

Former Mo. state lawmaker Ed Robb dies at 69

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) Former Republican Missouri state lawmaker Ed Robb is dead at the age of 69.

Family spokesman Yancy Williams says Robb collapsed and died Saturday while leaving a birthday party in downtown Columbia. Williams says Robb had a pacemaker put in late last year but had been feeling fine since then.

Robb became the Boone County presiding commissioner in November two years after failing to win reelection to the Missouri House of Representatives. **He also was president of a consulting firm and was a former economics professor at the University of Missouri.**

Williams described Robb as a "good friend" and said he had the ability to "explain complicated things in a simple way."

Robb is survived by his wife, Rosa, of Columbia, and their five children.

Funeral arrangements are pending.



Curators discuss possible lab sale

Friday, September 23, 2011

University of Missouri System curators have discussed whether MU should sell its Research Animal Diagnostic Laboratory, but they're not ready to share those conversations.

"It's nothing I can talk about," Curator Wayne Goode said. "It was the subject of a closed meeting. The sale comes under that, clearly."

Asked for an update about it, Curator David Bradley questioned whether system administrators had made an announcement. When he learned they had not, he declined to comment. UM System administrators also weren't willing to talk about it this morning, spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said.

The discussion of privatizing the lab — a center that provides animals and testing services to companies that use them for biomedical research — has been ongoing for years. Earlier this year, MU hired Chicago-based brokerage firm Livingstone Partners to help determine the lab's value and identify possible buyers.

In recent years, RADIL's annual revenue has been about \$12 million, and the lab has returned roughly \$2 million back to the university and College of Veterinary Medicine.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Dear Reader: Big 12 leaders fuel conference confusion with non-answers

By Tom Warhover

September 23, 2011 | 6:06 p.m. CDT

Dear Reader,

No actual news was committed in the production of Brady Deaton's news conference on Thursday.

At 6:45 p.m., MU's chancellor held court on campus at Jesse Hall. The press crowd was there, eager to hear whether any clarity could be found among the Big 12 realignment talks. The answer? Not here.

Expecting a momentous evening, the Missourian sent two reporters from the football beat, a photojournalist and a reporter who was assigned just to tap out Twitter posts as the news happened. Live streaming video was discussed but ruled out for technical reasons.

Deaton is the chairman of the Big 12 board of directors. But the real news was delivered 463 miles away at the University of Oklahoma, where university president David Boren held his own news conference.

There, according to the Daily Oklahoman's website, Boren declared victory. Oklahoma, he said, helped force out Big 12 executive director Dan Beebe. Boren then detailed conference plans for self-imposed handcuffs: Beginning next year, the Big 12 — not the individual universities — would control media rights packages. That means a university could leave the conference but couldn't take its TV rights with it.

Here, according to the Missourian's Harry Plumer, Deaton said the conference has plans for moving forward — without describing any of those plans or even outlining the problems. "There are specific issues to be addressed, and I think the public is generally aware of what those are," Deaton said.

Well, sure, I generally know there are a lot of issues with conference realignment. Most begin and end in Texas, where the Longhorns aren't just first among equals but plain first in revenue and power.

But I don't know what issues Deaton plans to address because he wouldn't say. The chairman leaves it to us to speculate.

Deaton is the gentleman, which is why you might wonder how the Big 12 would ever let go of its wonderful director:

"We sincerely thank Dan who has always demonstrated a total commitment to what is in the best interest of the Big 12 Conference. His energy, devotion and skill in negotiating on our behalf have been tremendous assets that have benefited our member institutions, our student-athletes, our athletic programs and all our fans."

Contrast Deaton with Boren. Again, from the Daily Oklahoman: "I'm alarmed that in 15 months we lost three teams. I am aware, in detail, of how some of those situations played out. I didn't think it was necessary or inevitable that we would have lost those teams. I felt we needed a fresh start."

You know the game, dear reader. Politicians try to stick to the script. So some of the platitudes emanating from MU are expected. Meanwhile, journalists push for details. Perhaps Deaton held the press conference just to avoid a gaggle of phone calls. A press conference beats giving non-answers one at a time. This way, he could circumvent all the calls, emails, text messages and visits. The Missourian's football beat writers, for instance, have been known to camp out at the door to the chancellor's office. Earlier this week, they waited more than six hours to ask a few questions as Deaton left the building.

Dealing with the constant presence of the press goes with the job. After all, Deaton is the head of this group that's supposed to be at the head of the Big 12. The Big 12 hasn't stopped feeding its own drama.

A Q&A with new Big 12 interim commissioner Neinas

By Mike DeArmond - Posted on 23 September 2011

COLUMBIA – On Friday morning The Star caught up with newly-hired interim Big 12 Conference Commissioner Charles M. Neinas.

Better known to a legion of collegiate officials and coaches as Chuck, Neinas brings a wealth of credentials to his new position.

He began his career in athletic administration with the NCAA in 1961. He moved on to take over as Big Eight Conference commissioner in 1971. In 1980 Neinas became executive director of the College Football Association.

For many years Neinas has worked as probably the most successful and influential headhunter in college athletics, helping schools around the nation in identifying and hiring 51 athletic directors or coaches. Including many on the job now in the Big 12 Conference.

Neinas was up early in his home in the Boulder, Co., area, providing his own preamble when he picked up a telephone and said:

“What goes around comes around, huh?”

Congratulations, Mr. Commissioner.

“Or condolences,” Neinas said, laughing easily.

Q: Hitting the elephant in the room, what is your read on Missouri and its stance (of demanding real Big 12 reform to keep Mizzou from looking to another league)?

A: “I’m going to ask the chancellor (Brady Deaton). They were vague, were they, yesterday?”

Q: A big question in the Big 12 concerned whether Dan Beebe (who stepped down as Big 12 commissioner on Thursday) ever had the power to lead a conference in which individual school presidents kept so much decision-making in their own hands. How strong a commissioner, or interim commissioner, can you be?

A: "That's a good question. I think my role is defined as trying to bring the team together, to work together.

"I'm not planning to be there long term, so my responsibility is to help mend fences if that has to be the case and try to make sure that everyone is operating and doing their best in the right direction.

"Obviously I have to get a better feel for the situation. I'm going to visit all campus sites and have private conversations so I can get a better understanding to try to help the conference move forward.

"What we need to do is relatively simple. To identify our objectives, address our concerns and then lay out a timetable and prioritize how we move forward and accomplish what we want."

Q: Someone asked me what I would do if I were commissioner and I told them I would get all the presidents or CEOs in a Spartan setting, no fancy hotel, bring them all into a room, lock the door and show them the key and say that until everybody was on the same page and working together that I wasn't going to let them out.

A: "I don't think I'll do that.

"What you do. . . I don't think people understand or appreciate it. You develop your stature on the job, if you follow me.

"I was with the Big Eight for almost 10 years. I had more authority when I was leaving than when I came. But you earn that. You earn that. That's given to you by your members."

Q: Can you tell the situation of how you were approached and by who?

A: "By David Boren (president of the University of Oklahoma). I've known David a long time. If you recall I was involved in the AD search (Joe Castiglione) with Oklahoma and I was involved in the football search at Oklahoma (Bob Stoops).

Q: When did he call you? When was the first contact?

A: "It all happened very quickly. Last week. The original reason he called me was not about being commissioner."

Q: When did he broach the possibility of you being the commissioner?

A: "It must have been early this week."

Q: Did he approach you about being commissioner before the Pac 12 said they didn't want people, to expand?

A: "I can't put the timeline together immediately. I can't say for sure."

Q: Do you have a timeline for beginning work with the Big 12, getting everyone on the same page and determining if you can keep this conference together as it is so constructed? I'm figuring without Texas A&M.

A: "Technically, I have to talk to chancellor Deaton, as chairman of the conference. He and I talked briefly last night but I've got to talk to him today.

"I anticipate starting in a couple of weeks. That's not going to be tomorrow. I'm going to be down in Dallas for some meetings next week.

"I'm going to attend the (Big 12) AD meetings, but there are also meetings of the 1-A athletic directors. I have a project I've been working on for others.

"I don't think I'm going to be officially on board until maybe the week of October 3 or October 10th. We'll see how that plays out."

Q: Do you have any preconceived notion of the prospects, of your ability to heal the fractures?

A: "I've done it before. This is nine members. The CFA had 63."

Q: Do you hire your replacement?

A: "No, the presidents hire the replacement."

Q: But are you a commissioner who still has his hat in the ring as headhunter?

A: "I would probably offer to assist in the search, if that's what you're asking."

Q: Anything that you have in mind, that I haven't asked you about, that you feel is important to get out there?

A: "I look forward to working with the group. I know the ADs and I know the football coaches. I've known some of them for a long time. Some of them are good friends. I gave Kirby Hocutt (athletic director at Texas Tech) his first job. These are not uncharted waters when it comes to knowing the players."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Big 12 is the best fit for Mizzou

Posted: Sunday, September 25, 2011 12:00 am | [\(4\) Comments](#)

By Bryan Burwell

NORMAN, Okla. • Years from now when all this craziness is thoroughly studied, I wonder if reasonably intelligent people will look back at the turmoil that has pushed the Big 12 Conference to the brink and scratch their heads in amazement.

Will they say that the folks who run this conference merely flirted with disaster and survived or that they dashed recklessly into the abyss and destroyed a really good thing? Will they say that the decision makers at the University of Missouri were shrewd strategists who ensured the long-term stability of its sports programs or rash fools whose emotional actions put Mizzou college athletics in a bind?

I hope in the next few days this all comes together and both the Big 12 and Missouri athletics get a clean bill of health. I hope that chancellor Brady Deaton navigates around an emotional alumni base and is able to make the smartest choice for the Tigers, which is keeping MU in a newly stabilized Big 12 with a new commissioner, a new sense of economic sanity and a reined-in University of Texas program that has begrudgingly been brought into the modern age of football socialism.

On Saturday night under the bright lights inside Memorial Stadium, with a sold-out audience of more than 82,000, you could see how the Big 12 environment can be one of the best in college football.

Coming here still means something significant to Mizzou, even if the Tigers have yet to solve the mystery of winning a football game here as Saturday night's 38-28 loss to the No. 1-ranked Sooners clearly illustrated. But this is where the Tigers belong. Geographically, historically, socially, Mizzou is deeply entrenched into the fabric of the Big 12 and if there is any way to keep the conference together without making any bad economic concessions, then MU must do it.

A week ago I never would have imagined that the Big 12 would find a way to be a viable option anymore for Missouri. But circumstances have changed rapidly and with a new commissioner and the University of Texas finally bullied into accepting that equal revenue sharing is what works best for everyone in the conference, this is Mizzou's best current option.

Yet after watching the events of the last few months, the circumstances make me think about the Wall Street financial collapse: Too big to fail.

How in the heck did a conference full of such storied championship accomplishments on the national stage find itself in such jeopardy? And closer to home, how did an athletic program of MU's stature find it necessary to play this coy game with the rest of its conference "partners?"

And by "partners" I mean the other conniving university presidents who have all been cutting so many side deals and exit strategies that the new conference logo should be a revolving door with a knife stuck in the back.

In the year of its near collapse, the Big 12 boasts the No. 1 football team in the country, four teams in the top 25 and no fewer than a half dozen teams that should appear in college basketball's preseason top 25. Yet it's spent the better part of the last 17 months fending off expansion-hungry raiders. How does this happen?

It's all rather simple. Just like the financial meltdowns on Wall Street, the root of all evil in college sports reeks with a similar stench: shameless moral hazard. So even now as the Big 12's interim commissioner Chuck Neinas says everything has stabilized (while simultaneously the folks at Mizzou continue to flirt with the SEC), I wonder if anyone's learned a thing.

And that brings us back to Missouri.

Acting on whims of emotional alumni, the MU curators apparently are the ones who have slowed the process as we await a decision on whether it's better to stay in a restructured Big 12 or venture onto a more adventurous path into the SEC.

But this is not all that complicated. The best possible option for the Tigers is a stable Big 12, which seems to now miraculously be in place. I also know a lot of Mizzou alums have flooded the curators with pleas to bolt to the SEC, and I can clearly understand where they're coming from. But if you think the whupping that was inflicted on the Tigers on Saturday in Norman was bad, just imagine what it will be like going on the road every week in the SEC. Alabama. Florida. LSU. South Carolina. Auburn. Tennessee. Shall I go on?

If the Big 12 can be held together and strengthened by Neinas — and if the conference presidents follow up Neinas' interim reign by hiring a strong-willed visionary who is no easily manipulated "yes man" — then there is no better place for the Tigers. I hope the Missouri curators will be smart enough and patient enough to figure that out and not let their emotions get the best of them.

Will Missouri follow Texas A&M out of the Big 12, into the SEC?

By **BLAIR KERKHOFF**

It's done.

Texas A&M and the Southeastern Conference will plow through any red tape such as legal threats and exit fees and get hitched, with the Aggies beginning competition next year for the first time in a conference with no other Texas school.

There is rejoicing in College Station and remorse in the Big 12, where interim commissioner Chuck Neinas said a few days ago he'd take a shot at keeping A&M in the fold. But he never got the chance.

It wouldn't have mattered. The Aggies had emotionally checked out of the conference weeks ago and now will follow Nebraska and Colorado through the Big 12 exit portal.

The procession may not be over, with some uncertainty surrounding Missouri.

The Southeastern Conference may be an option for the Tigers as well. The SEC has thought enough about Mizzou as a 14th team that it has explored the idea of switching Auburn to the East Division.

If an offer is forthcoming, Missouri's decision isn't easy, or is it?

More than a century of relationships and rivalries, primarily with Kansas, are embedded in the Big 12, which exists on more solid ground than a week ago.

Then, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State had bags packed for the Pac-12, with perhaps Texas and Texas Tech in tow. But on Tuesday, the Pac-12 gave a stiff arm to expansion, and the Sooners publicly reaffirmed a commitment to the Big 12.

But a move to the SEC for Missouri would mean membership in a conference that has no concept of the maddening uncertainty that has become business as usual in the Big 12.

SEC football rules supreme, and realignment is football-driven. No more wondering about the Tigers' place in the world if (when?) Texas and Oklahoma get another relocation hankering.

Word is football coach Gary Pinkel, the conscience for frustrated Big 12 programs, and athletic director Mike Alden see moving as the better option.

Chancellor Brady Deaton, chairman of the Big 12 board of directors, has supported the current conference relationship but didn't offer a long- or short-term commitment to the Big 12 on Thursday.

Neinas, a former Big Eight commissioner, said Friday he believes Missouri will stay.

The SEC insists that it is preparing for life with 13 members, as strange as that appears. Some have pointed to the Big Ten, which housed 11 members for two decades until Nebraska joined this year as the odd-number model, but the difference is the SEC would exist with uneven divisions while the Big Ten was one big odd standing.

Missouri was one of five schools that met at a Kansas City hotel on Jan. 12, 1907, to form what informally was known as the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association.

That day, the Tigers played the first basketball in their history, and the third game was played in Kansas City. By then, the school had played about 25 football games in KC. The connection runs that deep, and throughout the realignment process the potential impact on Kansas City is never far from my thoughts.

What would happen to MU-KU football at Arrowhead or some of the nation's best regular-season basketball games?

The Big 12 would survive without the Tigers, but Kansas City would be a lesser sports town without them. Missouri has thought about this before. The school has made inquiries to the Big Ten, and the Tigers were tied to that conference through speculation in last year's round of realignment.

This potential move looks south, where the Tigers could join the conference that has won the last five college football national championships, the league that is A&M's new home.

The Aggies are planning an SEC celebration tonight at the school that to them will feel more like a University of Texas liberation. A&M's move is as much about separating itself from the Longhorns, who have always looked down on the Aggies as an annoying little brother.

A&M is willing to surrender a gridiron rivalry with Texas that dates to 1894 to escape Bevo and the Network. The Aggies are headed to a conference where, at least in the short-term, they figure to be no better than the middle of the pack.

If Missouri is next, the motivation would be different, even more reasonable. Stability, not spite, would be the catalyst.

Would the Tigers leave? The heart (tradition, rivalries) may say no, but the head (stability, security) may prevail.



Big 12 interim commissioner thinks MU will stay

By **JOE WALLJASPER**

Published September 23, 2011 at 6:25 p.m.

Updated September 24, 2011 at 2:51 a.m.

Chuck Neinas, the Big 12 interim commissioner, said yesterday he believed Missouri would decide to stay in the conference. Speaking on a conference call with reporters, Neinas said he had spoken to Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton about that topic.

"What the chancellor told me is he has some curators that are new and they are interested in discussing some things," Neinas said. "But I do believe in the end it will be resolved. ... I do think that Missouri is going to stay."

Missouri raised some concerns in the Big 12 on Thursday when, during a press conference, Deaton and Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden declined to commit to the Big 12 as the school's long-term home. Another MU official, speaking off the record, said Missouri leaving the Big 12 for the Southeastern Conference remains a possibility.

The ultimate decision on Missouri's conference affiliation belongs to the university's president and Board of Curators, who, according to school bylaws, "shall approve any proposal by a campus to withdraw from one intercollegiate athletic conference for the purpose of affiliating with a new conference. However, any proposal to withdraw would be proposed by the campus chancellor, whose role in the approval process would be significant."

In an unscientific Tribune online poll, 89 percent of nearly 1,750 respondents as of early this morning voted in favor of Missouri moving to the SEC. Fans apparently haven't been shy about emailing curators with their opinions. One unidentified curator, not realizing reporters were still present at a board meeting Thursday morning, announced over the phone: "Everybody get as many emails yesterday as I did?"

When asked if he was concerned Missouri might leave, Neinas said, "you've got to be concerned about it," but he added that he thought the Big 12 could survive even if MU left.

The Big 12 lost Nebraska to the Big Ten and Colorado to the Pac-12 last year, and Texas A&M was accepted as a member of the SEC this year. One idea for binding the remaining nine schools together is for the schools to grant their media rights to the conference for six years. That action would essentially lock the nine members in place for six years, because leaving the Big 12 would cost them all their television money over that period.

But the topic led to confusion Thursday night, as Deaton and Oklahoma President David Boren expressed conflicting stories about where the process stood. Boren said the Big 12 Board of Directors had agreed to grant its media rights. Deaton said the board was pursuing that strategy but had not agreed to anything.

Neinas said the reason for the confusion was that University of Missouri rules state the Board of Curators have to approve such a move.

"I don't know exactly when that will occur," Neinas said. "Also, there is a committee of the presidents and chancellors that has been appointed to look at some of the issues, as well."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Focus is on Mizzou as SEC makes A&M official

BY VAHE GREGORIAN | Posted: Monday, September 26, 2011 12:05 am

When the SEC and Texas A&M announced Sunday that their forbidden union finally had been cleared, implying legal roadblocks had been removed, it also plowed away an impediment for a potential SEC-Mizzou hookup.

Because the Southeastern Conference had resolved not to proceed with ushering in A&M until the Baylor-led legal wrangling was reconciled, it now faces a new landscape: an unwieldy membership of 13 but a perhaps less litigious-minded Big 12 to contend with if it is indeed serious about MU to be its 14th.

Rectifying those issues had been paramount to the SEC as it has gazed more fondly in recent weeks at Mizzou, which certainly has been at least winking back.

Now, if both sides remain intrigued, the full-blown game of semantics could be on.

At the heart of the issue: Is the Big 12 viable without Missouri?

Interim commissioner Chuck Neinas said in a teleconference Friday that he believed it could be.

But that may be more spontaneous remark than official point of view from the Big 12 and Neinas, who is expected to meet with conference athletics directors this week but doesn't officially begin work until Oct. 3.

If the Big 12 ultimately is deemed practicable without MU, and part of that may hinge on the fuzzy impact its departure would have on TV contracts as the conference seeks to add more schools, the SEC's concerns about lawsuits would be greatly reduced.

Baylor, for instance, would have no incentive to rattle legal sabers again.

Whether that means the call for all cards on the table is imminent remains to be seen. In a statement Sunday, SEC commissioner Mike Slive seemed to at least tap the brakes.

"When Texas A&M joins our conference, we don't have immediate plans for a 14th member. We aren't thinking in terms of numbers. We think about the strength of the SEC and the attractiveness of Texas A&M as an institution."

Mizzou's posture isn't specifically known. But signs point to many factions being fed up with Big 12 turmoil and Texas' never-ending pushing of the envelope.

MU made it a point last week to take a noncommittal stance on the prospect of saving the churning Big 12, and athletics director Mike Alden has repeatedly endorsed football coach Gary Pinkel's oft-stated words of condemnation of the manic antics in the Big 12.

Chancellor Brady Deaton, meanwhile, remains difficult to gauge, in part because he is straitjacketed as chairman of the Big 12 board and in part because he is committed to enhancing Mizzou's academic profile.

Whether Deaton can remain in his Big 12 chair capacity if SEC and Missouri talks intensify seems problematic.

Looming over Deaton is the Missouri board of curators. Deaton, Neinas said Friday, told him "he has some curators who are new and are interested in discussing some things."

Deaton worked diligently to keep the conference intact even as Texas A&M pulled out, Oklahoma thumped its chest about options to leave and Texas flirted, too.



Missouri tries to make use of leverage

By **JOE WALLJASPER**

Friday, September 23, 2011

It's hard to advocate staying in a conference as troubled as the Big 12. It's like arguing the merits of extending the lease on an apartment that is currently on fire. Maybe you like the location and a few of the neighbors, but still, there is the matter of the flames shooting out of your windows.

Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton tried to win that argument, repeatedly saying his goal was to keep the Big 12 together. Now, he's taking a different approach. A month trying to broker peace in this league as the chairman of the Big 12's Board of Directors would sap the resolve of anyone.

Last night, in a press conference whose target audience was University of Texas administrators, Deaton declined to make a firm commitment that Missouri would stay in the Big 12. MU Athletic Director Mike Alden was likewise noncommittal when he spoke to reporters. And just in case anyone missed the point, another MU official spoke anonymously to beat writers and indicated that unless the Big 12 adopts major reforms Missouri could bolt to the Southeastern Conference, where it could watch all future realignment drama from a safe distance.

To clarify, the SEC never publicly said it would take Missouri if the Big 12 collapsed nor said MU is still an option after the Big 12 funeral was canceled Tuesday night. That's not the way it works. Schools apply, and the league CEOs vote whether to accept.

But if the SEC is indeed interested, this might be the last chance for Missouri to hold any leverage to make the Big 12 a more equitable, stable conference. MU might be bluffing and have no intention of leaving, but we've gotten to the point where even someone like me who wants Missouri to stay in the Big 12 has to acknowledge that it's only worth staying if Texas is willing to compromise. Otherwise, the conference will be so fragile that it kills any athletic director's ability to plan for the future.

Perhaps Deaton feels the same. Publicly, he certainly has shifted his position.

Just compare two Deaton quotes.

The first is from Aug. 15, when rumors began about Missouri following Texas A&M to the SEC. Deaton said MU had no interest in even discussing leaving the Big 12. I asked him why.

"The Big 12 is real solid together," he said. "We've been through a lot over the last year, and we've done a lot in terms of planning and looking strategically at where we're going. We would prefer that everyone in the conference is absolutely totally happy with where we're going, and I understand there's dissonance

that occurs, and the discussions with Texas A&M reflect that right now, but I see that as a bit of an exception — not a bit of an exception, quite an exception.”

The second quote is from last night. Deaton was asked if he could rule out leaving the Big 12.

“That’s again a hypothetical that could occur,” he said. “In a sense, anything is possible.”

Deaton’s initial preference to keep the Big 12 together was, to some extent, a matter of honor. He took seriously the loyalty oath the Big 12 CEOs took in the summer of 2010.

Let’s examine the conference loyalty we’ve seen since. Texas tried to hurt the other schools by showing high school games on the Longhorn Network. Texas A&M is leaving. Baylor threatened to sue over A&M’s departure. Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas Tech offered their services to the Pac-12. OU President David Boren demanded and received the ouster of Commissioner Dan Beebe.

I’d say the loyalty oath is null and void.

As a rule, conference realignment bothers me. I would hate to see Missouri separate from the remaining members of the old Big Eight, especially Kansas. Conferences should be composed of regional rivals. To me, that is the best model for fans and athletes.

And I think the SEC is a serious gamble for Missouri. The Tigers wouldn’t get buried in football — they’ve averaged 10 wins the last four years playing in the nation’s second-toughest conference, so they’re not Vanderbilt — but probably would lose a few extra games a year. As a fan, what makes you feel worse, watching Missouri lose a football game or imagining Texas signing ESPN’s fat checks for the Longhorn Network? (You are free to hate both ideas equally.)

But at some point, this becomes less about the league you’re joining and more about the league you’re leaving. As the behavior within the Big 12 grew more self-destructive in recent weeks, Deaton’s single-minded focus on preserving the league became a concern for some within the athletic department. When asked questions about the Big 12’s chances of survival before recent football games, Aiden often emphasized Deaton was the one making the decisions. I interpreted it as: Don’t blame me. A Missouri official said last night that for a while there was a disconnect between Deaton and Aiden on whether the SEC option was worth pursuing but that they are on the same page now.

Maybe so, maybe not. Anonymous sources have agendas.

The real issue for Deaton is this: Are the Big 12’s problems even fixable? The Longhorn Network isn’t going anywhere, so right off the top, Texas has about a \$15 million annual edge in TV revenue over the rest of the league. I don’t know how you fix that problem.

There is a whole list of suggestions the Big 12 CEOs brought up yesterday on a conference call, though. If those criteria aren’t met, and if the SEC’s interest is legitimate, Missouri should walk away from the smoldering remains of the Big 12.



MU reluctant to make long-term Big 12 pledge

By **DAVE MATTER**

DATE: September 23, 2011

Forty-eight hours before their football teams meet tomorrow, the university leaders from Missouri and Oklahoma engaged in a different kind of duel last night on their campuses — a game of simultaneous press conferences that painted remarkably different images of the Big 12 Conference.

Oklahoma President David Boren projected an air of unity among the remaining Big 12 members. In a cramped Jesse Hall meeting room, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton left the door open for Missouri to saunter on out.

Fresh off a conference call in which the Big 12 board of directors agreed upon several new measures, including the ouster of Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe, Deaton talked a lot about the conference working to solve problems but stopped short of declaring a long-term commitment to the Big 12.

Asked if Missouri could change conferences if the Big 12's problems are beyond repair, Deaton said, "That's a hypothetical that could occur. In a sense, anything is possible."

Even, perhaps, a move to the Southeastern Conference? Media reports have identified Missouri as a likely SEC expansion target, and though he stressed the Big 12's desire to work through its differences, Deaton said MU has talked with other conferences.

"During these last few weeks, it's fair to say every major institution around the country has had one type of communication or another with essentially every major BCS conference," he said. "I think that's a fair statement for most. Certainly, we've had those contacts, as well."

Later, meeting with reporters in a hallway on the first floor of Jesse Hall, Athletic Director Mike Alden repeated Deaton's message about working to improve the Big 12 — he said the word "work" 10 times in the six-minute interview — but also declined to pledge total commitment to the Big 12.

In fact, Alden said he supported his football coach's recent swipes at the Big 12, when Gary Pinkel called the league "sad" and "embarrassing" on a St. Louis radio show Wednesday.

"His term may have been embarrassing," Alden said. "Mine was ... it's challenging. It's troubling. You don't want your league out there being talked about the way that the Big 12 had been talked about for the last two weeks, three weeks, year, year-and-a-half."

As the Big 12 tries to hold itself together with nine members — Texas A&M hasn't backed off its push to become the SEC's 13th member — it's still unclear whether Missouri holds an invitation to apply for

membership to the SEC or whether MU's athletic and academic factions would support such a move. Alden said he and Deaton are on the same page in their analysis of Missouri's position in the Big 12.

"We all know there are issues out there we have to work through," he said. "They haven't been resolved yet."

The Big 12 board addressed some of those issues during last night's conference call, as Deaton explained:

- The league and Beebe negotiated an agreement that he resign his post immediately. He'll be replaced by Chuck Neinas, a former Big Eight commissioner who for years has worked as a consultant for college athletics.
- As the board chairman, Beebe will form a "special working group" tasked with privately addressing Big 12 problem areas.
- The Big 12 will reactivate its expansion committee — a group of chancellors, presidents and athletic directors who will make recommendations to the board for consideration. A league source said Brigham Young was on the verge of joining the conference earlier this month, until Oklahoma and Texas looked into realigning with the Pac-12. Even though the Pac-12 didn't expand, BYU's interest diminished, the source said. TCU also has been mentioned as a potential expansion target.
- The board discussed granting its media rights to the conference for the next six years, meaning any school that leaves the Big 12 during that time would sacrifice its TV rights and revenue from the league's Tier 1 (network) and Tier 2 (cable) contracts.

Here's where wires became crossed literally and figuratively. Midway through Deaton's opening remarks, a voice came crackling out of a speakerphone that was placed on his lectern for out-of-town reporters to listen to the news conference.

"That's Oklahoma. That needs to be off," he said. "I can recognize David Boren's voice."

Sure enough, it was Boren, whose media gathering in Norman was somehow being transmitted through the phone.

That was just the first and less confusing mix-up. Deaton said the Big 12 board had "affirmed its intention to pursue the granting of media rights." A Missouri source later confirmed Deaton's statement, that the board had merely agreed to discuss the granting of rights. But in Norman, Boren said each school fully agreed to grant their media rights.

"These are very strong handcuffs," Boren told reporters. "The grant of rights really does bind the conference together, and it shows that we fully intend to stay together."

It's unclear which school misinterpreted the board's decision, but it was appropriate on a night short on clarity and commitment.

Deaton ended his session praising Missouri's athletic accomplishments as a Big 12 member, a statement that could have been a Big 12 endorsement or a sales pitch for another suitor.

"We're in the best era of intercollegiate athletics in Missouri's history," he said. "That says a lot about where we are, where our fan base is and the conference that we're in, as well."

A little confirmation on MU and the SEC

By Mike DeArmond - Posted on 24 September 2011

I am not big on looking to other reporters to re-confirm what I have already reported as true. But for all those who insist that the Missouri-SEC connection is a fabrication.

Tony Barnhart of CBS (and Mr. SEC to most folk) just said on national TV that Missouri needed to make up its mind about the SEC.

You cannot make up your mind on a offer that has not been made, informal or otherwise.

The interest from the SEC to make Missouri SEC No. 14 is there.

Will Missouri end up in the SEC? Should it?

My personal opinion is that if Missouri and the other non-University of Texas schools in the Big 12 can legislate or initiate change in the Big 12, then staying in the Big 12 makes the most sense for Mizzou.

Think of it this way:

1. Forget the Longhorn Network's cash payout to Texas. Nothing you can do about it but you can legislate what they are able to NOT show on it.
2. For the first time in history, the other eight Big 12 schools actually vote as a block and after grandfathering in the LHN, rewrite conference bylaws to legislate totally even revenue distribution on everything else from this day forward.

If Missouri cannot get that within the next two weeks, then go ahead and take the SEC offer, whether informal or formal.

Four hours to game time in Oklahoma.
And I for one am looking forward to covering a game.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Colleges struggle with students' data demand

BY TIM BARKER > tbarker@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8350 | Posted: Monday, September 26, 2011 12:10 am

Mizzou students arrived on campus this fall with a slew of new electronic toys and immediately wrought havoc with the school's wireless network.

Early on, too many gadgets were vying for attention, leaving some students unable to connect. There was, of course, a lot of virtual hand wringing and outrage from students furious and frustrated over the slow or severed connections.

Still, it was far from a total crash.

"It was only in certain places, large lecture halls and crowded areas," said Elise Moser, a laptop-armed freshman from Maryland Heights. "I'd get it in one class but then spend all the next class trying to get on the Internet."

The problems were traced to a software glitch and quickly fixed. But the incident is a reminder of the challenges faced by campuses nationwide striving to keep up with the needs of increasingly mobile students and faculty.

Like other schools, the University of Missouri-Columbia is in a state of perpetual upgrade, adding more Internet capacity and mobile access points all the time. But this new school year already is proving to be notable in one regard, said Terry Robb, director of information technology.

Last year, the largest number of wireless devices connected to the system at any one time was 900. Already this year, the campus hit the 8,000 mark. Why such a massive increase?

"Well, the iPad came out. That's part of it right there," Robb said, referring to the popular tablet device and its competitors.

Of course, it's not just the tablets putting a strain on wireless and Internet systems. Many popular smartphones also are built to take advantage of Wi-Fi networks. So are laptops, e-readers like the Amazon Kindle, and many other devices, including printers and video game systems.

But the growing array of toys students bring to campus isn't the real issue, experts say.

"It's not so much the number of devices, it's the video-based content they are going after," said Joseph Harrington, president of the Association for Information Communications Technology Professionals in Higher Education.

Harrington is also director of network service at Boston College, where 70 percent of Internet bandwidth is consumed by video streaming and downloading. The vast majority of that is purely entertainment.

PERKS TO BE EXPECTED

It's tempting to question why universities don't do more to stop students from using school networks for social networking and entertainment. The reality, experts say, is that students expect to find certain things on campus. A stronger Internet connection, preferably with a wireless option, is one of those things.

It's one of the reasons Washington University — like many area schools — doubled its bandwidth this summer, just a year after increasing it by half. Andrew Ortstadt, associate vice chancellor for information services and technology, feels like they have all they need today. But, tellingly, he's not sure he'll be able to say the same thing by year's end.

The school isn't sure what percentage of its bandwidth is gobbled up by movies and video games. In some ways, it really doesn't matter.

"At the end of the day, we want them to have good capacity for recreation," Ortstadt said. "They live here, too. We want to make sure they are doing what they want to do."

So it is that most schools are hesitant to place individual caps on student usage. Instead, they focus on controlling traffic during peak hours, while making sure that academic needs are still met. St. Louis University, for example, breaks its Internet space into three distinct pipelines, making sure students, researchers and clinicians do not interfere with one another.

Schools also use network management tools that prevent heavy users from dominating a network. At peak traffic times, for example, a larger movie download might be slowed to save space for students doing less-intensive research.

"All we try to do is make things fair. We try hard not to limit people," said Daniel Chace, director of network and systems infrastructure at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

At the same time schools are managing traffic, they also have to take precautions when integrating all these new devices onto their networks. They can't just open things up and let everyone in.

Systems have security devices and software designed to give every new device a once-over, looking for viruses and other security threats, said Greg Jackson, vice president for policy and analysis at Educause, a nonprofit that promotes the use of technology in higher education.

Security-related hang-ups can be frustrating to students used to walking into a Starbucks coffee shop and getting immediate access to the Internet. They want to know why it's so much harder to get a campus connection.

"The answer is that Starbucks isn't giving you access to its servers," Jackson said.

UPGRADES AT SLU

Student expectations also shape the way schools think when refurbishing or building new classrooms and residence halls.

St. Louis University is in the midst of a multiyear plan to upgrade all of its classrooms by summer of 2013. Each room will be guaranteed to have enough wireless access points to let every student access the Internet. Also included is enough electrical outlets to keep all those devices charged up. In some ways, that's the more difficult challenge, said Tim Brooks, the school's chief information officer.

"It's not access to wireless," Brooks said. "It's access to power."

That's something Mizzou also has been dealing with in recent years as it builds and renovates the residence halls where nearly 6,000 students live. Most of the older halls were built at a time when students came to campus with a desk lamp, radio and hair dryer. It's not uncommon for students to show up today with 20 or more devices, said Frankie Minor, director of residential life.

Rooms with a half dozen plug-ins have been replaced by rooms with up to 20 plug-ins. And they have cable lines, Ethernet lines and land lines for phones, even though the vast majority of students have no use for them. (The logic is that it's much cheaper to add the lines during renovation or construction — just in case they might be needed again someday.)

What Mizzou hasn't yet addressed — and it's a significant issue in the eyes of students who want the comforts of home — is a way to get wireless Internet into rooms. It's available only in common areas such as lounges and laundry rooms.

The school last tried a wireless pilot program in 2002. It worked great with an empty building but rapidly degenerated once it was full of students and their gear.

Nearly a decade later, they are ready to try again. Sometime in the next couple of months, they'll shut off the wired connections in one of the halls and see whether a new wireless network can handle the load.

Success could put an end to all the questions about the absence of wireless coverage in rooms. And it's about seven to eight times cheaper than a wired network, Minor said.

"Everyone wants wireless. But we know if it's not reliable, they won't be happy," Minor said.

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1955

Faculty Council explores new information on performance funding plans

Proposed program funding in Missouri would begin in the 2013 fiscal year.

By Caitlin Swieca

Published Sept. 23, 2011

Faculty Council received updates on performance funding initiatives that the state of Missouri is looking to implement in the coming years, it announced at its Thursday meeting.

The council also approved the academic calendar for the 2013-14 school year and saw a presentation from representatives from Mizzou Advantage.

Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer presented information he received from Nikki Krawitz, UM System vice president for finance and administration. The state is looking to implement additional funding to public universities based on certain academic parameters starting in July 2012.

Tyrer said there will be four main areas by which institutions will be judged, with each university having a fifth parameter unique to that school.

The four areas the state is planning to evaluate are student success and progress, degree obtainment, quality of student learning and affordability. It has yet to be determined which specific statistics will be used to distribute funding.

Goals would be set based on past numbers from each campus.

“The system is meant to put the institution in competition with itself,” Tyrer said.

If the system is implemented, the UM System will submit one set of numbers, meaning that statistics from MU will be combined with those of the UM-Saint Louis, UM-Kansas City and Missouri University of Science and Technology campuses.

“We’re supposed to be competing with ourselves to show improvement, but we’re being lumped in with UMSL and the other UM schools,” council member Art Jago said.

Council members also raised concerns that the measures focused on undergraduate teaching and might force MU to de-emphasize its research efforts and graduate schools.

“It goes against what half of our mission is, which is research,” council member Vanya Kriekhaus said. “It seems to go against what a public research university should do.”

There were also concerns about grade inflation that might deplete the quality of education.

“The incentives are very perverse,” Kriekhaus said. “If we give out nothing but As and have low standards, we’ll get more money.”

Members also felt MU could be penalized because incoming students may be unprepared to do college-level work.

“It doesn’t take into account what students can do coming in,” council member Nicole Monnier said. “We won’t be able to do these things if K-12 doesn’t improve.”

The state is not seeking input from faculty members on the proposed changes, but the council resolved to revisit the issue if a decision is made.

“What is clear to us is that creating a subcommittee to look at appropriate metrics is not the way to go,” Tyrer said.

The council voted to add an addendum to the 2013-14 academic calendar that will automatically add class on the final Friday of the semester and move Reading Day to Saturday in the event that MU misses two days of school.

“We’re trying to supersede any need for Faculty Council to meet in the middle of a snowstorm,” Monnier said.

The council also saw a presentation from representatives of Mizzou Advantage, who gave updates on the progress of its five initiatives and informed council members about upcoming events for faculty.

Some faculty members questioned the cost-effectiveness of the programs, others pointed out that it lays out new opportunities for research.

“There’s been a home for traditional research, and I don’t think it’s going away anytime soon,” council member Candace Galen said. “Mizzou Advantage is a new way of looking at that, and it’s an interesting experiment.”



Students share house for sustainable life

By **ANDREW DENNEY**

Sunday, September 29, 2011

The first six residents of the so-called Sustainhouse, an experimental home at 210 N. College Ave. where eco-friendliness is the emphasis, have found that life doesn't have to change much to live sustainably.

Members of Sustain Mizzou in the house forgo some modern conveniences and pay close attention to the consumption of resources to find ways to live cheaply and with minimal environmental impact. Sally Waldman, a resident of the house, said residents have everything they need to live normally. They all have laptops and other modern electronics, but the residents do some things the old-fashioned way.

They hang their laundry out to dry instead of using a dryer; they wash dishes by hand instead of using a dishwasher; and they keep a hen house in the backyard that can provide them with eggs. They will keep the heat low, go without air conditioning, and make sure chargers for electronics are unplugged when they are not in use. "It's very simple changes," Waldman said.

She and the other five residents are University of Missouri students. The other residents are Monica Everett, Claire Friedrichsen, Henry Hellmuth, Li Tang and Kat Seal, who is president of Sustain Mizzou.

Each of the students is tasked to handle some aspect of the house, such as buying groceries, budgeting and handling waste. The residents track their own consumption — a goal for the project is to reduce utility bills for the six-bedroom house by 20 percent.

Waldman said a challenge for the residents, who must adhere to their own school schedules, is to get all of them on the same page at the same time to discuss issues facing the house or to work on projects. But she said regularly scheduled weekly meetings have helped to keep the residents there in better contact.

Public events will be held at the house throughout the semester to show how the residents are working to live sustainably, such as potluck dinners and tours.

Waldman said the house is intended to be a teaching tool for other residents to show how sustainable living can be achieved. According to Sustain Mizzou, Columbia is the first among Big 12 cities to have a project such as Sustainhouse. In April, the project was recognized by the Clinton Global Initiative University, where student leaders and youth groups gather to discuss solutions to problems facing the planet.



J-Schoolers get scoop from big names in reality TV

By **JANESE SILVEY**

Saturday, September 24, 2011

University of Missouri journalism students got to quiz some big names in reality and entertainment television yesterday about how they can have a competitive edge when job hunting.

But the answers might not have been what everyone wanted to hear. No matter how students phrased the question, Linda Bell Blue told them they're probably not going to land a high-profile job right off the bat.

"You need to learn hard news, what your rights are, how comfortable you feel with sources," said Bell Blue, who has been executive producer of "Entertainment Tonight" for 17 years.

Bell Blue and other notable Missouri School of Journalism alumni convened on campus for a daylong symposium on reality television and how it relates to traditional journalism. Joining her were Jon Murray, creator of numerous reality shows including MTV's "The Real World"; Lance Heflin, executive producer of "America's Most Wanted"; and Jim Berger, who has created several shows, including "Cake Boss."

MU students already have somewhat of an edge just by being at Missouri's J-School, Murray said. He praised MU for providing a foundational liberal arts education. "You can't put a price tag on it," he said.

Murray — credited for inventing the modern reality TV genre — said his early inspiration came from PBS's 1973 12-episode docu-series "An American Family." The show put film crews inside a home in Santa Barbara and captured scenes from the life of the middle class Loud family — a family dealing with divorce, a son's sexual orientation and other tensions of that time.

The technology to capture those personal moments has improved since then, but the art of letting stories play out in a human and personal way has not, Murray said, showing clips from the show alongside "Real World" scenes.

He gave student reporters in the audience some ideas for how to incorporate successful elements of reality television with traditional TV news. For instance, putting confessional booths or cameras in the hands of viewers to let them record their private thoughts would be more powerful than simply having a reporter ask questions, he said.

During the question-and-answer segment, Bell Blue encouraged students to learn production and camera skills. For every on-camera job, she said, there are dozens off camera making the shows come together.

But she admitted having sources and personal connections helps.

That apparently was the case for Whitney Nevill, an MU graduate who has been on Entertainment Tonight's news staff for five years. She got the job after letting Bell Blue know that her father played high school football with Bell Blue's brother.

"It's who you know," Bell Blue said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU stem cell research lecture hopes to dispel misconceptions

By Joanna Demkiewicz

September 23, 2011 | 4:30 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – Mark Kirk, professor of biological sciences at MU, plans to address the controversial issue of cloning during the Saturday Morning Science talk about stem cell research this weekend.

"For people who fear cloning, I will try to clarify the difference between human being cloning and human cellular cloning," Kirk said. "And separate science fiction from science fact."

Kirk will illustrate generalities about stem cell research and appeal to an audience with little prior scientific knowledge by using an online animated tutorial.

According to the Saturday Morning Science website, the program welcomes those who have any interest in science and aims "to create a culture in which engagement between scientists and the public is the norm."

Kirk's lecture, titled "Why aren't stem cells created equal?" will discuss the difference between stem cells fertilized in vitro and adult cells pulled from tissue or skin biopsies that are reprogrammed to function embryonically.

Kirk's research focuses on stem cell therapies for central nervous systems disorders like Batten disease and spinal cord injuries, Kirk said. He said he will discuss his team's success in treating retinas from model mice that are affected by Batten disease. Batten disease is a hereditary disorder that causes vision problems and seizures.

For more information about Kirk's Saturday Morning Science lecture, visit <http://satscience.missouri.edu/>.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

South Farm Showcase educates children, parents about science

By Caitlin Sole, Miranda Zhang

September 24, 2011 | 5:26 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Dama, a black border collie, chased a herd of sheep around obstacles at Danny Shilling's order.

Meanwhile, Jessica Bock watched the dog-herding show with her 2-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter.

"The kids seem to like it," Bock said.

Shilling was invited to demonstrate dog-herding at South Farm Showcase, an event centered around science and learning. He brought four sheep and three dogs for the dog-herding performance.

The free event is sponsored by the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. It is run by volunteers and hosts a number of college groups, such as the Mizzou Hydrogen Car Team and the MU Agronomy Club.

The showcase featured a wide array of informational booths and activities, including a corn maze, wagon rides, \$10 hot air balloon rides and a trained hawk demonstration. South Farm also showcased demonstrations in dog training, herding and bug sweeping from 10 a.m. until noon.

John Poehlmann, assistant director of the Missouri Agricultural Experiment Station, said South Farm is a mixture of science and fun.

"It's got everything from biofuel and turfgrass information to dog-training demonstrations, all of which are matched up with things the kids can enjoy and their parents will enjoy as well," Poehlmann said.

Poehlmann estimated that 3,000 people came out to the event, an increase from last year's 1,300 attendees.

South Farm consists of 1,452 acres, home to the Swine Research Complex, the Beef Research and Teaching Farm and the Turf Center and the Horse Farm. Poehlmann said \$50 million of research has been put into South Farm.

The Agronomy Club showcased soybeans, corn, sorghum, wheat and rice on plates, as well as tofu, Coca-Cola, molasses, crackers and rice patties.

"Which one is sorghum, and which one is wheat?" asked Garth Duncan, one of the six volunteers for the booth. "Where do crackers come from?"

Duncan gave a quiz to 7-year-old Caleb Conner about food ingredients. The Agronomy Club added the quiz this year to attract kids and educate the parents through their children. Duncan said some adults don't realize that soda has corn syrup in it.

Thelma Conner, Caleb's grandmother, said she brought Caleb to the South Farm Showcase last year and had a lot fun. She said she decided to bring his sister, Lila, this time to see how they enjoy it.

"It is fun for kids. They learn things," Conner said.

Another booth featured Tigergen II, the winning hydrogen car made by the Mizzou Hydrogen Car Team. The group promotes awareness of alternative fuels and technology.

Bryce Guinn, treasurer of the Mizzou Hydrogen Car Team, said each year the group participates in the Shell Eco-marathon. The competition challenges students to create energy-efficient cars. Last year the team placed first for the hydrogen category in the UrbanConcept division.

A mere 40 feet away, children huddled around the herpetology booth to pet snakes and lizards as their parents enjoyed a wine-tasting provided by the MU Institute for Continental Climate Viticulture & Enology.

Poehlmann said they plan on holding the event again next year.



College students play key role in transit task force

By **ANDREW DENNEY**

Saturday, September 24, 2011

A task force appointed by Mayor Bob McDavid could consider a push to convince students at the University of Missouri, Columbia College and Stephens College that they should pay an increased student fee to provide citywide bus service for college students and to help foot the bill for an expansion of the bus system.

As the heaviest users of Columbia Transit, college students have been targeted by city leaders as potential sources of input for how the system could be reworked and as a funding source that could help the bus system — which is hemorrhaging about \$100,000 per month, city leaders say — avoid financial disaster.

McDavid's task force includes three students from MU and one student each from Columbia College and Stephens College. The task force has yet to meet, and a first meeting has not been scheduled.

Ian Thomas, executive director of the PedNet Coalition, said students appointed to the task force should develop marketing campaigns that tout the benefits of supporting the bus system through increased student fees.

Thomas said if they paid an additional \$80 per student, they could use buses free with a student ID. In turn, Thomas said, the city could receive about \$6 million more each year for the bus system.

The proposed budget for Columbia Transit for fiscal year 2012, which begins a week from today, is about \$7.2 million.

"If I was a student, I would be very keen to cast my vote" in support of an increased student fee and would "ask other students to do the same," Thomas said.

A student-subsidized bus system is used in Ames, Iowa, home of Iowa State University. At ISU, students pay \$62.60 per semester in student fees, which allows them free access to Ames' bus system.

According to a presentation at a recent work session, the bus system in Ames had about 90 rides per capita last year, compared with about 20 for Columbia.

"I would like to replicate the bus systems in those other towns," McDavid said, referring to Ames, Champaign, Ill., and Iowa City, Iowa, which also were discussed at the transit system work session.

McDavid said he has not tried to sway student appointees to the task force on the idea of increased student fees. But, he said, the goal of the task force should be to find ways to reconfigure the city's bus system to be more focused on the needs of the city's college students.

"We're going to find out what they want," McDavid said.

Missouri Students Association President Eric Woods, one of the MU appointees to the task force, said the idea to impose higher student fees would need more discussion before it is pushed on MU students.

"We won't do anything that would not receive the vast majority of the support of the student body," Woods said.

Woods said that if a proposed student fee increase exceeded increases in the consumer price index, the idea would have to be approved by the University of Missouri Board of Curators.



Aging, physician populations at odds

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Sunday, September 25, 2011

A brewing health care storm threatens to reach historic proportions when the aging baby-boomer population and expansion of the federal Medicare program in 2014 converge to create a flood of patients that could overwhelm the dwindling ranks of aging family physicians.

Some analysts describe that storm as "looming." Others insist the storm is already here, pointing to an increase in the number of retiring family doctors and a steady decrease in the number of new general practitioners and primary care physicians.

The patients most caught in a pinch are people in rural areas, where access to medical care is often limited.

The Missouri Hospital Association calls the shortage of primary care physicians "severe" and "alarming." A report this summer by the MHA noted there is an average of one primary care physician for every 962 residents in metropolitan areas of Missouri, compared with one primary care doctor for every 1,776 residents in rural areas.

"Access to care is crucial, but in Missouri, there are regions that don't have enough primary care professionals to serve residents," said Thomas McAuliffe, policy analyst for the Missouri Foundation for Health.

More than 80 percent of Missouri has been designated as a health professional shortage area. That means one in five Missourians currently doesn't have access to primary care services. The Affordable Care and Patient Protection Act has provisions for incentives to encourage medical students to pursue primary care careers, especially in rural areas.

The looming shortage of primary care physicians is not a new concern. Jack Colwill, professor emeritus of family and community medicine at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, co-authored a study in 2008 that predicted a nationwide shortage of as many as 44,000 primary care physicians by 2025.

"The time for vigorous action is now," the study concluded. The study, published in the April 2008 edition of Health Affairs, projected that population growth and the aging population will increase family physicians' and general internists' workloads by 29 percent from 2005 to 2025, without a proportionate increase in the number of new family doctors.

The ACA will create an influx in 2014 of at least 35 million Americans who don't currently have health insurance. McAuliffe said the emphasis on primary and preventive care outlined in the health care reform law can only be effective if there are more primary care doctors, rather than specialists. But the reason for the growth of the ranks of specialists — and the decrease in general practitioners — isn't difficult to determine, he said.

"Medical schools push students in the direction of specialties," McAuliffe said. "That's where the money's at."

Physicians who go into general family practice will make from \$30,000 to \$50,000 less than a specialist, "and they have the same amount of loans," he said. "Right now, there's not a lot of upside to go in that direction."

McAuliffe said the most competitive specialty is dermatology because of the lure of high return on time and dollar investment.

"You come out and work an eight-hour day and make an ungodly amount of money," he said. On the other hand, a primary care physician — especially a family doctor in a rural area — "might be on call 24 hours a day."

"Ask any hospital administrator in a rural area, and they'll tell you that to cover" the patient load of "an old family care doctor, they've got to hire two new doctors because they won't work those kind of hours," McAuliffe said.

Steven Zweig, chairman of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the MU School of Medicine, agreed that hefty debt accumulated in college and medical school and the "large disparities" in income between primary care physicians and specialists are reasons fewer physicians go into family medicine, a trend at least 10 years in the making.

Zweig said fewer than 10 percent of graduates from U.S. medical schools choose family medicine, although the rate for MU medical school graduates is almost twice that rate.

"All physicians make a lot of money, so I'm not crying on anyone's shoulder," Zweig added, but he said a loan-forgiveness provision of the ACA for students who pursue family medicine is "very, very helpful" to new doctors.

The ACA won't be the cure-all for the nation's health care system or for the dwindling number of family practitioners, McAuliffe said, "but it is a good step in the right direction."

In an effort to stem the tide of doctors opting for specialty practices rather than general practices, the ACA outlines a number of financial incentives for current and future health professionals, including:

- **Financial assistance.** The ACA helps provide additional scholarships and, in some cases, loan repayment for students who agree to practice in underserved areas for a specified amount of time after graduation.
- **Tax breaks.** The law excludes from taxation the value of student loans repaid or forgiven because the individual worked in primary care or certain other health professions. This benefit is retroactive to 2009.
- **Additional student aid.** The ACA adds another \$40 billion in funding to Pell Grants to ensure students receive the aid to which they are entitled.

The ACA also focuses on encouraging existing primary care providers to accept new Medicaid and Medicare patients into their practice through increased reimbursement for certain services. This component is aimed at increasing access to primary care providers before the expansion of Medicaid in 2014, as well as meeting the need of baby boomers who will become eligible for Medicare in the next several years.

MU ON TRACK

Zweig said the MU medical school already is ahead of the primary care crisis curve with its Rural Track Pipeline Program, a series of five programs offered by the university's Area Health Education Center.

The programs give students the opportunity to train and work in rural communities throughout the state, exposing them to the life of a rural physician in the hope they will return to practice in rural Missouri, Kathleen Quinn, MU-AHEC director, said in a news release.

The program also has a preadmission scholars option that allows select students to be conditionally admitted to medical school early as part of the "pipeline" to get doctors into rural areas. The final component of the pipeline is the Missouri Physician Placement Service, which helps match physicians who want to practice in Missouri with communities looking for doctors.

Other programs already have been established to encourage more family medicine practitioners. Medical students must complete an eight-week rotation in family medicine, four weeks of which are spent with a physician in practice, often a rural family physician. The university has clinics in Fayette and Fulton where those rotations occur, and all residents also get experience at Callaway Community Hospital in Fulton.

Since 1995, nearly a quarter of MU's medical students have participated in the Rural Track Pipeline Program, said Rich Gleba, MU School of Medicine spokesman. More than 55 percent of the students who have participated in the program chose a rural location for their first practice.

TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE

The advent of telehealth technology a decade ago, whereby a physician can consult with a patient possibly hundreds of miles away via video, was once touted as more than just a stopgap for patients from rural areas who needed to see a doctor. McAuliffe said some in the medical community still champion that technology as "the future."

"I think it has all the potential in the world," he said, "but it's a lot like the electric car. For years, automobile manufacturers have said they are close to having them, but there still aren't a lot of electric cars on the road."

McAuliffe said the health care system still has "technologically averse" providers and patients, especially in rural areas and among aging populations.

Technology also is streamlining patient care in the form of electronic medical records, giving providers in several locations the ability to access a patient's medical information with the press of a key. Under the ACA, a doctor who bills Medicare must have EMR capability. That aspect of the law doesn't appeal to some older physicians, McAuliffe said.

"They don't want to learn computers," he said. "They became doctors. They don't want to be IT specialists."

Technology of health care will be less of an issue five or 10 years from now when a new generation of physicians is in practice, McAuliffe said.

OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Health care professionals talk about changing other aspects of the culture of their profession. The ACA places a heightened emphasis on public health and prevention of illness and chronic diseases. In some ways, the call for increased health literacy is one of the more profound components of health care reform because it changes the focus from treatment of disease to prevention.

That shift in health care thinking was addressed recently at the Missouri Health Literacy Summit by Howard Koh, assistant secretary of health with the Department of Health and Senior Services.

"It's often pointed out in this country that we have a 'sick' care system, rather than a 'health' care system," he said. "But we're trying to help people not be patients in the first place."

The spotlight on health literacy isn't just a means of holding physicians accountable for making sure their patients are partners in their own health care, can understand treatment options and know how to take medications. The onus also falls more on patients to develop healthier diets and lifestyles.

Another part of the health care culture shift is the ACA requirement that insurance plans eventually cover preventive services and screenings at no cost.

"Once you do that, you essentially create a carrot for people to go to the doctor" for preventive care, McAuliffe said. "Half of seniors don't see a physician for preventive care. That is a recipe for disaster."

Currently, for people with no insurance, those services are rarely an option, anyway. For someone with a high-deductible policy, "the first thing they're going to cut out is preventive services," Zweig said.

In the long run, prevention will lower the cost of health care when there are fewer chronic conditions, McAuliffe said. But without a ready, accessible workforce of primary care physicians to perform those routine checks and screenings, overall health — and health care costs — will not improve, he said.

When it comes to treating chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes, "there's no other health system in the world you want to be in. You want to be in America," McAuliffe said. But when it comes to quality of life, "we're very bad at preventing chronic conditions."

Colwill, meanwhile, warned that as patient numbers rise, the shrinking ranks of general practitioners will be doing more "urgent care" and will have less time for preventive services. He endorses ways to make primary care more management and income "comparable" with other specialties.

Colwill strongly endorses development of new models of primary care called "medical homes," where teams of physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and others provide care that also focus on management of patients with chronic illnesses. These models promote more access through expanded hours and use of telephone, email and electronic medical records. The biggest challenge for that model is to devise a system of reimbursement that isn't more costly than current models.

Managing the cost of health care is the hurdle ACA doesn't clear, McAuliffe said. The United States continues to have the most expensive health care system in the world.

"We have to get that under control," he said. "This law may modify the cost of health care, but it's not really going to change it." McAuliffe said additional steps are needed to address the costs.

Zweig said management of care and management of cost are not inverse parts, especially when it comes to addressing the disparity between the earnings of primary care doctors and specialists.

"You can't provide more health care for people," he said, "and make it all cheaper."

MU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE BY THE NUMBERS ...

Class of 2015 size: 104

Average MCAT score: 30.23

Average GPA: 3.78

Average science GPA: 3.78

Total applications: 1,686

Applicants interviewed: 444

Applicants accepted: 166

Age range: 20-36

Female: 51 percent; **Male:** 49 percent

Geographic representation: 85 Missouri residents

Graduation data for Class of 2011:

P32 percent are completing residencies at MU

P41 percent are completing residencies in Missouri

P43 percent chose residency training in primary care. Primary care fields include internal medicine, pediatrics and family practice.

Total MU physician alumni: 7,714

MU physician alumni in Missouri: 4,298

The above number includes graduates of MU's medical school and residency programs.

— MU School of Medicine, Rich Gleba