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Focus for university press turns to mending fences

By Janese Silvey

Now that they've agreed to keep the doors of the University of Missouri Press open, administrators are going to have to figure out how to fund the operation while it recovers from lost time, how to acquire manuscripts with a staff shortage and how to keep current authors from fighting for their book rights back.

"There's no magic wand that's going to suddenly erase the past," former MU Chancellor Richard Wallace said. "Fences need to be mended. We're going to work hard to do that, with authors being up there very, very high."

Wallace is leading a team charged with transitioning the press from the UM System to the MU campus. Yesterday, administrators scrapped plans for a new type of press and said the current press would remain committed to scholarly peer-reviewed books, essentially reversing the May decision to phase it out.

The press is in production of its fall list. But employees spent the summer preparing to shut down the operation rather than working on future catalogs. Many authors who were on the spring 2013 list have taken their manuscripts elsewhere, and nothing has been acquired for a fall 2013 catalog. Acquisitions Editor John Brenner has accepted another job, and Editor-in-Chief Clair Willcox was laid off last month, leaving the press with one editor.

That means the UM Press is not going to generate normal revenue in the coming year and likely will require funding from the university that will exceed its previous subsidy of \$400,000. Financial details are being worked out, MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said.

"We need to pay the bills, whatever they're going to be," Wallace said.

If authors do get rights to their books back, it also would decrease the roughly \$700,000 in revenue generated from the backlist. Ned Stuckey-French, a Florida State University faculty member and co-organizer of a Save the UM Press Coalition, said he has heard from a dozen or so authors who plan to continue to pursue their book rights unless Willcox is reinstated.

An advisory committee is expected to help recruit a new editor-in-chief who will double as a faculty member. Speer Morgan, an MU English professor who was tapped last month to lead the

now-defunct new press model, will have a role in the UM Press, although his title has not been determined.

Willcox said he doubts Morgan or administrators would welcome him back, especially since he's spoken up against the previous plans for that new model.

Bruce Joshua Miller, a Chicago-based book representative and co-organizer of the opposition, said, though, that Willcox might be the only person who could successfully repair the press's reputation after the summer-long controversy.

Wallace is aware of the damage and said the next step is to rebuild relationships with authors.

"The message would be we are going to have a high-quality academic university press," he said. "The quality of that press has grown, and it is what it is because of those authors. That is the reputation and quality of the press. Stay with us. Please stay with us. We need you."

theman eater

UM System announces transition of press to MU

By Jack Howland

University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor Brady Deaton announced Tuesday that the UM System is shifting responsibility for the UM Press to MU.

The announcement came in a news release from the MU News Bureau.

An advisory committee will be appointed to offer advice and counsel on the undertaking, according to the release. No current UM Press staff will lose their jobs.

This announcement marks an important step in integrating the UM Press into the academic and research missions of the university, Wolfe said in the release.

"A viable, fully functioning Press is essential to a major AAU university," Deaton said in the release.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the university wants to keep moving in the right direction when it comes to the press.

"We are hoping to move aggressively to maintain a strong academic press," Basi said. "It's a little too early to give out any specific reaction, but we know we want to maintain a strong academic press."

The next step in transitioning the UM Press to campus will be to organize an advisory committee, Basi said.

The committee will be made up of representatives from the four UM System campuses, student scholars, experts in scholarly publishing who work outside the university, a representative from the current press committee and scholarly authors.

The committee will provide advice and counsel on the press as it is transferred to MU, the release stated.

"(The advisory committee) is going to work with the press transition team, and that's led by chancellor emeritus Richard Wallace and assistant vice president Deborah Noble-Triplett to ensure high quality service for University of Missouri Press, customers and authors," Basi said.

Former UM Press managing editor Jane Lago, who parted in 2008, said she thinks the UM Press issue is long from solved.

"I don't think all is well (with the UM Press)," Lago said. "Many unhappy authors are conjecturing that the sole purpose of this announcement was to undercut the grounds of their lawsuits, which said that the entity they were contracting no longer exists."

Lago said it is suspicious that former UM Press editor-in-chief Clair Willcox was fired on the grounds that the press was disbanding, and that he has remained fired even after the announcement that it was not. She said the company is currently doing a national search for a new editor-in-chief. According to her, it doesn't make sense to replace Willcox.

"There's something fishy going on," Lago said.

Lago, who worked at the UM Press for 33 years, said if they want to rectify the problems they need to hire a permanent director who can address a vision of what the press should be. She said the current plan can lead to a successful academic press, but she has her doubts.

"I believe it can happen," Lago said. "I'm not optimistic that it will happen but I certainly hope it can happen."

According to the news release, MU is hopeful about the future of the press.

"Going forward, we envision that the Press will publish not less--but more--scholarly work," Deaton said in the release.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mizzou will invest \$2.5 million in more online degrees

BY TIM BARKER • tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350

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The University of Missouri-Columbia said this week that it will invest \$2.5 million to spur the growth of its online degree offerings. And if things go well, the school will match that investment next year.

The school offers 45 degrees — most of them master's level — that can be completed online. Officials want to add as many as 15 more by 2014.

Mizzou plans to award the \$2.5 million through a series of grants — worth a maximum of \$250,000 — to campus departments to pay for any start-up costs related to the proposed degrees, said Jim Spain, the interim vice provost for e-learning.

Until those applications are evaluated, he said, there's no way to know which new degrees will be offered in the online format.

"We're really waiting to see what programs have interest," Spain said.

The move follows several years' worth of growth in online enrollment. Last year, 9,150 students enrolled in online courses. That's more than double the 4,000 students who enrolled in 2005, he said.

Part of that growth is attributed to the fact that the school continues to increase its portfolio of online courses, creating more options for students to take part in distance learning. But also, he said, students are growing more comfortable with the idea of online classes. So too are the professors who teach those classes.

"As they become more familiar and confident with student outcomes, we are seeing more faculty express interest," Spain said.

While the school is looking to boost its online presence, Spain said the faculty would retain the same control over subject matter and content as they did over their traditional classrooms.

"All we are trying to do is invest in the programs they are interested in delivering in this online format," Spain said.

MU's 6-year graduation rate hits record high in 2012

By Olivia Hancock

August 29, 2012 | 4:37 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – The MU 6-year graduation rate reached an all-time high of 70.7 percent in 2012.

The 6-year rate has been on the rise for years, said Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies. Twenty years ago, in 1992, the comparable rate was 59.8 percent.

"The graduation rates fluctuate, but there has been a very steady improvement over the last 20 years," Spain said.

Ann Korschgen, vice provost for enrollment management, said the record graduation rates can be attributed to several factors.

"We attract great students," she said. "Also, administrators and faculty care about student success, and MU provides excellent academic advising services."

Spain credited MU programs such as Summer Welcome and Freshman Interest Groups.

"Student Affairs has expanded and strengthened programs that help students get connected and involved on campus," he said.

Four-year graduation rates at MU are on the rise as well. The 2011 4-year graduation rate was 46.9 percent, in comparison to 1997's rate of 28.5 percent.

Although 4-year rates are not as high as 6-year rates, there are many reasons a student might not graduate in four years. Korschgen said that taking fewer than 15 credit hours per semester, internships, study abroad and work can all contribute to a later graduation.

MU has started programs to help students graduate and succeed. The Commission for Student Success was created to give a wide range of perspectives on student services, Spain

said. He also said that an early alert system for struggling students and an assessment program for academic advising are in the works.

Spain said the improving graduation rate can be attributed not just to the effectiveness of MU's efforts to ensure student success, but to the students as well.

"Improving student success as measured by graduation rate demonstrates that MU's students are capable and motivated," he said.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.

New cancer drug has 10x the punch

Medicinal chemists have made an existing cancer drug ten times more potent by adding a special structure to it.

“Over the past decade, we have seen an increasing interest in using carboranes in drug design,” says Mark W. Lee Jr., assistant professor of chemistry at the University of Missouri. “Carboranes are clusters of three elements—boron, carbon and hydrogen. Carboranes don’t fight cancer directly, but they aid in the ability of a drug to bind more tightly to its target, creating a more potent mechanism for destroying the cancer cells.”

For the study published in the *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry*, Lee and colleagues used carboranes to build new drugs designed to shut off a cancer cell’s energy production, which is vital for its survival.

All cells produce energy through complex, multi-step processes. The key to an effective drug is targeting the process that cancer cells depend on more than healthy cells. By increasing the binding strength of a drug, a smaller dose is required, minimizing side effects and increasing the effectiveness of the therapy. With carboranes, Lee found that the drug is able to bind 10 times more powerfully.

“The reason why these drugs bind stronger to their target is because carboranes exploit a unique and very strong form of hydrogen bonding, the strongest form of interactions for drugs,” Lee says.

The discovery also will lead to further uses for the drug.

“Too often, after radiation or chemotherapy, cancer cells repair themselves and reinvade the body,” Lee says. “This drug not only selectively shuts off the energy production for the cancer cells, but it also inhibits the processes that allow those cancer cells to repair themselves.

“When we tested our carborane-based drugs, we found that they were unimaginably potent. So far, we have tested this on breast, lung, and colon cancer, all with exceptional results.”

According to Lee, this is the first study to show systematically how carboranes can improve the activity of a drug. He believes the discovery will open additional possibilities of improving drugs that are used to treat other diseases, not just cancer.

“The end result is that these new drugs could be many thousands of times more potent than the drugs that are used in the clinics today.”

While it will be several years before the new drug will be available on the market, Lee says that clinical trials could begin within the next two years. Additionally, further testing on other types of cancer is under way.

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Social media often used as cruel tool in divorce, with spouses putting children in the firing line

In a small study that examined the communication habits of 49 couples, researchers from the University of Missouri found that couples going through acrimonious divorces and separation were using technology as a weapon by either manipulating or withholding information and limiting access to their children.

Email, texting and social media may be effective communication tools for couples going through divorce, but a new study also shows that some are using the services less for good, and more for evil -- at their children's expense.

In a small study that examined the communication habits of 49 couples, researchers from the University of Missouri found that couples going through acrimonious divorces and separation were using technology as a weapon by either manipulating or withholding information and limiting access to their children.

For example, some parents in the study admitted to pretending that they had never received emails from their ex.

"Technology makes it easier for divorced couples to get along, and it also makes it easier for them not to get along," said lead researcher Lawrence Ganong. "Parents who use technology effectively can make co-parenting easier, which places less stress on the children."

For instance, those in co-operative relationships used communication tools to effectively coordinate the exchanges of their children. Among some of the most productive uses of the technology included using online calendars to share information about their kids' activities.

"Email is a great resource for hostile parents who can't talk face-to-face. They can communicate essential information while editing what they say to avoid conflict," said Ganong. "Also, the parents have a record of what was agreed upon."

Meanwhile, studies have shown that social media activities on Facebook are being increasingly cited in divorce petitions around the world. Lawyers in the US, for instance, are likewise increasingly demanding to see a partner's Facebook page as evidence, while some studies even cite the social network as the leading cause of divorce.

According to a British divorce website, for instance, 33 percent of divorce petitions in 2011 contained the word "Facebook," citing inappropriate online behavior like flirting with the opposite sex and posting negative comments about their spouse.



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

MU med students connect with senior mentors

COLUMBIA, MO. • New medical students at the University of Missouri quickly learn the nuances of anatomical science, disease treatment and other basic requirements for aspiring doctors.

But a majority of the nearly 100 first-year students in the Class of 2016 will find some of their most valuable lessons outside the classroom, paired with senior mentors who will give an up-close look into the realities of growing old — and also shatter some well-worn stereotypes.

Now in its 12th year, the Heyssel Senior Teacher Educator Partnership — or STEP — is strictly voluntary for new students at the University of Missouri School of Medicine. Sixty percent of the incoming class has signed up for the program, and the participation rate has nearly doubled since the program began in 2001.

"It's a way to help medical students get to know seniors as human beings," said Dr. Steve Zweig, chairman of the school's department of family and community medicine. "Learning from the people you will be caring for is a very powerful lesson, and one we need to be reminded of."

The program's growth mirrors advances in gerontology and geriatric medicine, Zweig said. It's a far cry from his own experiences as an MU medical student nearly four decades ago, treating "desperately ill and delirious" older patients at the Veterans Administration hospital.

University of South Carolina medical school researchers studied the Missouri program and nine similar efforts in 2009 and confirmed many of the anecdotal observations already made by Zweig and his colleagues — namely, that the human touch goes a long way toward supplementing classroom and lab lessons. The participating universities included Arizona, Duke, Nebraska, Ohio State and the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Eldin Duderija, a second-year MU medical student, said he remains close to the retired couple he was paired with last year. The 23-year-old Bosnia native, who moved to St. Louis as a child, said his mentors are "essentially like the grandparents I never had in Columbia."

"It gives you another element to medicine," he said. "It's not always about the science."

For seniors, the STEP program provides a connection to a younger generation while also offering valuable lectures on topics such as exercise, death and dying and senior sexuality, said Marty Hausman, a retired nurse.

"You feel really good about the future," she said.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

An NCAA Conference at Home

By JOSH DAWSEY

Like other Southeastern Conference graduates living in a city without big-time college football, Gordon Voight found that most New Yorkers failed to comprehend his consuming devotion to his alma mater.

"The people in New York City had no clue," he learned after moving to the city in 1993. "They didn't even have an idea what it means to be from an SEC school. They had no idea what Saturdays were like."

While the city lacks a native college-football culture, Mr. Voight suspected he could find other frustrated transplants. He needed friends who knew exactly what game days mean to a fan of the Arkansas Razorbacks.

Before the kickoff of the 1998 football season, he put out a call for die-hard fans of SEC schools to meet at a restaurant. "I had no idea who'd show up," Mr. Voight said of that first meeting, which was assembled entirely on word of mouth.

Fifteen years later, his informal college-football support group draws hundreds of SEC fanatics to what has become an annual preseason tradition for wayward Southerners in the five boroughs.

At this year's party, held Wednesday evening at the Ainsworth Hotel, revelers wore jerseys and carried pocketbooks with college logos. Pennants from all 14 SEC schools decorated the walls. **Attendees sipping discounted beers and cocktails included alumni from Texas A&M University and the University of Missouri, the newest schools to join the athletic conference.**

Ben Boveroux admitted to skipping some of the SEC parties in the past—particularly in years when his team's prospects made it hard to trade barbs.

"Now that South Carolina is doing better at football and has won two national championships in baseball, 'wait 'til next year' seems more like a threat," he said.

The annual gatherings are flourishing along with SEC football: The conference has won the last six championships. The ranks of local SEC graduates are also growing.

Christopher Hollinger, president of the University of Alabama's local alumni organization, said the 2,325-member New York City chapter is now the university's biggest outside of

Birmingham. More than 900 gathered at four city bars for viewing parties when the Crimson Tide won the national title in January.

"College football is something to look forward to, it's the kind of anticipation that you're going through all summer," Mr. Hollinger said. "It's a fever pitch when we get back together."

The camaraderie that characterizes the preseason SEC conclave survives into the season, even as alumni splinter into factions and spread out to team-specific bars on Saturdays. The college-football world in New York is small enough that encounters are assured.

"If Georgia plays at 12, you'll see their fans watching with another school at 3:30 and you'll see some others at another bar at 7," said Huston Stewart, a graduate of the University of Alabama.

He met his wife, Julie Yates Stewart, at one of the annual SEC pre-season events. Others have been known to date graduates from rival schools.

"It makes New York like home," Mr. Stewart said. "It's a way to take that which you hold most dear to your heart—your college football team—and put it in your backyard in New York City."

At the preseason party, memories of elaborate tailgating feasts mix with friendly trash talking. Attendees plan sojourns south to see games and swap restaurant recommendations.

Large quantities of bourbon are poured over ginger ale, leading to ambitious plans. On Wednesday, some pledged to stage an all-SEC bar crawl across Manhattan this year—canvassing alumni watering holes for each college over the course of a single Saturday.

"We can be the biggest rivals and the biggest enemies," said Nicole Feltman, president of Gotham Gators, the city's alumni chapter for the University of Florida. "But we have such a sense of community from being from the best conference in the world."

Mr. Voight's SEC group has gained and lost members over the years, and meetings have at time become less frequent. For a five-year stretch, he recalled, members met at monthly happy hours even after the football season ended, a practice he wants to revive.

But social-media websites have brought an influx of younger alumni into the mix, and the founder has plans for expansion.

Jason Goldman, a recent University of Georgia graduate, moved to the city earlier this summer. "The best way I can handle that fact is by simulating my game days as close as possible by waking up early, throwing on my jersey and finding other alumni to share the experience with," he said.

Mr. Voight, a real-estate agent, said he has tapped the group for business connections and plans to add a job-listing section to the group's website. He hopes to eventually give the ad hoc association a permanent home, with a vision of an SEC House in Manhattan.

It would be something like the Harvard Club on West 44th Street, he said, with a private endowment and board of directors. "It's just a dream right now," Mr. Voight admitted. "But maybe that dream can turn into reality in five or 10 years."