



MAR 12 2012

Professors question Deaton's move in Engel case

In a meeting Thursday at Memorial Union, members of the University of Missouri's Faculty Council discuss regular business before taking up the issue of Chancellor Brady Deaton's decision to send Greg Engel's faculty irresponsibility case back for review by a committee that already ruled on it.

By JANESE SILVEY

Friday, March 9, 2012

University of Missouri professors say they are confused and disappointed that, against their advice, Chancellor Brady Deaton sent a faculty irresponsibility case back to a committee that already ruled on it.

Complete coverage of the case of MU Professor Greg Engel

"The process was carried out in good faith, and they lost. And rather than accept it, they find another way," Eddie Adelstein, associate professor of pathology and anatomical sciences, told fellow Faculty Council members yesterday.

Deaton has asked a faculty responsibility committee to take another look at charges of discrimination brought against Greg Engel, an associate engineering professor, and decide whether it thinks the accusations are more than likely correct. That would be using a lower standard of evidence than what committee members used when they ruled earlier this year that there wasn't enough clear and convincing evidence to recommend Engel go through a firing process. Faculty bylaws don't set a standard for evidence.

Several Faculty Council members proposed a resolution to denounce Deaton's decision and deem whatever the committee decides next as being "tainted by administrative interference." The authors are revising the document with input from peers and are expected to bring it back for a council vote in two weeks.

Much of yesterday's faculty meeting highlighted unanswered questions in Engel's case.

Why, for instance, did the faculty committee go through a lengthy process using "clear and convincing" evidence if that wasn't the appropriate standard — especially when a UM System attorney, Kathleen Markie, and Deputy Provost Ken Dean, also an attorney, were in the room?

"There was ample opportunity for this discussion of burden of proof. Couldn't they figure this out in the beginning?" asked Joe Parcell, Faculty Council vice chairman.

The Tribune has been trying to get that question answered all week. Members of the faculty responsibility committee have either not been reachable or have declined to comment. Markie wouldn't answer the question, and Dean has been unavailable. George Smith, Engel's attorney who also was in the discussions, said he doesn't remember anyone recommending a standard of evidence during the meetings.

Professors also questioned why Deaton didn't simply ignore the committee's recommendation and move Engel's case forward to a tenure review committee anyway — which he has the authority to do. That committee hears cases in which a tenured professor is facing termination and does have to be convinced of evidence before recommending a professor be fired.

"It's in the chancellor's power to say, 'I don't agree.' He should do it and not us," said Gordon Christensen, a professor in the School of Medicine.

Deaton's hands might have been tied, though. In recorded testimony from the hearings, Dean assured the faculty responsibility committee that administration would not recommend termination if the committee didn't. "You have invested nine months of your life, your professional life, here, and the provost respects the process, that this is a faculty-driven process," Dean is on record as saying.

Deaton wrote Parcell a letter last week explaining his rationale. In it, he said a higher standard of evidence deters professors genuinely concerned about a colleague's conduct from filing faculty irresponsibility charges.

The letter also says: "The Faculty Council may want to consider adding provisions to the faculty bylaws ensuring that before imposition of a severe sanction (such as suspension from service for a stated period) as a result of a faculty irresponsibility proceeding, there must exist clear and convincing evidence that the violation constitutes a significant violation of professional ethics or responsibility."

Philosophy Professor Don Sievert said he was "stunned" by that part of the letter because Engel has been suspended from teaching duties for more than a year, even though two separate committees cleared him of charges using clear and convincing evidence.

Suspension from service, though, is different than being suspended from classroom duties, Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton said. He said faculty members can be suspended from teaching while still providing service to campus in other ways. Engel continues to conduct research.

This page has been revised to reflect the following correction:

A photo that ran online with a Friday story about the University of Missouri's Faculty Council meeting had a caption that incorrectly said faculty members were discussing Chancellor Brady Deaton's decision to send Greg Engel's faculty irresponsibility case back for review. The photo was taken before that discussion.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Burwell: Haith won't steal show he created



Missouri head coach Frank Haith cuts down the nets after a Big 12 tournament game between Missouri and Baylor on Saturday, March 10, 2012, at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, Mo. Photo by Chris Lee, clee@post-dispatch.com

KANSAS CITY • He already had fought back his emotions on national television and now Frank Haith was at it again, biting down desperately on his lower lip, trying mightily to hold back on the sort of deep and cleansing sob that was just dying to get out.

There were tears in there that wanted to get out, needed to get out, deserved to be witnessed by all these cheering, giddy and delirious Missouri loyalists who were singing his praises for delivering this Big 12 tournament championship trophy to them.

There he was standing in the midst of this crazy championship commotion — the Sprint Center was throbbing with M-I-Z, Z-O-U! chants, and everyone was reveling in the moment of the improbability and feel-good vindication of winning the tourney as a fine parting gift on the way out the door to the SEC — and Haith was trying his best to hold on to his wits.

But then along came Kim English, draped his long arms over his head coach's shoulders, leaned down and whispered something that forced Haith to wrestle with his emotions once again.

“We were just talking about the whole process,” Haith said. “We were just thinking back on all the things we’ve been through.”

There was a lot to think about.

A year ago, when Mizzou’s basketball team left the Big 12 tournament, it was a dysfunctional program on the verge of an emotional implosion. Now everything had changed. English’s face was beaming that megawatt smile he always carries around with him as if it’s air and water. But as he gave his coach a hug, you had to understand how meaningful this embrace was for both, who began this journey to the Big 12 tournament title with a not-so-simple phone call last April shortly after Haith had been hired to replace Mike Anderson amid howls from a discontented fan base.

“I remember that phone call like it was yesterday,” English said after Mizzou had beaten Baylor 90-75, locked up an automatic berth into the NCAA Tournament and presented a mighty strong argument that a No.1 seed should be in the mix, too.

The phone call was from a new coach whom no one really wanted to a player who was part of a team full of bruised egos and hurt feelings. The coach was reaching out to the one familiar face in the program (Haith had unsuccessfully recruited English three years earlier to go to Miami), hoping English could convince his teammates to just give Haith a chance to fix all that was ailing their downtrodden team.

“And now here we are,” said English grinning from ear to ear.

Yes, here they are, a program revived. Mizzou is one of the best college basketball teams in the country, and has Frank Haith to thank for it. MU is 30-4, with a Big 12 tournament trophy in hand. The Tigers have built a résumé that is clearly deserving of so much more attention and respect, like being awarded a No.1 seed Sunday .

And again, they have Haith to thank for that, too.

The guy no one wanted. The guy everyone was ripping when he was hired. The guy who absorbed this onslaught of public criticism with class and dignity and even with a touch of humor and a mound of humility.

English paused for just a moment because he wanted to make this point very clear. This conversation and this season was about something so much more revealing than simply showing how well Haith draws up Xs and Os on the sidelines, which he does as well as anyone. It was about what happens when adversity punches you in the gut and demands that you either crumble or counterpunch like a man possessed.

The story of this coach and team is how they came out swinging and played this season with a singular purpose. It wasn’t about proving people wrong. It was about confirming everything they all believed about themselves. That they were better than people thought. A lot better. And tougher, too.

“And that’s why more than a basketball coach, I respect him as a man,” English said. “When people were talking bad about him, our fans were talking bad about a man they never met, and it crushed me. They didn’t know him like I know him. (But) he stayed in the process. He stayed true to his faith in God. He went home late afternoons to spend time with his family, then came to work with us. He did those three things no matter what people said about him, and then he did those same three things when people were calling him the greatest thing since sliced bread. And that’s what makes me respect him even more. (It’s) his ability to stay in the process and take criticism and take the praise and treat them both as the same thing.”

Players always notice that about coaches. Give them a man who is consistent, not some emotional elevator who goes up and down with the successes and failures of the season, and they will follow him to the ends of the earth. Haith was the emotionally steady rock that this emotionally frail team desperately needed. And that goes a long way in explaining how they have been transformed from an emotional wreck into one of the mentally tough teams you’ve ever seen. But here’s the thing you have to appreciate the most about what Haith has done.

He’s a background guy.

He isn’t looking for opportunities to tell you “I told you so,” even though he deserves to do that. You’ll never see him in some tug of war on the podium fighting with his boss or his players trying to gobble up the spotlight.

“Just to show you how he is,” said English, “did you notice what was going on when they were giving us the trophy?”

The players were on the stage at center court. The trophy was up there on the stage on center court. The Big 12 interim commissioner was on the stage waiting to present the trophy to the team at center court.

And the only one who wasn’t on the stage with the trophy at center court was Haith.

“They’re getting ready to present us with the trophy, and I saw him over there with his family,” said English, just shaking his head in equal parts pride and amazement. “I was like, ‘Come on coach. This is yours. You got this. You constructed this. You made us play the way we played.’ He’s so humble. He’s such a humble guy”

Haith finally took the trophy, and more than an hour later he stood in a quiet room smiling at English’s kind words.

“I’m a behind-the-scenes guy,” he said. “I’m not a head coach who needs to be up front. It’s about the players. It’s about those guys and the hard work they put in. We’re just doing what we’re supposed to do, coach these young men on and off the court. That’s our jobs. We are supposed to help them grow as people and players. I just wanted those guys to have that moment for themselves.”

He wouldn't say an unkind word about any of his critics, though you know he could. Instead, he stood there sipping on a cup of ice water grinning and exhaling and thinking about the next challenge to conquer.

"If you have family and faith in place, you can endure and overcome anything," he said. "Has it been trying? Absolutely. Has it been motivating? Absolutely. But you don't get through it unless you stay true to who you are. That's what makes this year so special, all the things that they've had to overcome and accomplished."

He couldn't bring himself to say that he had overcome and accomplished a lot, too. But he should have. He deserves to say that, and a whole lot more.



Study reveals that caregivers of veterans are stressed but satisfied

By JANESE SILVEY

Saturday, March 10, 2012

Those who take care of veterans with chronic illnesses are stressed but also satisfied with their work, a University of Missouri researcher says.

Bonnie Wakefield, an associate research professor in MU's Sinclair School of Nursing, studied informal caregivers who look after veterans — a growing population as outpatient treatment becomes common — who are nearly twice as likely as the general public to have chronic illnesses.

Most of those caregivers are wives or other family members. And nearly half of those studied said they didn't feel they had a choice when it came time to care for their loved one.

It can be a stressful job: More than a third of the caregivers reported high level of strain. "Having a lot of care-giving demands doesn't necessarily mean that caregivers aren't satisfied," Wakefield said in a statement. "Some people get satisfaction from helping others."

Those with the highest levels of satisfaction also said they had more outside help, such as support from friends and relatives, and they had coping strategies, such as exercise.

There's help for those who need assistance, including websites such as www.myhealth.va.gov and www.caregiver.va.gov.

The study, "Strain and Satisfaction in Caregivers of Veterans with Chronic Illness," was published in the Research in Nursing Health journal.

Co-authors included researchers from MU's School of Medicine and the Kansas City Veterans Affairs Medical Center.



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH



Student group wants MU smoking ban next year

By JANESE SILVEY

Friday, March 9, 2012

Some University of Missouri students don't want to wait an extra year before the campus is smoke-free.

The Missouri Students Association Senate yesterday approved a resolution asking administrators to ban smoking on campus starting in January, rather than the current plan to implement that policy in 2014.

"We think we're representing a majority of students because of the outcry we hear," said Xavier Billingsley, MSA president. He said he has heard complaints from students "tired of people smoking in our faces on the way to class."

Since 2006, MU has been slowly whittling down areas where students and employees can light up. That year, all MU Health Care property went smoke-free. Then, in 2009, smoking was banned in university buildings and within 20 feet of entrances.

Last year, the campus rolled out designated spots, such as in parking lots, where smokers are supposed to stay.

But it's not being enforced, Billingsley said. "They don't stay in the areas where they're supposed to smoke."

Kim Dude, director of the MU Wellness Resource Center, agreed the restrictions aren't working. "It's much easier to have a policy that's black and white," she said.

Dude has grant funding that allows her to provide faculty, staff and students with free smoking-cessation products, such as nicotine patches or gum. That money runs out in April 2013 — meaning smokers would have more help adjusting to a cigarette-free day on campus if the ban started in January.

The funding "wouldn't last if we waiting until 2014," Dude said. "That's why the timing is so perfect."



Final bus trip features 'impressive' system

By Andrew Denney

Saturday, March 10, 2012

CHAMPAIGN-URBANA, Ill. — For Columbia city government's third and final trip to observe bus systems in other Midwestern university towns, city officials and alternative transit advocates traveled yesterday to the home of the University of Illinois where the independent Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District provides service.

In trips last month to Ames, Iowa, and Lawrence, Kan., city officials and University of Missouri students were shown a higher level of bus service than that offered in Columbia in terms of ridership, funding and uses of technology.

City Transportation Supervisor Drew Brooks, who took all three trips, said the level of service offered by the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District, or MTD, was "by far the most impressive" of the three bus systems, "but the least attainable."

The MTD projects to have a ridership of more than 11 million by the end of the year, compared with less than 3 million for Columbia. The MTD operates on a roughly \$33 million budget, compared with \$4.8 million for Columbia Transit in the same fiscal year. The MTD has a fleet of 101 buses, as well as paratransit vehicles, and during the fall and spring school semesters it has buses running nearly every hour of the day.

The three trips were arranged after a proposal made a few months ago by Columbia city leaders for MU students to help support the bus system through an increased student fee was not well-received by student leaders. All three of the cities have student-centric bus systems that are funded in part with student fees.

The group from Columbia was given a chance to take a ride on routes that crisscross through the Illinois campus, which is centrally located between the cities of Champaign and Urbana. At around 2 p.m., the campus was a flurry of activity as students gathered around the campus' bus kiosks, which feature digital screens that track bus arrivals in real time, and hopped on buses to get to class. Potential students were taking tours of the campus with their parents yesterday, adding to the congestion.

The MTD fleet includes larger buses that are equipped with rear joints to help the vehicles smoothly navigate curves. The bus system centers around the University of Illinois campus and students are able to board the buses with the use of their student IDs. Applications for smartphones are available to keep track of buses and to find stops.

Deputy City Manager Tony St. Romaine, who went along for the trip, said he was impressed that the MTD had established itself as an independent transportation entity. Columbia has been exploring new systems of governance for both Columbia Transit and Columbia Regional Airport, and he said that seeing how the MTD was arranged made him think that the city should consider a similar model for its transit modes.

"I think basically that's the direction we should probably go," St. Romaine said.

Sixty-five percent of the MTD's budget is provided by the Illinois Department of Transportation, and funding also comes from University of Illinois student fees. Students began paying fees for campus bus service in 1989 after passing a referendum, and now they pay \$50 per semester.

Jim Maskeri, an Illinois student representative to the MTD Board of Trustees, said students are generally in support of the student fee, and a referendum to increase the student fee to increase the fee to \$59 by 2015 passed with two-thirds of the students who voted. "It's something that students do utilize," Maskeri said.

Flash mobs inspire study

KC instigated the report not to stop the gatherings, but just to understand why they can sometimes turn violent.

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

The Kansas City flash mob that turned violent on the Country Club Plaza last summer has attracted local university researchers who are studying the social media phenomenon.

People at both University of Kansas and the University of Missouri began working in September to find out why teens participate in these electronic callouts to suddenly mass in a particular location.

“I don’t think we have good information about why they use social media to form flash mobs,” said Hyunjin Seo, assistant professor of journalism at KU. “Understanding them is the first step to solving problems that might arise when a flash mob turns violent.”

The effort is not to stop teens from participating in flash mobs for fun but to understand the mob mentality, she said.

Ten focus groups of teens from diverse ethnic groups were questioned by Seo, Brian Houston, MU assistant professor of communication, and Leigh Anne Taylor Knight, Kansas City Area Education Research Consortium director.

The focus groups helped develop a survey currently circulating in area schools and community centers. From those come quantitative data for a report for Kansas City Mayor Sly James’s office.

With summer just a few months away and warm weather already here, city officials said they are eager for information to help improve safety should more gatherings erupt.

“Frankly Kansas City only put a Band-Aid on the situation last summer when we issued a curfew,” said Dan Rotert, mayoral spokesman. “We need to figure out how to deal with this on a more proactive long-term, preventive way.”

James actually watched as last year's flash mob of hundreds of teenagers looking for summer-evening fun on the Plaza turned ugly. Three teens were shot just a few yards from him, and a panic ensued.

The city immediately issued a curfew for children under 18. Community leaders gathered to offer solutions to teens' summer boredom, Rotert said, "but kids know more about this than the adults who were talking about it."

So the city instigated the study, paid for by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation.

"Our thinking was, you won't know if you don't ask," Rotert said.

James sought input from mayors around the country whose cities had experienced similar and worse flash-mob violence. The website violentflashmobs.com lists about 150 incidents, from schoolyard fights to assaults to mobs of teens coming together and ransacking mall stores.

After talking with her focus groups, Seo doesn't think the flash mob here was arranged with violent intentions.

"But since it goes out on Twitter and Facebook, anyone with violent intent could show up," she said. "We just really wanted to find out what teens think about flash mobs."

Boredom, she said, came up repeatedly about why teens would attend a flash mob. They also suggested specific entertainment alternatives — more movies, bowling alleys, places to host talent shows — and where they should be located. Very specific solutions will be in the report, Seo said.

Students said they have used cellphones and Twitter to call groups to the cafeteria for a spontaneous dance number during school lunch, or to the football field or basketball court to pump up the crowd with a moment's notice dance number during a ball game.

Flash mobs have become so popular that Fox television, with Howie Mandel as host, created a program, "Mobbed," around the concept. On the show, hidden cameras follow as hundreds of strangers are called on to fill a street with song and dance for some person's special announcement.

James intends to share the report with other cities.

"I think there is an opportunity to collaborate with many other cities," Seo said. "We see a lot of potential for future engagement with community centers and organizations."

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Sexual assault reported Friday near Hearnese Center

By Ben Harms

March 10, 2012 | 3:13 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — A sexual assault was reported Friday afternoon at a parking lot near MU's Hearnese Center.

Around 3:50 p.m., a man approached the victim from behind and grabbed her buttocks and crotch area outside her clothing, according to a news release from MU police.

She was able to get into her car and leave the area.

The victim reported the assault to police at 4:27 p.m. and described the suspect as a white male with brown hair, of average build and between 5-foot-5 and 5-foot-6. He was wearing a peach- or salmon-colored polo shirt, blue jeans and a dark gray ball cap.

MU police have issued a composite of the suspect, who was last seen at parking lot SG-4.

Anyone with information is encouraged to call MU Police Detective Sam Easley at 884-3721 or Crime Stoppers at 875-TIPS. Individuals with information may remain anonymous and could be eligible for a reward of up to \$1,500 for information leading to an arrest.



Tilley stands firm on Limbaugh bust

By RUDI KELLER

Friday, March 9, 2012

JEFFERSON CITY — A delegation of about a dozen female University of Missouri students met yesterday with House Speaker Steve Tilley but were unable to persuade him to drop his plan to enshrine radio host Rush Limbaugh in the Hall of Famous Missourians.

"He stood his ground pretty strongly," said Nicole Silvestri, a junior women and gender studies student from St. Louis. "He doesn't believe that by putting him in the hall of fame that we are condoning his actions."

The controversy has dogged Tilley all week. At a news conference, Tilley said he is not backing down.

"I listened to what their concerns were, and I explained to them why I nominated him," Tilley said of his visit with the students. "And we just may disagree about it, but I certainly made time for them, ... and I respect their opinion, and I hope they respect mine."

House Democrats have called on Tilley to reconsider the honor. They also have called on Gov. Jay Nixon to block the installation of the bust on the third floor of the Capitol.

Tilley, who like Limbaugh is from southeast Missouri, called Limbaugh an "entertainer," adding that he doesn't agree with everything Limbaugh says. There are other figures in the hall who generated controversy in their time, Tilley added. "They are wanting to hold Rush to a different standard," he said.

The students who met with Tilley said they were unable to budge him.

"He apologized if it offends us but does not believe he needs to change," said Lindsey Wehking of Edwardsville, Ill., a sophomore strategic communications major.

Putting Limbaugh's bust in the Capitol sends the wrong message, Wehking added.

"It says he has done something positive," she said. "We should not reward a man who is lining his pockets by being offensive."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Soaring MU wrestling program soon will be homeless

BY DAN O'NEILL • doneill@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8186 | Posted: Sunday, March 11, 2012 12:05 am | [1 Comment](#)

Wrestling is where the expression originated, "no guts, no glory." Yet, in terms of public profile, there is no such parallel.

Wrestling requires plenty of guts, no question. Absorbing pain, pushing limits, testing inner and outer strength ... all part of the package. Scratches, welts and cauliflower ears are the bar codes of the sport.

In wrestling, characters are welcome. But character is essential.

But if we're talking recognition, or "glory," the exclamation point turns into an asterisk. The sport has an audience, to be sure. Those who follow it and those immersed in it are as passionate as they come. That said, not many wrestlers gain "big man on campus" status. ESPN commentators don't apply the "Booyah" to many wrestling highlights.

The big beam in college sports follows the money. Meal tickets depend on it. Since the University of Missouri orchestrated its exodus from the Big 12 Conference to the SEC, the spotlight has focused on football and, to a lesser extent, basketball. All conjecture, concerns and conversations are centered on how the transplant impacts those sports. That's where your "glory" is.

Oh, and by the way, the move also affects other sports, including wrestling. That is the program that just won the Big 12 championship, which is one more Big 12 title than the football program ever won. More specifically, it's the sport that has all 10 of its starters set to make the drive from Columbia to compete in the NCAA championships beginning Thursday at Scottrade Center.

That's the Missouri wrestling program — "all guts, no story."

it will 'never be the same'

When the 10th-ranked Tigers upset No. 3 Oklahoma State to capture their first Big 12 title last weekend at Hearn Center, it also was their last Big 12 title. As things stand, Missouri's most successful athletics program has no conference affiliation.

There is no such things as wrestling in the SEC universe, no other conference members participating in the sport. MU wrestling is a stranger in a strange land.

"Right now, it's to be decided (where the program goes) after the season," said Missouri coach Brian Smith, a former Michigan State wrestler who has resuscitated a once-comatose program. The Tigers finished 4-9 in Smith's inaugural season in 1998-99. Since 2001-02, they are 144-41.

"You can't get anything done during the season," Smith said. "There's a lot of discussion and a lot of things that have been written down, ideas. It's just a matter of getting everybody to agree on things.

"Because it's not just Missouri that has been affected by this. Really, it's the whole country that has been affected."

The game of musical conference chairs collegiate football schools have been playing has wreaked havoc with their auxiliary programs. The Big 12 is a tradition-rich entity, home to wrestling royals such as Oklahoma State, Iowa State and Oklahoma — the only schools in the league to compete in wrestling other than Mizzou. OSU has 34 national titles. But with Missouri leaving, the Big 12 is now a Tiny 3, i.e. the Big 12 is wrestling history.

"It's just like that Kansas-Missouri basketball and football rivalry, it's really sad to see something like that end," said Missouri sophomore Alan Waters, who beat OSU's Jon Morrison and dominated Oklahoma's Jarrod Patterson to win the school's first conference title at 125 pounds last week.

"To see the Big 12 wrestling conference diminish — which has been a powerhouse since ... it started — that's sad. You'd like to see it keep flourishing and in some way, somehow it will. But it's sad that the actual Big 12 will never be the same."

regional wrestling AHEAD?

In essence, Missouri is leaving a burned-out building. With only four participants, the Big 12 was short of the NCAA requirement of six to receive automatic bids to its championship. Where wrestling is concerned, the conference had gone from an orchestra to a quartet.

Similar fragmentation has taken place elsewhere. The world of collegiate wrestling is largely discretionary. Smith isn't sure what the picture will look like after the weekend plays out and discussions about the future gain traction. But he figures it will be something familiar, something that includes the Big 12 remnants.

"They're talking regional," said Smith, a member of the National Wrestling Coaches Association, a veritable board of governors for the sport. "That's pretty much what the rest of the wrestling conferences have been doing."

For example, in wrestling terms, the Pac-12 is a hybrid Pac-12, a group that includes Boise State and CSU-Bakersfield. The Eastern Collegiate Wrestling Association mixes Ivy League schools

with outsiders such as Army, Navy and Bucknell. The Western Wrestling Conference has Air Force landing with Northern Iowa and South Dakota State.

"I don't know what's going to happen to the Big 12," Smith said. "When we were down in Stillwater (for a meet with Oklahoma State), some of those people were asking me, 'Well, what are you going to do?' And I said, 'What are you going to do?' And they think, 'Yeah, you're right. What are we going to do?'"

big 12 brethren

Whatever happens, it won't be a Self-imposed divorce — the disassociation Kansas basketball coach Bill Self has decreed regarding Mizzou. The schools that have wrestled under the Big 12 flag almost certainly will continue to wrestle each other, regardless of conference affiliations.

From Smith's standpoint, what happens when the university raises the SEC flag ultimately is all good. The move promises to bring more money and more prestige. The "Mizzou brand" will spread deeper south, opening doors to the rich recruiting fields of Florida. Wrestling-barren or not, the SEC is a two-point reversal for Smith's program.

"It's obviously the best thing for our university," Smith said. "I think (SEC) is the best football conference in America, there's no doubt about it. I'd be dumb to say, 'Oh, don't do that.' It has never had a conference member leave. It's bringing in the most money. It's next television contract is going to be through the roof, so that's all good for us. That has a trickle-down affect.

"We've had great support from fans, great support from boosters. I'm not too concerned. I just wanted to make sure (the athletics department) would help me out in getting to the right place and (athletics director) Mike Alden and (associate AD) Sarah Reesman have been great."

mma lends a hand

Missouri wrestling now sells itself in high school living rooms. That will be evident at Scottrade, where the Tigers are a legitimate threat to win their first national championship. And in terms of awareness, the program is getting plenty of help from some of its former stars, albeit not help Smith anticipated.

By quirk, Missouri has become a college launching pad for postgraduate work in Mixed Martial Arts fighting. Former Missouri standouts Ben Askren, Tyron Woodley, Tyler Perry and Michael Chandler are some of MMA's most dynamic prospects. Mark Ellis, Missouri's 2009 NCAA Division I heavyweight champion, and 2004 grad J. P. Reese also are mixing it up in professional martial arts.

"I had nothing to do with that," Smith said. "I really don't even like it. But it's become popular with kids. On any given night you can find at least two TV stations with it on. Those guys like to come back here and train with our guys. They're former All-Americans and national champs, and they wrestle. It keeps them involved somewhat in the sport, and (MMA) is a way they can actually make money in it."

getting their glory

Smith and his coaches run a series of successful "Tiger Style" wrestling camps in the summer, including one in Georgia. And if wrestling doesn't generate revenue, it is a self-sufficient sport, supported by alumni, boosters and fundraisers.

Wrestling is the only team that has its own weight room at Missouri, part of a \$400,000 expenditure to renovate Hearnes Center into Wrestling Central.

With all 10 of its starters competing for national titles, and more than 19,000 in the seats at Scottrade, the Tigers — including Kyle Bradley (St. Peters) and Drake Houdashelt (O'Fallon, Mo.) — will cop some "glory" this week. Moreover, only one of the 10 qualifiers is a senior (Dorian Henderson). MU wrestling might be disenfranchised, but it is not the least bit diluted. In a free-agent market of collegiate wrestling, it is sure to find a happy home.

"It doesn't really impact us," Waters said. "Our athletic department is behind us 100 percent. We're going to figure out where we're going to be. The head coaches aren't going to let a program like Missouri fall to the curb."

SEC, FCC, BBC ... it doesn't really matter right now to Houdashelt, a 157-pound red-shirt freshman who is 28-5. He's confident MU will land somewhere on top.

"It doesn't really bother me," he said. "There is a lot of tradition that is gone now and rivalries and stuff, but it's still going to be there. I guess you start over new and make new traditions now."

The organizational umbrella is to be determined. But you can count on two things from Smith's Missouri wrestlers: there will be guts ... and there will be glory.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Letters: MU needs new stadium

Posted: Sunday, March 11, 2012 12:00 am | [No Comments Posted](#)

MU needs a new stadium

Our main state school has taken the leap to the Southeastern Conference and that is a good place to be. Missouri should be proud to be a part of this top-notch athletics conference and the No. 1 football league in the country.

Mizzou alums should take pride in the fact that the University of Missouri is viewed as being a good academic school and an upgrade to many fine institutions currently in the league.

I am very proud of my school. But, after visiting many college stadiums in my 46 years, I must admit that our stadium has lived its life. Quite honestly, it is kind of embarrassing that Mizzou does not play in a better building. If you travel around the country one thing is clear ... Mizzou needs a new stadium to compete in the big leagues. Geez, even Baylor is building a new building!

Missouri has a beautiful campus and many facility upgrades, but the stadium is past its prime. Big-time football is not played in front of lawn seats, rock M's and bleacher benches. It is time for Missouri to polish up its signature state school and get with the big league it is joining.

Steve Einspanier • Webster Groves