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MU's nuclear science institute to be split

By Janese Silvey

Monday, March 12, 2012

Four longtime University of Missouri professors were blindsided this morning when administrators told them their department is dissolving as of Thursday.

The Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute will be split off into an academic program guided by a yet-to-be-named director under the Graduate School and into a nuclear science research center under MU's Office of Research. The transition is expected to be complete by July 1.

The decision, made without input from the faculty, requires the four professors to find new academic homes in two years.

Graduate Dean George Justice said one reason for the change is because the Graduate School is not set up to oversee faculty issues such as tenure and promotion. The nuclear engineering program faculty moved under the Graduate School in 2002, in part because of rifts with the College of Engineering.

Even if the engineering school won't take them back, Justice expects all four professors to have no problem finding new departments to join. He also said he doesn't think the changes will affect students, but faculty members disagree.

"Anybody who believes you can just yank the faculty and their research funding apart and say that's not going to affect students ... is hopelessly naïve," Professor Bob Tompson said.

The 55 students now enrolled are supported with grants and contracts that could be affected if the program ceases to exist, said Sudarshan Loyalka, a curators' professor of nuclear engineering.

The change was partly based on a 2010 report from an outside group of consultants. The review group praised the institute for conducting research and serving students well but warned that the current model wasn't sustainable because of limited resources.

The consulting group also said others on campus with expertise in nuclear engineering weren't willing to work with NSEI because of perceived controversies.

"There appears to be considerable personal bitterness between NSEI current faculty and other units and individuals on campus," the authors wrote.

But the announcement also comes after a string of successes. In 2007, the institute ranked No. 1 for faculty productivity among top research universities in a study published in the Chronicle of Higher Education. A year later, Mark Prelas, a professor with NSEI, was named Missouri Outstanding Citizen of the Year by the Missouri House of Representatives for his research. And this month, Prelas and Tushar Ghosh, another NSEI faculty member, received a textbook excellence award.

The department also has had longtime issues with administrators. In 2008, NSEI professors complained when administrators blocked the institute from applying for a grant the College of Engineering was allowed to seek.

And Loyalka has been a critic of the process being used to try to fire Greg Engel, an associate engineering professor. Loyalka last week pitched a resolution to the MU Faculty Council to denounce a recent administrative decision.

"We had a sense they might be up to something — we've had that sense multiple times," Tompson said. "They decided, I think, this was their time to go ahead and do to us what they wanted to do to us."

MU Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute professors affected by tenure changes

By Breanna Dumbacher

March 12, 2012 | 9:37 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The tenure home of four MU professors will be changing.

According to several reports from university administrators, the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute will split Thursday to become a nuclear science academic program and a research program under the MU Office of Research.

The four professors who were part of the graduate school program will have to choose another department in which to hold tenure and put through grant proposals. The change is expected to be finalized July 1.

The motive

It is unusual for professors to be housed in a graduate school program and not have an affiliation with a specific department.

George Justice, dean of the graduate school, said the school doesn't have the structure to maintain tenured positions and support for faculty research because that is not its purpose.

"We're changing the focus to be able to do what graduate schools do," he said.

Justice said that when the institute was created its goal was to create an interdisciplinary program that would grow and include professors from various departments. This is still the goal of the nuclear science academic program that will remain associated with the graduate school.

The effects

With the restructuring of the graduate school, four nuclear engineering professors will have to find departments to become a part of. Justice said these faculty members are professors Sudarshan Loyalka, Mark Prelas, Tushar Ghosh and Robert Tompson.

Justice said the four faculty members will have to approach faculty, department chairs and deans of the colleges they seek to join and ask for a position in the department. They have two years to make this switch, and Justice said he has offered to help them.

"I am still their dean until they find new homes," he said.

Justice said neither the faculty members' jobs nor the academic programs offered are at risk of disappearing.

For current students, Justice said, the program will stay the same, but future students could see a change if the college of engineering decides to offer a nuclear engineering program that is more specific than the nuclear science program offered through the graduate school.

Potentially, the program is seeking to involve faculty from the colleges of medicine, engineering and arts and science, as well as any others than are interested.

Not all on the same page

Although Justice sees the restructuring of the program as a way to expand its reach, not everyone is as optimistic. Justice said several faculty members have told him they're not as confident in the plan.

Ghosh said in an email that the changes weren't necessary and put some of the institute's past successes at risk. He cited the rankings by American Analytics, a company that analyzes doctoral program productivity, as evidence of the program's merits. The institute was ranked No. 1 in 2007 and No. 3 in 2010, he said.

"We have proven ourselves, both individually and collectively, what we can do in terms of productivity, national recognition for our program and for the campus," Ghosh said.

Ghosh said he is less worried about his own ability to find a new department than he is about the success of the program after this change.

"The changes only communicate lack of support to Nuclear Science and Engineering research and education in this campus by this administration," he said.

"To be successful in getting grants, the reputation of the program matters a lot. This will certainly will provide a negative perception of the campus and is bound to affect our ability to get grants."

Gosh also said the medical physics program received accreditation in 2010, and the restructuring is putting that accomplishment in jeopardy.

Prelas said he is unsure about the changes because he hasn't studied the documents well enough yet, but hopes that even with the changes the program can continue to improve.

"We are currently rated No. 3 by academic analytics," Prelas said. "I will support anything that will get us to No. 1. But I don't believe that this plan will."

A surprise or a long time coming?

When the institute was created in 2002, it was an experimental program that would be reviewed later by an external review committee.

In November 2002, a letter written by then-Chancellor Richard Wallace stated that, if there was a negative administrative review, the institute could be shut down and tenured faculty would be reassigned to other academic units.

In 2010 the external review committee published a report citing many of the strengths discussed by Ghosh but stating concern that the program had not become as campus-wide as originally intended in 2002.

Ghosh, however, said he's upset that there was not further communication before the decision was made to restructure the program. He said he did not know this change was going to occur until it was announced.

"We are blindsided," Ghosh said. "No input was sought. Also, I could not find any rationale for doing this in the middle of the semester without consultation with faculty."

In other news:

- On Thursday, the Truman School of Public Affairs will become its own college and will award tenure and grants, as well as have its own dean. The goal is to use its new status to increase its scope and effects in both the campus and national community, according to a letter from the provost.



Public affairs school gets upgrade

By Janese Silvey

Monday, March 12, 2012

The Truman School of Public Affairs will become its own college starting Thursday, the University of Missouri announced today.

The school has been under the Graduate School since 2000. Graduate Dean George Justice said splitting it off will allow the Truman school to expand.

It's a major step for an academic discipline that has undergone several changes in its 40-year history at MU, said Bart Wechsler, the director who becomes the school's dean in a few days. For a long time, it was a department within the College of Business with five faculty members, he said.

When it moved to the Graduate School, "the idea was to try to, over time, build capacity and get to the point we would be able to achieve far greater impact," Wechsler said. "In some ways, what we're doing now is taking all of that to the next level, vision and capacity."

The Truman school, which has 175 master's-level students and 12 seeking doctoral degrees, attracts students from a range of disciplines. Mostly, students come with bachelor's degrees in political science, but some attach public affairs onto degrees in less obvious fields, such as art history, to align interests with a passion for public service, Wechsler said.

That has required the school to reach out to faculty members from all over campus who share appointments with the Truman school or simply teach a class or two to help out.

"What this new structure will allow is for us to become even more eclectic and reach out and join with more people working on these important policy issues," Wechsler said.

Wechsler said preliminary ideas include the creation of an undergraduate public affairs program.

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

with D.C. news from LegalTimes

Yale remains on top of U.S. News rankings, while Stanford passes Harvard

Yale Law School retained its hold at the top of *U.S. News & World Report's* annual law school rankings, which the magazine released on March 13.

There were a few shakeups among the top 10 this year — most notably, Stanford Law School overtook Harvard Law School for the No. 2 spot, pushing Harvard to No. 3.

The University of California, Berkeley School of Law and the University of Virginia School of Law — tied at No. 9 last year — were tied again, at No. 7. Those showings pushed the University of Michigan Law School to No. 10, down from No. 7 last year.

The format of this year's list was the same as during 2011: 145 schools received numerical rankings and another 49 were ranked alphabetically in what *U.S. News* has dubbed the second tier. This format debuted last year, when the publication expanded its numerical rankings and eliminated the bottom two tiers of unranked schools.

Changes were relatively small among the top 20 schools, but the middle and bottom of the numerical rankings saw some dramatic changes.

The biggest jump was by the University of Missouri School of Law — a 28-position climb from No. 107 in 2011 to No. 79. The *U.S. News* ranking had been a source of handwringing at the Columbia, Mo., school, which had fallen from No. 65 since 2009.

Arizona State University Sandra Day O' Connor College of Law picked up 14 spots, to land at No. 26, while the University of Washington School of Law gained 10 spots, to crack into the top 20.

The largest drop was by the University of Mississippi School of Law, which went from No. 107 last year to No. 135. The University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law dropped by 22 spots to No. 135, while Pace Law School fell by 25 spots, to No. 142.

It was not a good year for two law schools caught up in admissions scandals. For the second year in a row, Villanova University School of Law plummeted 17 spots, to rank No. 101. The University of Illinois College of Law went from No. 23 last year to No. 35. Both schools admitted that they'd inflated the

median Law School Admission Test scores and undergraduate grade-point averages of incoming students.

The rankings are based on selectivity, including LSAT scores and undergraduate GPAs, peer reviews of quality, placement success and faculty resources.

Several law schools climbed out of the unranked second tier and received numerical rankings this year, including the University of Toledo College of Law, Suffolk University Law School and the University of North Dakota School of Law.

Conversely, a number of schools numerically ranked last year fell into the unranked second tier, including Campbell University Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law, Ohio Northern University Pettit College of Law and the University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. Several law schools newly accredited by the American Bar Association landed in the unranked second tier.

The Drexel University Earle Mack School of Law was the only newly accredited school to receive a numerical rank — No. 119.

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Editorial: Student curator needs voting power

Last week three bills to appoint a student curator with voting power to the UM System Board of Curators failed in the House.

One remaining active bill in the Senate would require the Board of Curators to appoint a graduate or professional student to the board by 2013. Given the three failed bills in the House, it doesn't seem likely. This needs to change. This bill is an opportunity to give students throughout the system a representative voice like we've never had in the past.

The student curator is a position to which the governor appoints a qualified student. The student curator serves as a representative to the board, which is in charge of all matters involving the university system. Having that student voice gives us a say in important issues that affect our collegiate experience. Yet without a vote, our voice is not nearly as strong as it should be. Having full voting rights for the student curator would make each statement on our behalf legitimate and prominent on the official voting records. Instead of offering advice that the eight-member board can disregard, a student curator with voting rights can directly support or oppose board initiatives. Even if the student curator is outnumbered, that one vote will serve as an unflinching reminder of what UM System students want and need and whether the board has served those wants and needs.

What group of people feels the consequences of the board's actions more than we, the students? Our input is necessary in making decisions for the betterment of the entire university.

Perhaps state officials are hesitant to pass any bill giving a student curator voting power because they think our representative will be unprofessional and unwilling to listen to opposing viewpoints. But it's not as if the student curator will be some Joe Schmoe freshman from Schurz Hall. The student curator will be a qualified, knowledgeable graduate or professional student who must be approved and appointed by the governor.

In any case, it is incumbent on the student curator to conduct him or herself in a manner befitting a representative of more than 73,000 students, and we hope current student curator Amy Johnson, of UM-Kansas City, will do so. A student curator who gives any doubt as to his or her professionalism cripples our standing with the board and kills our representative strength within it.

Even though there will be a consistent turnover rate within the student curator position due to that student graduating, the presence of a student curator will keep the Board of Curators updated on the viewpoints of a student population with a turnover of the same rate.

We support and appreciate the Associated Students of the University of Missouri who have been pushing this issue for a long time now, and we think this is an important initiative MSA should lend its weight to, as well. Each of us students must act, too.

Call your state senators and make it known that the most important constituents of the UM System Board of Curators, the students, demand that we be given a voice in matters that directly affect us.

This is not something to disregard as a nice afterthought for the future: if the bill is approved, it will take effect Aug. 28 of this year, meaning we will be able to seize the opportunity for increased representation and all the benefits that come with it now. Even if it passes in the Senate, we must make our support of the bill known to Gov. Nixon, to avoid a veto like Sen. Blunt's in 2008.

The Board of Curators is outdated. Approximately half of all U.S. public colleges and universities had at least one student as a voting member of their board as of 2010, according to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

It's time we have our say.

Backup Missouri QB Ashton Glaser arrested for unpaid traffic tickets

By The Associated Press

March 12, 2012 | 3:05 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Missouri backup quarterback Ashton Glaser has been arrested in Columbia on Laclede County warrants issued after he failed to show up in court for a speeding ticket.

Columbia police say Glaser was punched in the face early Sunday by an unidentified man who answered the door when Glaser sought out a female neighbor.

Witnesses called police, but only the 21-year-old Glaser was arrested after officers discovered the outstanding warrants.

Glaser was charged in a November 2011 traffic stop in Laclede County with speeding and not having a valid driver's license. The warrants were issued after he failed to appear in court in January and February.

Glaser is listed as the Tigers' third-string quarterback on spring football depth charts.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Southern Poverty Law Center identifies 26 hate groups in Missouri

By Ben Nadler

March 12, 2012 | 12:04 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The number of hate groups active in America grew to 1,018 in 2011, up from 1,002 the year before, according to a report issued by the Southern Poverty Law Center on Thursday.

The Southern Poverty Law Center attributes the increase largely to three major factors: the poor economy, the continued growth of the Hispanic population and the prospect of America re-electing a black president.

The report has identified 26 hate groups currently active in Missouri. Sixteen states have more hate groups than Missouri. California has the most, with 84 active groups, followed by Georgia with 65. Michigan and Arkansas also have 26 active hate groups.

Boone County has no active hate groups, according to the report.

The Southern Poverty Law Center also tracks “hate incidents” that range from racist graffiti to assault and murder. Missouri had four of these incidents in 2011, the most serious of which included an arson in Independence. **Columbia was the location of one of these incidents, when an MU student spray-painted racist graffiti outside of Hatch Hall on Feb. 12, 2011. Benjamin Elliott was charged with the crime.**

The Southern Poverty Law Center has fought hate groups since its formation in 1971 in Montgomery, Ala. The organization created a program called Klanwatch in 1981 that began to monitor Ku Klux Klan groups across the nation. In 1998 the program was renamed the Intelligence Project and was expanded to monitor all active hate groups in America.