

MAY 18 2011

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Editorial: School's out — Missouri high school students deserve the truth about college access

By the Editorial Board | Posted: Wednesday, May 18, 2011 12:00 am

College cap-and-gown season is in full swing in Missouri at commencement ceremonies at public and private universities.

There's nothing quite like the glow of soon-to-be graduates as they queue up for their moments in the sun. It must be an honor to give a commencement address, to commend the graduates on their accomplishments, caution them about the challenges and responsibilities ahead and share life lessons that might help them follow their dreams.

Such festivities, though, increasingly have become a privilege for Missouri high school graduates, especially those whose families lack the wherewithal to pay or borrow what's needed to meet skyrocketing tuition and other costs. Their prospects of walking across a stage to accept a diploma for a four-year degree are in serious decline.

Post-Dispatch higher education reporter Tim Barker spelled out the details in [a story](#) Monday about how financial aid lags behind college costs. The analysis is simple: Total all college expenses — tuition, room, board, books and fees — and subtract the financial aid made available to the neediest students. **The gap at the University of Missouri-Columbia has grown from \$7,270 for the 2006-2007 school year to \$12,724 for the 2011-2012 school year. At the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, it increased from \$7,905 in 2006-2007 to \$13,480 in 2011-2012.**

Students can stretch to bridge the difference through some combination of loans or private scholarships. But for many, that has become an impossibility.

"The math does not work anymore," said Faith Sandler, executive director of the [Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis](#). "The neediest students are simply unable to piece together the total cost of even state public institutions. The resources are not there."

Missouri legislative leaders, Gov. Jay Nixon and business leaders like to talk about how Missouri needs an educated work force. But none has shown much leadership in promoting access to higher education for students from lower-income families.

The Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry didn't include the college affordability gap among its "[Fix the Six](#)" priorities, and its successful push to repeal the state corporate franchise tax means less revenue is available for this purpose.

State funding for higher education has been reduced in the FY2012 budget just passed by the Missouri Legislature, and it may face further cuts as Mr. Nixon tries to conform the budget to expected revenue. Access Missouri, the state's only needs-based scholarship program, is down 25 percent from the Legislature's \$83 million appropriation in 2010 — and even that reduced funding depends on the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority finding \$30 million in cash and transferring it to the scholarship program for a second consecutive year.

Missouri political and business leaders frequently are honored at college and university commencement ceremonies. But before they step to the podium and address a graduating class or accept an honorary degree, they should speak to lower-income Missouri high school students who are aspiring to go to college. They should deliver an honest "pre-commencement" address to these students about their prospects:

"Most of you will not have the opportunity to go to college, no matter how hard you work," the students should be told. "That's because affordable higher education is not a priority in Missouri. Public colleges and universities in this state are reserved mainly for children from more affluent families.

"But good luck," the students should hear. "You will need it."



New panelists to advise USAID on global food security issues

4 additions represent academia, grassroots hunger fight and private sector

By Jim Gold Reporter, msnbc.com, updated 5/17/2011 9:06:43 PM ET

A presidentially appointed panel that offers the U.S. Agency for International Development advice on global food security-related issues will move forward with a new chairman and three other new members.

President Barack Obama recently named the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) members from private industry, a major charity and higher education. They are scheduled to join three continuing members at the board's meeting June 24 in Washington.

The board is mandated to have four members from the academic community. The board also advises on the role of higher education in international agricultural development. Panelists advise USAID, which has a \$21.9 billion budget to promote peace and stability by fostering economic growth, protecting human health, providing emergency humanitarian assistance and enhancing democracy in developing countries, its website says.

Two new members and one continuing member also are World Food Prize laureates, noted Dr. Rajiv Shah, USAID administrator. The prize recognizes individuals who helped improve the quality, quantity or availability of food in the world. Often given to food scientists, the prize in 2010 was shared by two grassroots hunger fighters: David Beckmann, who heads Bread for the World, and Heifer International's Jo Luck. Luck is one of the new BIFAD appointees.

Here's a look at the new BIFAD members and what they said their appointments mean to them.



Brady Deaton

Brady J. Deaton, the new BIFAD chairman, is the University of Missouri's chancellor who previously was chair of agricultural economics. He told the student newspaper, The Maneater, that the board will work toward agricultural and technological innovation that will allow countries to feed themselves. "I've had a lot of experience in organizing and building a framework for conducting research, conducting education and stimulating private sector development," said the former Peace Corps volunteer who taught vocational agriculture in Thailand. "This job brings all that

together."



Jo Luck

Luck is president Heifer International, which provides cows, goats, water buffalo and other livestock to thousands of people in more than 50 countries, including the United States. The charity focuses on helping the poor become self-sufficient and urges the people it helps to go on to train others. "Food security is a critical aspect of global humanitarian assistance and sustainable development," said Luck in a statement, adding she plans to focus on the smallholder farmer, the empowerment of women and a greater multilateral private and public dialogue regarding these issues. "I have seen first-hand how enabling self-sufficiency for poverty-stricken families can lead to improved health, better education, inspired entrepreneurial spirit, community unity, positive leadership and personal dignity."



Marty McVey

Marty McVey is president of McVey & Co. Investments, a private equity firm that focuses primarily on health care, real estate and energy investments. He is founder of Safi Energy, a renewable energy company. "I come from the private sector, no academia," McVey told msnbc.com. He said he hopes to bring efficiencies to the agency to make sure dollars allocated, "a gift from the American people," are used judiciously and get to the people they are intended for. "We can help people in need help themselves" and create wealth for themselves. "Commerce and trade would take over" from aid, he said. "For example, at some point the war in Iraq is going to end. What comes next? Will USAID presence be increased?"



Gebisa Ejeta

Gebisa Ejeta is a Purdue University professor, executive director of the Purdue Center for Global Food Security and the 2009 World Food Prize laureate who has worked in plant and crop science. Ejeta in a prepared statement noted that a USAID predecessor built the high school and college he attended in his native Ethiopia. "I have now gone full circle," Ejeta said. "From a young African child given an opportunity for education by an act of a U.S. government body such as this to now having the chance to offer a new vision or a new policy directive that may give a similar chance for an education to another African child or a life-saving act for another child somewhere. What a privilege and responsibility."

The new members replace Robert Easter, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign interim chancellor and former BIFAD chairman; Tim Rabon of Mesa Verde Industries in New Mexico, and H.H. Barlow III, who has served on the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board.

The continuing board members are William DeLauder, president emeritus, Delaware State University; Elsa Murano, president emerita, Texas A&M University; and Catherine Bertini, professor, Maxwell School of Public Affairs and Diplomacy, Syracuse University and the 2003 World Food Prize laureate.



MU workers display talents, draw kudos

By Janese Silvey

They keep the grass mowed on campus, the computers working in the labs and University of Missouri administrators on schedule, but MU staff members also have a creative side.

When they're not working, some of them use their free time to paint, quilt, make jewelry and take professional-quality photographs. That work is on display in Room 201 of Ellis Library this week for the annual Arts & Crafts Showcase, part of Staff Appreciation Week. The three-day gallery was expected to open at noon today with a meet-the-artists reception.

Gen Howard, a Web specialist in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, is displaying her photography. She received a digital Canon Rebel for her 40th birthday a little more than a year ago and discovered she has a natural eye for lighting and detail. Howard lives in Clark and has captured breathtaking pictures of landscapes and tiny wildflowers.

She appreciates having a chance to show off that work and to also see what her co-workers are up to when they're off the clock. "It adds a richness of what we offer, that we're not just here working, but we also have a creative side," Howard said. "It integrates the personal and professional."

Mindy Smith is showcasing her textile art and paintings. The elaborate textile pieces require a number of skills. She first has to sketch out a design before cutting tiny pieces of fabric and using quilting techniques to piece them together. Smith also uses thread painting, a technique using a sewing machine, to add more dimensions to her pieces.

Smith is an executive staff assistant for Jackie Jones, vice chancellor of administrative services. Mostly, she coordinates schedules and manages information for Jones. When she's not doing that, she's working on her art "all the time," she said.

A longtime artist, Smith is fine with showing her work in public, but she thinks the Arts & Crafts Showcase is a great way for other talented employees to get their work out in a supportive environment.

"I'd like to see this grow," she said. "There are so many wonderful, gifted people who haven't had a chance to show their work."

Janet Bradshaw is showing her glass beads and jewelry for the first year at the event and was having some pre-reception jitters this morning.

“I feel good about my work, but I’m still nervous,” she said.

Bradshaw makes and sells jewelry featuring her floral, tiger-striped and other patterned glass beads.

The arts show isn’t the only event recognizing staff on campus. Appreciation Week also includes garden and campus tours, special workshops and an open house at the Chancellor’s Residence. The week kicked off yesterday with a ceremony where Chancellor Brady Deaton recognized those celebrating milestone anniversaries.

Staff members are the “first face” of the university, Deaton said. They keep the grounds looking nice and are typically the first people parents and potential students meet when they visit campus.

“I’m grateful and proud of what you do for us,” Deaton said.

Bradshaw is the front-desk assistant at the graduate school, where her main job is to greet and work with students, and it’s a task she takes seriously.

“I love working with the students and being part of their education and experience here,” she said.

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Beef boosters groom meat mavens on campus

ALAN SCHIER ZAGIER, Associated Press, Wednesday, May 18, 2011



In this May 4, 2011 photo, Travis Martin, center, and Dennis Fennewald of the Boone County Cattlemans Association grill up steaks for lunch as part of the Mizzou Collegiate Cattlewoman's "Meet Your Meat" event on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, Mo. College students across the country are being enlisted by the national beef industry in a public-relations battle for America's hearts, minds and stomachs.

(05-18) 01:09 PDT Columbia, Mo. (AP) --The national beef industry has enlisted college students across the country in its public relations fight for America's hearts, minds and stomachs.

The Masters of Beef Advocacy program also recruits farmers, ranchers, high-end chefs and school dietitians to spread the gospel of red meat consumption. But the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, which started the outreach effort two years ago, has placed a strong emphasis on the Twitter generation. At least 20 percent of the nearly 2,200 program graduates are age 21 or younger.

The online program — called MBA in a nod to the more commonly known graduate business degree — is available in 47 states and particularly popular at public land-grant universities with strong agricultural schools, such as the University of Missouri, Iowa State, Kansas State and Western Kentucky.

"We know what the science is," said Dennis Fennewald, a fifth-generation farmer, former bull semen salesman and beef production instructor at Missouri. "The emotional part, that really is being controlled by people who don't know or understand our science."

Fennewald and professors at other schools typically offer the six-hour course as extra credit rather than a required assignment. Students who finish it are expected to speak to school groups and civic clubs or build online buzz through social media.

Missouri senior Erin Mohler and other members of the school's Collegiate Cattlewomen's club spent a recent afternoon sharing their "Meet Your Meat" message with passing students on a busy pedestrian mall.

Volunteers sold rib-eye steak sandwiches from a portable food trailer while a 1,600-pound Simmental beef cow named Summer grazed nearby in a temporary enclosed pen.

Students passed out recipes for Moroccan-style beef kabobs and tenderloin salad with cranberries and pears, while other brochures touted beef's high content of zinc, iron, protein and other essential minerals and vitamins.

Mohler, a senior animal sciences major whose parents live in Maryland and own 40 cattle on a north Missouri "hobby farm," said her perspective isn't always embraced on campus. Yet she remains undeterred.

"A lot of people have a hard time grasping why I would promote the cattle industry," she said. "More people need to understand where their food comes from. You eat three times a day."

The reactions to Summer and her handlers were decidedly mixed. Last year, the "Meet Your Meat" mavens convinced several passers-by to renounce their vegetarian ways, group member Kaitlyn Lee said.

Freshman David Adams had a different reaction, calling the display "kind of gross."

"I don't want to see an animal and then go buy a sandwich made from its relative," he said. "I guess I'd like to remain oblivious."

The grass-roots campaign is just one part of the beef industry's effort to reverse a five-decade slide in meat consumption by Americans. Seed money came from the \$1 per head of domestic and imported live cattle that producers pay under a 1985 federal law. Fifty cents of each \$1 goes to the national cattle group's Beef Promotion and Research Board.

Pork producers use their \$1 surcharge to operate a similar program called "Operation Main Street."

Focusing the outreach on college campuses — usually considered friendlier terrain for People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and like-minded groups — is an obvious and needed approach, said Daren Williams, executive communications director for the Denver-based National Cattlemen's Beef Association.

"There's a political, social and economic discussion going on about food production," he said. "(Beef producers) have felt left out of the discussion."

At Western Kentucky University, animal sciences professor Nevil Speer offers the Masters of Beef Advocacy curriculum as an extra-credit assignment for the mostly freshmen and sophomores in his introductory-level classes. The units cover beef safety, production techniques, animal care, environmental stewardship, nutrition and the national program that provides marketing and research money.

"It's not a coercive type of thing," Speer said. "It's an external and an objective voice about the food system ... It's not set up as propaganda."

Nathan Runkle disagrees. The executive director of Chicago-based Mercy for Animals, which promotes a vegetarian diet, said that "a more accurate title for this offensive program would be the Master of BS."

"Centers for higher learning should not become dumping grounds for propaganda programs that push increased profits for an industry that subjects animals to extreme cruelty and exploitation," he said. "Cruelty and violence has no place in the classroom."

Speer said he doesn't expect all of his students to embrace the beef industry's viewpoint. Like any good college class, the program ultimately forces students with entrenched views to consider other perspectives, even if they don't agree with them, he said.

"You have all kinds of students going through this program, and all of the sudden they're talking to each other," he said. "As long as we have dialogue going, that's a good thing."