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GUEST COMMENTARY: Higher education linked to longer, healthier lives

By Tim Wolfe

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Since becoming University of Missouri System President, I have been traveling the state far and wide touting the advantages of higher education, offering examples such as a more informed citizenry, higher income and more engagement in society.

Let me give you one more: an overall healthier, longer life.

As an avid runner myself, I was struck by a recent study by the Centers for Disease Control that linked higher education to a longer life. As reported in USA Today, people with a bachelor's degree or higher live about nine years longer than those who don't graduate from high school. This is a trend that has continued throughout the past several decades, experts say, and it manifests itself in the more than three times higher smoking rates among those without a college degree and the more than double obesity rates in children of parents without a college degree. Those without a college degree also have higher cholesterol levels and more prevalence of diabetes.

To me, all of this boils down to the No. 1 advantage of higher education: improved quality of life.

Whether it is because those with a higher education are more aware of healthier choices, more predominantly choose healthier behaviors, or they have better access to health care, it is definitely clear that education makes a positive impact on our personal health and wellness, which, of course, ultimately affects our health care costs as a society and helps keep Missouri an affordable place to live.

I wish I could say that Missourians were bucking these statistics, but unfortunately that's not the case. In fact, we Missourians have higher-than-average rates of chronic diseases like the ones mentioned above, which makes me wonder even more: Are these statistics related to the

fact that Missouri as a state hasn't placed great value on higher education as evidenced by near-bottom per capita funding?

As the product of higher education myself — the president of the premiere public, research land-grant university in the state — and the father of two soon-to-be college-bound students, I can't stress enough how valuable education is. And I am extremely concerned that there are those in our state who just don't get it.

So, I'll continue to travel the state touting the advantages of higher education. And we'll continue to encourage people to visit our website to learn more about who we are, what we do and the difference we make.

But lest anyone doubt (or not hear) my message, let me be clear: Higher education is a game-changer. It transforms society. It advances our state. It pays dividends to individuals. And it is related to longer, healthier lives. Who needs more reasons than that?

Tim Wolfe is the president of the UM System. Questions? Contact Opinion editor Elizabeth Conner.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Facebook page rallies support for UM Press

A Facebook page called Save the University of Missouri Press is gathering supporters with some 390 "likes" on Tuesday.

The university announced Thursday it would close the 54-year-old press, which has published more than 2,000 books through the years.

On Tuesday, popular librarian Nancy Pearl of Seattle posted on the Facebook page:

As a book lover, I am saddened by this decision - especially in light of the huge disparity between what the relatively paltry amount that University of Missouri Press needs to continue operations in comparison to the huge amount of money that goes to support the University's major sports teams. Something's screwy in our values, here.

Over the holiday weekend, Kris Kleindienst of Left Bank Books in St. Louis posted a letter she had written to university system President Tim Wolfe. It says in part:

I was shocked to learn that Univ. of Missouri Press would be shutting down. They have a distinguished list of titles. I know that much is changing in scholarly publishing but one thing doesn't change: the need for public access to well-researched, book-length treatments of important historical/scientific/biographical subjects that won't be touched by commercial publishers. And U.MO's backlist of books on regional and local subjects has long been a core part of our bookstore's regional section.

Publishers Weekly's online site says the men behind the Facebook page are "Bruce Joshua Miller, a commission publisher's rep in Chicago and Ned Stuckey-French, an English literature professor at Florida State University, are leading the charge in drumming up public opposition to the University of Missouri's announcement Thursday that it will no longer subsidize the University of Missouri Press with a \$400,000 annual allocation."

Phone App That Predicts Health Risk Using A Picture Of Your Tongue

For over 5,000 years, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has claimed to be able to predict the state of your inner health (or 'zheng') simply by looking at your tongue.

The traditional method bases its results on the flow and balance of positive and negative energies in the body.

However, in the modern world (and with technology on our side) gadget geeks have come up with a contemporary way to check our health using the power of the tongue... by creating a smartphone app that does it all for us.

Combining ancient practices with modern medicine and advanced mobile technology researchers from the University of Missouri are developing computer software that enables users to take a snap of their tongue and have it analysed for any health issues.

"Knowing your zheng classification can serve as a pre-screening tool and help with preventive medicine," said Dong Xu, the co-author of the latest study, reports *Medical Daily*.

The phone app aims to analyse the tongue's colour, where it gets placed into a 'hot' or 'cold' category, which then pinpoints any possible underlying health conditions.

"Hot and cold zheng doesn't refer directly to body temperature. Rather, it refers to a suite of symptoms associated with the state of the body as a whole," adds Xu.

So far, researchers have tested the app on 263 gastritis patients and 48 healthy people.

"As we continue to work on the software we hope to improve its ability. Eventually everyone will be able to use this tool at home using webcams or smartphone applications. That will allow them to monitor their zheng and get an early warning about possible ailments," adds co-author of the study, Ye Duan.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mizzou senses more harmony in the SEC

DESTIN, Fla. • A year ago this week, with the Big 12 supposedly galvanized by the chaos of the year before, Mizzou athletics director Mike Alden emerged from league meetings in Kansas City thinking, "We're set, we're solid."

Within weeks, though, the Big 12 was destabilized again when fallout from the Longhorn Network and other issues with Texas compelled Texas A&M to nuzzle up to the Southeastern Conference.

Weeks after that, MU, too, was fixing its gaze on the SEC, which announced Mizzou's admission on Nov. 6.

Almost since then, Alden said Tuesday, "It's really been a blur."

But as he flew Monday evening into Florida for SEC spring meetings, all was coming more into focus.

"You were much more in the moment," he said.

That's in no small part because with this event, becoming part of the SEC is less vaguely on the horizon than it is essentially here.

While MU doesn't officially become a member until July 1 and won't be partaking of SEC revenue sharing until next spring, for most intents and purposes the new era is commencing with this occasion.

When any league actions are announced Friday, after all, they will reflect votes of the member presidents and chancellors — including Mizzou chancellor Brady Deaton — largely based on recommendations resolved by the league's athletics directors, including Alden.

Although Alden suggested Mizzou will be deferential as it acclimates to its new environment, he also expected that MU's opinion would continue to be solicited and valued as part of a harmonious, forward-thinking and stable operation.

And even as he specifically expressed gratitude to the Big 12 for its role in Mizzou's sweeping overall program improvements in the last decade, it was evident that the SEC culture already has represented a gratifying change for Alden.

"In my opinion, it comes from (Commissioner) Mike Slive; I think he's one of the great leaders in college sport, maybe all of sport," said Alden, further noting that Mizzou and A&M are just

the third and fourth additions to the SEC since it was founded in 1932. "And nobody's leaving. Nobody's looking to. ...

"What I love about it is these schools, they don't talk about just living in the moment. They talk about what's good for the league a decade from now, 20 years from now, 30 years from now.

"And I'm not used to that. We're used to being in reactive mode vs. being in proactive mode. And I don't say that negatively. That's a fact."

What Alden called SEC "collegiality" has stood out in meetings in which Florida, Alabama or Georgia, among others, repeatedly say, in essence, "It's not about us. This is about what's good for the league. And if it means I'm going to take a hit ... I'm prepared to be able to do that because it's going to be good" for the league.

More specifically, he noted cooperative efforts from league schools.

Next week, for example, Mizzou and Texas A&M representatives will appear together in Atlanta for what Alden called "a celebration" of their new membership in the SEC.

Last week, Arkansas athletics director Jeff Long and several members of his staff attended a Mizzou athletics retreat, Alden said, 'sharing best practices.'

As for the SEC's proactive mode, this week that includes discussion about renegotiation of its media rights contracts.

The very topic left Alden almost blushing as if he'd been dealt a poker hand he couldn't quite suppress, perhaps especially so as he prepares to seek Board of Curator approval in late June for a facilities master plan upgrade.

"I'd say that it's pretty encouraging," he said, smiling and adding, "We're appreciative of our commissioner and his leadership."

The SEC is in the fourth year of a groundbreaking 15-year deal that pays the conference an average of \$150 million a year but has provisions for renegotiation along the way.

Any new deals, including a potential SEC network, aren't necessarily going to be resolved immediately but evidently are in the works.

More timely matters for the week include a more permanent football scheduling format, which almost certainly will feature Mizzou playing Arkansas in an annual cross-divisional rivalry game.

Also to be clarified is how the basketball schedule will work.

Alden said he believes an 18-game template "is pretty much there," but just how it will be constructed still may be subject to some deliberation.

Looming largest for college athletics overall, of course, is the SEC's stance on the future of how college football resolves its champion. It has considerable clout given that the last six national champions have been SEC schools.

The Bowl Championship Series model is on the verge of being terminated in favor of some form of a four-team playoff.

"Is that something that's going to continue to be called 'the BCS?'" Alden said. "I don't know, (and) that to me is exciting."

Just like being part of the SEC is, starting ... now.



Brookside owners pledge quick recovery after fire

By Janese Silvey

What was supposed to be a swanky new apartment complex is now a pile of bricks, wood and busted windows after a fire early Sunday destroyed most of Brookside on College at Walnut Street and College Avenue.

The blaze is estimated to have caused at least \$7 million in damage, although that's an early estimate and does not take into consideration indirect costs, said Columbia fire Battalion Chief Steve Sapp.

All 73 apartments at the complex, which was set to open this fall, had been rented.

The investigation is ongoing, Battalion Chief James Weaver said this morning.

Sapp on Sunday said there was no reason to suspect arson, but the fire department has not ruled out anything.

Fire crews received the call at 5:09 a.m. Sunday, Sapp said, and by the time crews arrived, the buildings, totaling 14,500 square feet, were engulfed in flames as high as 100 feet.

Parts of the complex are still standing. A few construction crew members were assessing the damage this morning as pedestrians and motorists gawked at the destruction.

According to Brookside's Facebook page, owners Jon and Nathan Odle estimate that 40 percent of the units will be ready on or shortly after the start of school in August, with the remainder ready for occupancy by mid-October.

The Odles are allowing residents to terminate their leases. Stephens College also is offering temporary housing in Hillcrest Hall and apartments on the east side of campus off Broadway.

The University of Missouri's Wellness Resource Center is prepared to help students find alternative housing, as well.

MU senior Kathryn Jankowski, who had secured an apartment at Brookside on College in November, said she and her roommates are waiting to see if their unit is one of those that can be salvaged by the start of school. "If we could stay there, I think we would want to take that option," she said.

Student housing is competitive, and the four female friends had snagged an apartment next to four of their male pals.

"Our first thought was if we're put in temporary housing, our chances of staying together were pretty slim," Jankowski said. "We're upset. We were so excited about it. We did everything right and were planning ahead. Brookside did everything right. And now this disaster put a kink in everyone's plans."

Temperatures from the fire rose to as high as 1,500 degrees and melted the College and Walnut traffic lights, which have been replaced. Windows were broken at Roblee Hall and Pillsbury Hall on the Stephens campus.

Eddie Linzie lives in an apartment complex on the other side of Walnut, a building recently purchased by the Odles. A neighbor woke him at about 4:40 a.m. telling him to evacuate.

"I looked out the window, and it looked like a sunset," he said. "It was bright orange."

The fire appears to have started in the lobby area on the end closest to the intersection of College and Walnut, Sapp said. Flames easily traveled through the breezeways, catching other parts of the building on fire.

Crews used at least a million gallons of water to extinguish the fire, Sapp said.

The apartment project has been the subject of news reports recently regarding the Odles' pending rezoning request for the second 120-apartment phase of the development, which is on the opposite side of Walnut, as well as neighbors' concerns about the traffic and congestion the apartments might bring to the area.

Last week, the city announced it had been working with the Odles on a plan in which funding from the developers would be used to help improve bus service in the downtown and campus areas.

The Odles did not respond to calls seeking comment.