment was estimated more than 30,000 students.

MU has seen two years of dramatic enrollment declines since campus protests over racial issues in November 2015. The protests led to the resignation of university system President Tim Wolfe and MU campus Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and this academic year is the first since those events where both the UM System and the Columbia campus have permanent leadership. Mun Choi became president on March 1 and Alexander Cartwright took over as chancellor on Aug. 1.

“We’re excited about what our preliminary numbers are showing,” said Pelema Morrice, vice provost for enrollment management. “These are stronger numbers than what was indicated earlier this year. Additionally, our strong retention number, which is one of the highest among all of Missouri’s universities, shows us that students have successful academic experiences on campus. This class is very reflective of the state of Missouri.”

Enrollment at the Columbia campus peaked in fall 2015 at 35,448. This year’s first-day enrollment of first-time freshmen is 34 percent below 2015 and overall enrollment is down almost 8 percent in two years. The official enrollment count will be made during the fourth week of September.

Several minority freshmen students attending their first day of college on Monday said they were aware of MU’s rocky history with race relations. Some said they felt comfortable on campus, while others said the university is not any more unwelcoming than other college campuses.

Daval Torres and Jairon Parker from Illinois and Texas, respectively, said they were not worried about the environment on campus. Recent protests did not play into their decision to attend school in Missouri, both freshmen said, as they’d selected MU because they want to walk on to the football team.

The university’s football team notably drew national attention two years ago when players joined the Concerned Student 1950 protests.

Torres said he spoke with several older students and heard about racism students experienced on campus that was not as widely publicized or understood.

“The thing is, it’s no difference than what you’d get anywhere else you go,” Torres said. “You’d get it everywhere.”

During Summer Welcome, incoming students saw skits that dealt with the 2015 protests and a video about the university that included information about it. The purpose was to spark discussion among the new students and answer their concerns, MU spokesman Christian Basi said.

“We did not shy away from addressing questions students had about the protests,” Basi said. “It shows we’re willing to talk about these things.”

The way the issue was addressed in Summer Welcome made students visiting campus feel like they belong, said Kierra Blurgouis from Chicago. Her grandmother spoke with her before school started about what the protests at MU concerned, Blurgouis said, but the school’s history was not something that worried her.

“I wanted to come here exactly because everyone was super welcoming,” she said.

Other aspects of the first-day enrollment report were also positive. The retention rate for undergraduates is 86.6 percent, the second-highest in school history, according to the university. The incoming freshman class held an average ACT score of 26, well above the state average of 20.2 and national average of 20.8, according to MU officials.

“Student success is at the heart of what we do at Mizzou,” said Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies and e-learning. “Over the past decade, we have made student success a priority.”



MU enrollment is down but last year’s freshmen came back

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

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AUGUST 21, 2017 6:24 PM

Fall classes started at University of Missouri on Monday and while enrollment is down on the Columbia campus, MU officials boast that a high percentage of last year's freshmen returned for a second year.

More than 4,100 students make up this year's freshman class, down nearly 700 students from last year. But preliminary numbers released by the university indicate that 86.6 percent of freshmen from last year came back. MU says that's the second-highest retention rate in the school's history.

"We're excited about what our preliminary numbers are showing," said Pelema Morrice, vice provost for enrollment management.

"These are stronger numbers than what was indicated earlier this year. Additionally, our strong retention number, which is one of the highest among all of Missouri's universities, shows us that students have successful academic experiences on campus."

However, MU is still struggling to recover from the blow it took to its reputation in the fall of 2015. Overall enrollment numbers this year are still down at MU, as university officials had expected.

Classes began with an enrollment of more than 30,000 students.

Preliminary figures on opening day are not official because many students continue to enroll or drop out in the first few weeks. Official numbers are gathered during the fourth week of classes and will be released in late September.

At this time last year MU's enrollment was at 32,777, including 4,799 freshmen. The year before enrollment was at nearly 35,500.

Christian Basi, a university spokesman, pointed out that in May based on admission applications administrators were projecting a freshmen class of about 4,000. So the enrollment of 4,100 this year means that more than 100 additional students enrolled in about the last three months.

Freshman enrollment at the Columbia campus has fallen by more than 35 percent in the two years since the fall semester of 2015, when racially charged student protests and a threatened boycott by the football team forced the UM System president to resign and for Mizzou's chancellor to step down.

The 2016 freshman class was down 22.9 percent from 2015.

University officials have attributed the drop in enrollment in part to the fallout from the 2015 campus unrest, including questions about why university leaders did not immediately fire

Melissa Click, the communications professor who called for “muscle” to remove a journalist during a campus protest.

Some blame also has been placed on a demographic shift resulting in fewer high school graduates, plus increased competition from peer institutions for Midwest students.

MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright, named to the position on May 24, said the university plans to improve its numbers further.

“I’m very excited to be here at this critical time, and I’m grateful for the support of our alumni and friends and the dedication of our faculty and staff. I’m excited to get to work as the new academic year begins.”



Preliminary MU enrollment statistics offer mixed picture

BY ANDREW WITHERS NEWS@COLUMBIAMISSOURIAN.COM

Preliminary MU enrollment figures show a freshman class smaller than last year’s but larger than administrators predicted in May. MU reported more than 4,100 freshmen began classes Monday, the first day of the fall semester. That represents a 14.6 percent decline from last year’s first-day freshman count. The 2016 figure was down 22.7 percent from 2015.

Administrators [said in May](#) they expected freshman enrollment would be close to 4,000.

Officials estimate total MU enrollment is now 30,400, down from the 32,777 reported on the first day of classes in 2016. Officials emphasized the numbers are preliminary and will not be

finalized until late September. In 2016, enrollment increased by 489 students between the first day and Oct. 6. Enrollment peaked in 2015 at 35,448, according to MU's Institutional Research office.

Administrators hailed the university's 86.6 percent retention rate, which is the second-highest in school history, according to a university news release. The rate represents the percentage of returning students who were freshmen last year.

"Our strong retention number, which is one of the highest among all of Missouri's universities, shows us that students have successful academic experiences on campus," said Pelema Morrice, vice provost for enrollment management.

Administrators cited multiple reasons for the strong retention rate. "Our students have opportunities unlike any other Missouri institution," said new MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright, "from undergraduate research and athletics to health care and extension."

Student protests in the 2015 fall semester over the campus racial climate and the university's response have been cited as reasons for the decline, but so have other factors. MU has had to deal with a series of state budget cuts, a declining pool of graduating high school seniors and a few mediocre seasons from its marquee sports programs.



Mizzou sees second highest retention rate in history

By: Jordan Smith

COLUMBIA - The University of Missouri began classes Monday with the second highest retention rate in the university's history, according to preliminary figures. The retention rate, which is a measure of how many students who were freshmen last year choose to return to the university, stands at 86.6 percent. This number is up from 85.4 percent in 2016.

"We're excited about what our preliminary numbers are showing," said Pelema Morrice, vice provost for enrollment management. "These are stronger numbers than what was indicated earlier this year."

Preliminary data also shows that more than 30,000 students attended the first day of classes, 4,100 of which were freshman.

"We plan to improve these even further by expanding applied learning opportunities. I'm very excited to be here at this critical time," Chancellor Alexander Cartwright said. "I'm excited to get to work as the new academic year begins."

Final figures will be released in late September.



Freshman Enrollment Down, Retention Up on the First Day at Mizzou

Watch the story: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=37e6f447-5748-408f-bc86-7d2677fcd49c>

MISSOURIAN

UM System emphasizes importance of free speech

BY EDWARD MCKINLEY

The importance of freedom of expression, even of beliefs some find repugnant, was reiterated Monday by University of Missouri System officials.

The system reaffirmed its commitment to the [2016 “Commitment to Free Expression” statement](#), which was written by MU’s [Ad Hoc Joint Committee on Protests, Public Spaces, Free Speech, and the Press](#). The committee was founded in January 2016, two months after protests hit the Columbia campus. Its goal was to develop a policy on how public spaces are to be handled while protecting free speech, and to recommend a way to settle disputes over the use of campus public space.

The statement underwent a process in which it was approved by the faculty councils of the four system schools — MU, University of Missouri-Kansas City, University of Missouri-St. Louis and Missouri University of Science and Technology. The affirmation process was completed this summer, and the result was announced Monday to coincide with the beginning of the school year, said MU spokesman Christian Basi.

In an April email from then-interim Chancellor Hank Foley, [MU announced new rules and restrictions](#) regarding protests and free speech on campus. The rules banned megaphones and sound amplification devices without a permit, overnight camping on school grounds and flashing lights without a permit. Protests were allowed to continue without being registered beforehand, student organizations could continue placing fliers on bulletin boards and chalk could be used as long as it wasn't within 25 feet of the entrance to a building or Traditions Plaza.

Speakers espousing beliefs some find controversial or offensive, such as Ben Shapiro or Milo Yiannopoulos, have been met with protests, occasionally violent ones, at schools such as UC Berkeley, UCLA and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. By affirming the 2016 freedom of expression statement, Basi said, the system has made its position clear on the subject.

“We want to make sure that everyone can come to a university campus and have their perspective heard in a respectful way,” Basi said.

Basi pointed out that when Shapiro visited MU last year he was not met with aggressive protests and was given his opportunity to speak.

The 2016 free speech statement unequivocally states the importance of free speech for the health of the campus community. Basi said part of the school's mission is exposing students to those with differing viewpoints from their own.

“It is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive,” [the statement](#) reads. It goes on to say that “concerns about civility and mutual respect can never be used as a

justification for closing off the discussion of ideas, however offensive or disagreeable those ideas may be to some members of our community.”

Regarding protests of people expressing controversial views, the statement says, “The University has a solemn responsibility to undertake all reasonable measures not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it.”

UM System President Mun Choi also weighed in, saying in the release: “The freedom to express our opinions and to freely discuss ideas are fundamental to democracy and serve as central foundations that promote learning, research and engagement.”



Witnessing the Great American Eclipse in Columbia, Missouri

By **Ryan Korsgard** - Reporter

Watch the story: <https://www.click2houston.com/news/witnessing-the-great-american-eclipse-in-columbia-missouri>

Second video from live morning broadcast:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=4bd79f4f-0c4c-48ce-97bf-492324a19a8c>

Generated from a News Bureau direct pitch

COLUMBIA, Missouri - It happened just after 1 p.m. where thousands of students, as well as some alums, gathered at the University of Missouri and sat in the middle to get a sweet spot of the total solar eclipse -- and total darkness.

"This is amazing. This is like my whole lifetime experience. Like, it's amazing. I'm really amazed by it," Sharon Tan.

She lives in Sugar Land and attended school at the University of Missouri. Tan said she took a private plane early Monday morning to get to Missouri. She said the temporary transformation was worth it.

"We were hesitating if we want to fly to here because the cost is pretty high to fly by private plane but now I think it's totally worth it," Tan said.

She was not the only Houstonian jet-setting into the line of total darkness.

Houstonians took off from Million Air at Hobby Airport, headed north to see the view.

The Missouri School of Journalism flew a drone over the crowd. It captured images over the school on the first day of class.

University of Missouri Student Andrew Gammon had a creative description.

He said, "I thought it was a good team effort. I think the moon did really well. The sun did too. They really pulled their weight and put a good show on tonight. Glad Mizzou funded that for us. It was a great time!"

The Washington Post

Totality in Missouri: 'I may become an eclipse chaser now'

By SARA SHIPLEY HILES

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Attendees at a private party at The Roof bar whooped and screamed as totality neared. The landscape rapidly descended into eery twilight, sunset pinks and blues hovering over the horizon. **The University of Missouri's trademark Jesse Hall dome stood stark against the Kodachrome sky.**

A loudspeaker announced to dozens of partygoers that totality had arrived. "You may now safely remove your glasses!" a man shouted.

The moon slipped over the sun and the sun's bright white corona appeared. People screamed; some started crying. Fireworks began sparkling over the city.

Yvette Nieto kissed her husband, Doug Bowles, shortly after the sun went dark. After two minutes and 36 seconds, the process reversed. A "diamond ring" effect appeared as the sun's rays began peeking through the moon's uneven surface.

“Incredible,” she said.

“Amazing,” said he.

“It’s almost like New Year’s Eve,” she said.

University of Missouri director of astronomy Angela Speck, co-chair of the American Astronomical Society’s Solar Eclipse Task Force, was doing live color commentary for local TV station KMIZ. Speck removed her eclipse glasses and stared at the hole in the sky where the sun used to be.

Afterward, Speck said she couldn’t even remember what she had said to a live TV audience, she was so overwhelmed. “That was amazing, it was fantastic. And I expect I’m going to try to find way to go to the next one, which is in Chile in 2019. I may become an eclipse chaser now.”

The Washington Post

[‘He’s coming for the free lunch’: MU student’s parents join him for totality](#)

By SARA SHIPLEY HILES

COLUMBIA, Mo. — **Hundreds of onlookers gathered on Jesse Quad at the University of Missouri, prepared for first contact.** Heavy humidity and light clouds made the sky seem hazy. Just after the moon began crossing the sun, dozens of people raised their faces skyward, looking through eclipse glasses.

“You can’t see much yet. Just a sliver,” said Mark Telle of St. Louis, who is retired from his family’s tire and auto service business. Telle drove from St. Louis with his wife, Maureen, to watch the eclipse with their son, Elliott, a senior civil engineering major.

Telle had a video camera and a still camera set up on tripods to catch the action. The couple drove from St. Louis so they could see totality — and have lunch with their son. “He’s coming for the free lunch,” they joked.

Nearby, Rachel McCormick, 23, was one of many MU students camped on the quad. She and two friends sat on a blanket in a shady corner with a view of Mizzou’s iconic columns and Jesse Hall, the historic administrative building.

“I’d be a bit more excited if it weren’t so cloudy,” said McCormick, a graduate student in math. Nonetheless, she added that the eclipse is “kind of a big deal.”



Mizzou goes crazy for eclipse

By Andy Banker

Watch the story: <http://fox2now.com/2017/08/21/mizzou-goes-crazy-for-eclipse/>

COLUMBIA, Mo. – Eclipse Day fell on back to school day for students at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Columbia was nearly “dead center” in the eclipse path.

Most students told Fox 2/News 11 their classes before and during the total solar eclipse were cancelled.

A massive crowd of students, staff, and alumni, gathered on the Carnahan Quad. There were free eclipse glasses and Shakespeare’s Pizza.

“I couldn’t have imagined my last first day of school any other way,” said Sophia Cygnarowicz, a senior from of Columbia, Illinois.

Totality came right on schedule. The sky got dark at 1:12 p.m. Automatic lights, fooled by the darkness, lit up the dome of Jesse Hall. Insects, also fooled, began chirping as if it were nightfall. There was pure magic at Mizzou. A kinship or brotherhood seemed to sweep through, especially during the close to two minutes and 35 seconds of totality.

Researchers across campus were monitoring the impact of the eclipse on plants, birds, and insects.

A group of engineering students from the campus SEDS (Students for the Exploration and Development of Space) chapter launched a weather balloon with cameras and GPS mounted in a Mizzou styrofoam cooler to track the eclipse up-close.

Minneapolis psychologist Bob Karol, who got his graduate degree from Mizzou, came back to campus with his wife and a special camera rig. Was he ever glad that he did! It was more than just the awesome photos he captured, he said.

“About a year, I’ve been planning this...it’s just awe-inspiring...my wife was just crying, it’s amazing, it’s just amazing,” he said.

The SEDS club recovered their gear which dropped back to Earth in Illinois, near the Illinois River about 100 miles northeast of Columbia, MO. As of early Monday night, they had yet to review their footage.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Mizzou campus celebrates the eclipse: ‘All our woes will be gone’

BY JASON HANCOCK

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COLUMBIA - They’d made the nine-hour drive from Dallas to Kansas City to view the eclipse. But by 8 a.m., Klaes Svensson and Soren Neilsen began getting worried.

The weather reports were looking bad, and they were concerned their chances to see a once-in-a-lifetime event could be dashed.

So Svensson and Neilsen decided to head east with no particular destination in mind. By 10 a.m., they’d settled on the campus of the University of Missouri, surrounded by thousands of students, faculty and staff who were back in town for the first day of classes.

“We planned to go to St. Joseph, but we realized last night the weather wasn’t going to be good,” Svensson said. “We decided to go east, but we didn’t know where to go.”

Turns out, they made a good choice. While St. Joseph was mostly socked in by clouds during the total solar eclipse, the skies over Columbia were clear.

The eclipse, paired with the first day students were back in classes, made for a busy Columbia campus Monday. The school provided free pizza to students and handed out more than 4,000 pairs of eclipse glasses.

“We didn’t have class today. All of our classes got canceled,” said Kristina Moore, a sophomore studying chemical engineering. “So that was really nice. We feel really lucky it’s happening here.”

Ruth Tofle, professor and chair of the department of architectural studies, said faculty had the option of canceling classes during the hours of the eclipse, but “school was not supposed to be canceled before and after. But the reality is we didn’t know about the traffic. So I think all classes are basically canceled.”

Tofle said the eclipse is a wonderful way to kick off a new school year, especially after the turmoil the campus has seen in recent years.

“Mizzou is a wonderful school, and we need good press,” she said. “Between our total solar eclipse, and the coming basketball season, all our woes will be gone.”

As for Svensson and Neilsen, they agreed that the drive to Columbia was totally worth it. Even if it maybe wasn’t a once-in-a-lifetime moment after all.

“Seeing an eclipse, this is something on my bucket list. It wasn’t until after we decided to do go that we found out [there will be one in seven years in Dallas](#),” he said, laughing. “But then again, I could be dead in seven years.”

He added after the eclipse was over, “That was amazing.”



In the ‘Show-Me State,’ one city appends ‘Totality’ for eclipse event

By STEVE TARTER

COLUMBIA, MO. — “Show Me Totality” T-shirts are just some of the signs of the solar eclipse experienced Monday in this Missouri city of 120,000.

Hundreds gathered in Stephens Park where Kashif Ali and Drew Brown took photographs of the eclipse.

A New York City resident who works in finance, Ali said he made the trip to Columbia where Brown resides “to experience something that occurs once in a lifetime.”

The pair were well prepared for the eclipse watch in the park: cooler, umbrella, reclining chairs and guitars along with the necessary equipment to take time-lapse coverage of the sun-moon confrontation.

I, on the other hand, hunkered down with my eclipse glasses and my phone — no blanket, drinks or musical accompaniment (Beethoven’s “Moonlight Sonata” was playing somewhere in the distance).

This is a town that went all in on the eclipse, taking advantage of the fact that Columbia lies in the 70-mile-wide path of totality that spanned the country.

“We’ve got a group here from Japan, a couple from Norway, people from all over the country,” said Megan McConachie of the Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau.

“I’ve never seen the parking lot so full,” she said of the town’s Cosmo Park, a center for eclipse-viewing activity that staged a music festival on Sunday.

Amid food trucks and hot air balloons, visitors roamed the park brandishing the eclipse glasses necessary for viewing the great event.

While it’s the first total solar eclipse to be viewed in Missouri since 1869, it’s Columbia’s first since before Columbus arrived in the New World. The last time Columbia experienced a total solar eclipse was 1442.

I was ready for a momentous occasion. After all, hadn’t I read that a total solar eclipse was nothing like a partial?

David Baron, author of the recently-published “The American Eclipse,” got me excited: “A total eclipse is a primal, transcendent experience. The shutting off of the sun does not bring utter darkness; it is like falling through a trapdoor into a dimly-lit, unrecognizable reality. The sky is not the sky of earth--neither the star-filled dome of night nor the the immersive blue of daylight, but an ashen ceiling of slate.”

I was ready for a transcendent experience. The University of Missouri students nearby who didn’t seem concerned with what was about to happen were really going to be surprised.

And then it came. As the darkness of totality enveloped the park, street lights went on in the park, followed by whoops and applause from onlookers

And somewhere, down to my right in the park, Dominic Lee, 29, proposed to Stephanie Beal, 30. While Lee's family and friends were aware that the big question was going to be popped, Beal said she was "kept in the dark."

More awe was exhibited than craziness when things went dark. Somebody told me that people were given to fits of profanity under the power of the eclipse, but I didn't hear any foul language — just genuine admiration for this dramatic change in the daily routine.

And two minutes and 36 seconds later, the sunlight crept back and we were back in the light — not blinding, mind you, but the switch had definitely been flipped.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Crowds gather on University of Missouri campus to witness totality

By Caitlin Campbell Columbia Daily Tribune

About one minute before the 2017 solar eclipse reached totality, a crowd of roughly 10,000 students, faculty and staff **who had gathered on the University of Missouri quadrangles peeked at the sun behind tiger-striped paper safety glasses.**

Cicadas started chirping around Carnahan Quadrangle. The lights on Rollins Street and sidewalks hummed to life. A bird in a tree near Cornell Hall stopped singing. Someone cut the music from a pair of speakers, which had been playing "Total Eclipse of the Heart" by Bonnie Tyler.

"M-I-Z," someone shouted as the moon completely covered the sun and campus went dark.

But no one replied with the usual "Z-O-U" refrain. Instead, the crowd erupted in gasps, cheers and applause. Thousands of people who were seated on blankets and lawn chairs at MU's Carnahan Quadrangle, Francis Quadrangle and Stankowski Field took off their glasses and admired what many said would be a once-in-a-lifetime event.

"Oh my gosh, just look at it," said Rebecca Graves to her husband just before totality. "I've never seen anything like it."

Graves, an education librarian at MU, said she was delighted to see the once-in-a-lifetime solar eclipse had such a large turnout among the student body. The world needs more festivals, she said with a smile, and it was nice to have the community come together for something that isn't athletics.

Viewing parties hosted by MU, Stephens College and Columbia College drew students and families in large numbers to the local college campuses on Monday. Although it was the first day of the fall semester, many students had their afternoon classes canceled for the event.

At MU, organizers estimated more than 10,000 people came to watch the total solar eclipse and that they handed out hundreds of pairs of safety glasses. Students who came to the party on Carnahan Quadrangle were also treated to free Shakespeare's Pizza, bottled water and sun-themed music blaring from two speakers, such as "Here Comes the Sun" by The Beatles.

A smaller crowd of students, staff and faculty at Stephens College gathered on the senior quad to celebrate with an afternoon of activities including a live DJ, lawn games and lunch. Columbia College by Monday morning was prepared to host a crowd of about 600 people, said spokesman Sam Fleury. Several of the college's departments showed off eclipse-related educational booths, which families enjoyed alongside a picnic lunch, he said.

By the time the moon began eclipsing the sun around noon, hundreds of observers were already buzzing with excitement on campus at MU.

"Oh, you can see it!" junior Luke Mouton and his friends said, as they pointed and peeked at the sun with paper safety glasses provided by MU. "There's a little bit right now — it's like someone took a little nibble out of the thing."

Mouton, who was wearing a black Total Eclipse Mizzou 2017 shirt, said he and his friends were "pretty excited" to see an eclipse. The fact that some classes were canceled didn't hurt, he said, because he didn't think he would have an opportunity to see anything like it again.

The event wasn't once-in-a-lifetime for everyone. Student Tong Ou said Monday marked the second time she had seen a total solar eclipse — she saw one in her hometown in China in 2009. The eclipse in Columbia looked different from what she saw in China, she said, but it was "just beautiful."

Several of the unusual events that happened during the eclipse surprised sophomore Aya Alzayer, who attended the event at Carnahan Quadrangle with three of her friends. Campus quickly went from a normal, mildly cloudy day to "just like night" very quickly, she said. She noted the noisy bugs in the trees and cooler, darker conditions.

According to MU's real-time weather tracker at Sanborn Field, the temperature dropped about 5 degrees in Columbia during the eclipse.

"I didn't think it was going to get so dark here so quickly," Alzayer said. "It was kind of creepy, but that was cool."

MISSOURIAN

ECLIPSE: Crowds gather, clouds scatter for moment of totality in mid-Missouri

BY PETER BAUGH NEWS@COLUMBIAMISSOURIAN.COM

It was 8:43 a.m. — four and a half hours before the moon would slide over the sun and midday in Missouri would look like dusk.

Already, 121 cyclists had lined up in Rocheport, population 250, to sign in for a 36-mile bike ride to Jefferson City. The trail offered a unique vantage point of a natural phenomenon that hadn't happened in Missouri since 1869: a total solar eclipse.

With Columbia in the path of totality, Monday's solar eclipse captivated the region and interrupted routines. Adults took a day off work, and students cut class. A local Subway stopped making sandwiches.

At Meriwether Café and Bike Shop, located at the 178th mile of the Katy Trail at the Rocheport trail head, business had slowed to a trickle of customers Monday morning after a very busy Sunday. A \$2 cup of tea here, an order of toast there. A young waitress gave a polite smile to everyone who walked in.

Outside the shop was a different story. Cyclists unloaded equipment onto the bustling gravel road, ready for a journey into darkness.

The excitement was palpable. Five hundred people had registered for the ride, some [traveling over 1,000 miles](#) to get to Rocheport. It may go down in the record books as one of the biggest gatherings in the town's history.

Heading east on I-70, signs flashed warnings to drivers. “Do not watch the eclipse from the side of the highway,” one sign read. “Do not take pictures from the road.”

Eleven miles from Rocheport, a crowd gathered at Cosmo Park in Columbia. Kids kicked a soccer ball across dew-covered grass, and a man set up a picnic, a case of beer firmly in hand. One woman wore a black shirt with white lettering: “My darkest day was spent in Columbia, MO August 21, 2017.”

Forecasts leading up to the eclipse were worrisome. Some weather outlets said it would rain, others warned of overcast skies. For people sitting in a park pavilion, the potential clouds were a source of concern. Could this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity be ruined by a few meandering clouds?

Fortunately for eclipse-watchers in Columbia, the clouds seemed scarcest when totality was nearest. Motorcycle riders at the Mid-America Harley-Davidson watch party sat comfortably in the shade, occasionally strolling over to the parking lot to watch the spectacle.

“Happy eclipse day, everybody!” a man wearing a bright orange Harley shirt shouted merrily.

Though clouds occasionally blocked the sun, it didn’t matter at 1:12 p.m. The sky went dark, and suddenly it was evening. The temperature dropped; a cool breeze blew through the parking lot. A small child cheered in excitement, and a biker played Pink Floyd from his motorcycle speakers.

On Francis Quadrangle at MU, there were cheers and applause, and the most popular word by far was “Wow!” As the crowd sounds died down, the cicadas and crickets could be heard, striking up a chorus. As the moon continued its journey, the light returned and the chimney swifts flew overhead.

For the 2 minutes and 41 seconds that the moon eclipsed the sun; bikers, restaurant workers and an entire community stopped to witness the historic, astronomical event.

The moment the eclipse ended, the bikers gathered in the parking lot. They mounted their motorcycles and gunned their engines, embarking on a celebratory ride, the fleeting moments of darkness already behind them.



Eclipse 2017 moved through Mid-Missouri

Watch the story: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/eclipse-2017-moved-through-mid-missouri/607607908>

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Public agencies report few safety issues during eclipse

By Brittany Ruess

Leading up to Monday's total solar eclipse, public safety officials worried drivers would stop in the middle of the road to watch the moon block out the sun. There were also concerns viewers would glance at the eclipse with the naked eye, damaging their sight.

But from what officials could gather several hours after totality, neither of those worries were realized

Missouri State Highway Patrol Sgt. Scott White, spokesman for the Troop F, which includes 13 Mid-Missouri counties, said some drivers parked on the side of outer roads, but there were no complete stops on highways.

Parking on Angel Lane in Ashland, a prime viewing spot near the Columbia Regional Airport, was full for the eclipse, White said.

Traffic on Interstate 70 and highways 63 and 54 moved slowly after the eclipse, which was expected, White said. He, along with other several highway patrol officers and the State Emergency Management Agency, were monitoring traffic patterns Monday.

“It seems to be going good, but it’s slow going,” White said.

A vehicle crash was reported at 3:42 p.m. Monday on northbound Highway 63, north of Prathersville. A northbound lane was closed and delays were expected to last an hour.

The Missouri Department of Transportation changed signal times Monday at the I-70 and Highway 63 connector, as it would for a University of Missouri football game, said Sally Oxenhandler, spokeswoman for MoDOT. Signal times were also changed at the I-70 and Highway 54 interchange, lengthening the green lights eastbound on I-70, she said.

Despite traffic congestion, Oxenhandler said the agency was pleased with conditions Monday.

“Traffic seems to be a little less than what we were expecting for a worst-case scenario,” she said.

The Boonville rest area, which is operated by MoDOT, was closed around 11 a.m. because it had reached capacity with people viewing the eclipse, Oxenhandler said. The agency anticipated rest stops becoming saturated for the eclipse because they tend to be open and spacious, she said. Rest stops were also closed in St. Clair and Lathrop.

The call volume Monday seemed typical, said Tom Hurley, deputy director of the Boone County Office of Emergency Management. He said emergency medical responders received a few calls related to heat.

University of Missouri Hospital, MU Health Care’s urgent clinics and Boone Hospital Center did not report any eye injuries or traffic-related injuries as of 4 p.m. Monday. Jennifer Kaufman, a spokeswoman for MU Health Care, said spectators who looked directly at the sun may see a temporary spot that could fade. However, they won’t know if damage is permanent for at least a couple of days, she said.

An “eclipse baby” was born at Boone Hospital before totality, said Madison Loethen, spokeswoman for Boone Hospital. Robin McKee, of Boonville, gave birth to Ila Lewis at 12:31 p.m. Monday.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

At Mizzou research farm, scientists study how eclipse affected animals, plants

By Jack Suntrup St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Generated from News Bureau expert pitch: [Experts Available: 2017 Total Solar Eclipse](#)

COLUMBIA, Mo. • As totality neared, one angler got a bite to remember.

"Right around totality was when the fish really started getting hungry," said Tim Reinbott, who was monitoring his network of anglers who were spread out across area lakes. "They're night-feeders. They felt it getting cooler, they felt the light going down, so they got active."

One minute before totality, an angler hooked what was likely a large bass, Reinbott said.

"He was fightin' this fish — fightin' it and fightin' it — and then it broke his line."

Reinbott, assistant director of Mizzou's agricultural research centers, helped lead eclipse-related studies from the South Farm Research Center. Researchers were also looking at chickens, horses, crops and other plants to see how they reacted.

Of seven horses, one researcher reported to Reinbott the five foals were running around during totality while the two adult mares were behaving normally, Reinbott said after the eclipse.

He said that though a rooster crowed, initial observations were that the chickens did not go to sleep.

"It happened too quick for the chickens," Reinbott said. "They started getting ready for bed but then it was over."

Bethany Stone, teaching professor of biological sciences, also coordinated some of the eclipse-related experiments. In one experiment, she studied how chloroplast in the cells of geraniums reacted to the change in lighting.

When there is high light, the chloroplast, which gives plants their green color, shifts to the side of a plant, allowing light to transmit through. When there is low light, chloroplast moves to the center and top of its cell. This makes the leaf color darker.

On Monday, Stone placed screens on the geranium leaves, essentially allowing one part of the leaf to receive high light and the other part low light. This created a pattern on the leaf. One stamp was in the shape of an "MU," for example.

The low light of the eclipse erased the designs on the geranium leaves, something Stone did not expect. She thought the chloroplast would need more time to react.

She also found drought-stressed soybean opened up during the eclipse, which is a natural nighttime behavior for such soybean.

In another experiment, the leaves of mimosas were folded inward before the eclipse, a reaction to the high temperature and wind gusts.

As the temperature dropped before totality, the leaves opened up, Stone said. They closed again during totality — a likely reaction to the lack of light — and then opened again as the eclipse ended.

The leaves on purple clover opened up, too, as the temperature dropped, but they did not close again like the mimosa as totality neared. This meant they didn't react to the drop in light the same way the mimosas did.

Stone said Monday's experiments did not have a large enough sample size to draw any concrete conclusions. But further studies could help scientists understand how plants process light.

"We might be able to find a better way for plants to do that," Stone said, "maybe modify them or breed them so that they are able to maximize their light and increase their yields."



MU researchers study how plants, animals respond to total eclipse

By: Taylor Petras

COLUMBIA, Mo. - **Researchers at the University of Missouri are using Monday's total solar eclipse to learn more about plants, animals and fish.**

MU's Bradford and South Farm research centers will be doing a variety of experiments Monday to see how the species respond when it becomes dark in the middle of the day.

Tim Reinbott, assistant director of the Agricultural Research Centers, said they have cameras set up all over the research farms to record what happens during totality. He said they hope to make the recordings into educational videos.

"That's what excites me is that we can continue to use this eclipse for many years to come and not only here in Missouri, but across the world," he said.

Reinbott said they plan to study the plants, animals and fish again at sundown and again the next day to see if the eclipse affected their normal routines.

"Horses usually stay in the shade during the day then come out in the evening," he explain. "Are they going to graze during the eclipse? We'll find out."

Parts of southeastern Missouri will be in the path of totality for another solar eclipse in April

2024. Reinbott said he's already planning how they can follow up on Monday's research.

"We're going to have a whole different set of circumstances," he said. "It's not going to be as hot, we're going to have shorter days and the part of the day is going to be different. Plants may respond different then."

The MU research centers will be open to the public starting at 11 a.m. Monday.

MISSOURIAN

ECLIPSE: Researchers, visitors take in solar sight at MU South Farm

KYLE LAHUCIK

After months of anticipation, the solar eclipse's moment of totality came and went at MU South Farm, with brief periods of silence, a drop in temperature and gasps as the sky darkened for two euphoric minutes.

Chirping bugs, the whirl of cars driving on U.S. Highway 63 and faint crackles of fireworks could be heard along the bank of a lake at the farm as the moon completely covered the sun. Director of MU Field Operations Tim Reinbott was standing along the edge of the lake looking toward the sky as totality happened at 1:12 p.m. After going to bed at 9 p.m. Sunday, he said he woke up at 10 p.m., 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. because of nightmares that he'd miss the special moment.

"We got extremely fortunate today," Reinbott said.

Reinbott has been working in conjunction with Bethany Stone, professor in the Division of Biological Sciences, for the past six months to coordinate research and educational experiments

on plants, chickens, horses and fish during the eclipse. College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources researchers recorded the reactions of the plants and animals during totality.

"The beauty of nature" is what Reinbott thought about during the event, saying it's something you can't describe to people. He watched in amazement with about 10 other people along the bank of the lake as the moon cast its shadow across the farm.

"Oh my goodness. Oh god look at that. Oh wow. Oh man. Holy moly," Reinbott said during totality.

After the sun began returning to everyone's line of sight, Reinbott took out his phone and recorded the moment.

"It was fabulous, more than what we could have ever hoped for," Reinbott said. "It's hard to even talk about it right now."

People from around Missouri and as far away as Brooklyn also gathered at the farm to experience the moment.

"I wish I knew more about other culture's myths (about the solar eclipse)," Diana Fleisher, who traveled from Brooklyn, New York, said. "We should make up our own stories for what's happening to the sun."

Fleisher was there with her family, including her mother, Carol Fleisher, a retired MU faculty member. Other families were on hand to experience the astronomical event.

Pete Sidoti, who said he viewed a partial eclipse in Chicago in the mid-'80s, was there with his wife, Anna, after making the trek from Denton, Texas, to be with their daughter, Stephanie, an MU graduate student.

"(I'm) happy to have the opportunity to come out (here)," Sidoti said.

A family with roots across the U.S. also came out to South Farm after finding out about the event on the MU website.

Sandra Johnson and her husband, Lent, traveled from Hannibal to watch the eclipse with their two adult children and their spouses from Evanston, Illinois, and upstate New York.

As far as the MU South Farm, it was a hidden gem and prime viewing location for the family.

"We never knew these (farms) were here," Lent Johnson said.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The Missing Black Professors

By COLLEEN FLAHERTY

Efforts to diversify the faculty may not be focusing enough on key areas, namely math-based fields -- especially when it comes to black faculty members. And such efforts haven't led to any premium in pay for those hired to contribute to campus diversity. That's all according to a new study of faculty representation and wage gaps by race and gender in six major fields at 40 selective public universities.

Consistent with existing research, the study says, black, Hispanic and female professors are underrepresented, while white and Asian professors are overrepresented across disciplines. But nearly all of that can be attributed to underrepresentation of black and Hispanic men and women and women of all backgrounds in the natural sciences, technology, engineering and math, it asserts.

A comparison of senior and junior faculty members suggests increasing diversity over time -- especially in STEM -- except for a key group: black faculty members.

The study attributes observed differences in faculty representation by race and gender to related differences in the number of Ph.D.s in various academic fields, and their backgrounds and experience. Again, though, the exception is black faculty members, who are overrepresented in non-STEM fields relative to Ph.D. production, and underrepresented among STEM faculty relative to Ph.D.s granted.

Those same factors explain some of the disparities by gender, but not all, according to the study.

“If a rationale for policies to improve faculty diversity is to provide role models for underrepresented students, and if it is presumed that students will gravitate toward such role models, the current diversity imbalance in higher education implies that students from underrepresented groups may be nudged toward lower-paying, non-STEM fields,” the study says. “This would serve to perpetuate an already-existing imbalance in the work force, both in academia and the broader labor market.”

A simple takeaway is that “STEM and non-STEM fields exhibit very different diversity conditions, which merits consideration in the design of policies” to increase faculty diversity, the study notes.

“Representation and Salary Gaps by Race-Ethnicity and Gender at Selective Public Universities,” published this month in Educational Researcher, was written by Divi Li, a Ph.D. candidate in economics at the University of Missouri at Columbia, and Cory Koedel, an associate professor of economics at Mizzou. They note that their campus, among others, has been a seat of student unrest concerning faculty diversity, or lack thereof: at Mizzou, for example, the Legion of Black Collegians has demanded an increase in the percentage of black faculty and staff members campuswide to 10 percent by this academic year.

Although it is “straightforward to obtain aggregate data on faculty representation at universities,” the authors say, “contemporary policy discussions would benefit from more detailed information.” For example, they say, “it would be useful to know how faculty diversity compares across fields, and whether universities are behaving in a way consistent with placing independent value on a faculty member’s contribution to work-force diversity.”

To inform such questions and conversations, Li and Koedel looked at racial and gender diversity and wage gaps on 40 campuses in six departments they considered “inclusive” of STEM and non-STEM fields: biology, chemistry, and economics; and educational leadership and policy, English, and sociology, respectively. Data were hand collected from public institutions holding top slots in the U.S. News & World Report rankings and concerned mostly tenure-track and tenured professors in the 2015-16 academic year.

In addition to finding that that underrepresentation of black, Hispanic and female faculty members is driven by the STEM fields, the paper also says that patterns of racial and gender representation by field generally align with patterns in Ph.D. production. (Doctoral data were taken from the National Science Foundation's Survey of Earned Doctorates.)

Examining faculty representation by rank, the authors found that assistant professors are less likely to be white and more likely to be Asian and Hispanic, and less likely to be male, than associate and full professors. That’s true of all fields, especially those in STEM.

The glaring exception, of course, is that black faculty members are just as underrepresented among junior faculty members as they are among senior faculty in STEM.

Regarding wage gaps, the study says that black and Hispanic male faculty members earn, on average, \$10,000 to 15,000 less annually (unadjusted for any factors) than their white counterparts. That's about 8 to 12 percent over the average wage studied, some \$120,195. Adjusted for various factors, however -- namely academic field, experience and research productivity -- the racial wage gap generally disappears.

Table 6. Decompositions of Wage Gaps by Race/Ethnicity and Gender. Table breaks down by following decomposition components: university, field, experience (linear), prestige of Ph.D. school, and research productivity. Note: The gaps for Asian, black and Hispanic faculty are relative to white faculty; the gap for women is relative to men.

The unconditional or unadjusted gender gap is even larger, at about \$23,000. Controlled for various factors, the wage gap between men and women shrinks to about \$4,000 -- but that's still statistically significant, according to the researchers.

Koedel said Monday that a major takeaway is that underrepresented minority and female faculty members have a much higher representation in lower-paying fields, even when non-tenure-track faculty members (who are disproportionately female and underrepresented minorities) are excluded from the sample.

And of the finding that there's no apparent wage premium for faculty members who increase campus diversity, despite many institutions having launched major campaigns around that goal? Older research did not identify a wage premium, but some may have expected that to change in recent decades, Koedel said.

The study notes that one way to increase faculty diversity in STEM without the ability to offer a premium is to recruit from lower-ranked departments. There's little evidence that that's happening thus far, though. Koedel said he didn't know whether his findings would be different at major private institutions, which presumably would have more flexibility in terms of allocating funds for hires that contribute to diversity goals.

MISSOURIAN

Launch of semester brings downtown businesses back to life

BY BIZZY EMERSON NEWS@COLUMBIAMISSOURIAN.COM

Downtown business owners celebrated the return of thousands of customers Monday, as fall semester classes began at MU and Stephens College.

Matt Jenne, co-owner of Addison's restaurant, appreciated the positive effect returning students have on Columbia.

"Students are the life of this town," Jenne said, noting that once students return, the restored energy draws more permanent Columbia residents to the downtown area.

Following a slow summer, local businesses braced themselves for the return of more than 30,000 college students returning to MU and Stephens College. Columbia College fall classes begin Aug. 28. Though total enrollment has declined over the past two years, merchants say increased foot traffic is helping their businesses.

Andrea Collette, the record keeper at Vinyl Renaissance, said moving the record store closer to the MU campus caused an increase in customers.

"At our new location" on Ninth Street, "there's been a pickup in foot traffic of both students and parents," Collette said.

Cha Boutique manager Jennifer Pestle said campus events such as game days and parents' weekends draw people to the downtown area.

“Our demographic is geared towards college students. When students come back, they make up a huge percentage of our sales,” Pestle said.

The demographic is a common thread for many small downtown businesses. Hannah Garrighan, manager of Sparky’s Homemade Ice Cream, said the shop gets “hit hard” during the summer because of the nature of its product, but recognizes a “definite shift” in the type of customer as summer transitions into fall.

“There’s a significant influx of a younger crowd, and a different vibe of our customer base,” Garrighan said.

With the student population bringing more cars into Columbia, many worry about finding a parking spot. However, Jenne believes parking is simply “a perceived issue,” rather than an actual problem downtown.

“People think there’s no parking, so they don’t drive downtown, which means less cars, which means more parking spaces,” Jenne said.