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Self-guided tours highlight campus history

By Janese Silvey

Thursday, October 25, 2012

Visitors heading to the University of Missouri for Homecoming this weekend can now learn about the more notable buildings and sites on campus without relying on a tour guide.

The Mizzou Alumni Association has expanded its self-guided audio tour to include 16 additional locations.

The association unveiled the audio tour last year when administrators realized not all visitors had a chance to or wanted to go on guided tours of campus, said Todd McCubbin, executive director of the alumni association.

“It’s another way for people wandering around” to learn about campus, he said. “It’s a cool way to do it. Technology meets the history we have here on campus.”

Here’s how it works: Using a map found on the university’s website or at the Reynolds Alumni Center, visitors can walk to specific attractions, call a telephone number and enter the code found on a sign at the location. Then, they’ll hear the history and fun facts behind each site.

Nathan Hurst, a member of MU’s News Bureau, recorded the new locations earlier this week after researching the histories of some of the lesser-known sites. Read and Gentry halls, for instance, originally served as the first two women’s dormitories on campus. They’re named after former President Daniel Read, the first to admit women to the university, and Sarah Gentry, the second woman to graduate.

The cellphone tour idea sprang from discussions among members of MU’s “Pride of Place” committee, said MU spokesman Christian Basi.

That ad hoc group is made up of faculty members, students and supporters who meet periodically to talk about ways to promote campus buildings and spaces.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Court revives discrimination lawsuit against MU

22 hours ago

A Missouri appeals court has revived a former professor's gender discrimination lawsuit against the University of Missouri.

The Western District Court of Appeals ruled Tuesday that a trial court must determine if Loreen Olson had a legal contract to become the head of the university's communications department in 2010.

Olson sued after the College of Arts and Sciences withdrew the job offer when she and Dean Michael O'Brien couldn't agree on compensation and job duties. Olson now teaches at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

A Boone County judge dismissed most of the lawsuit last fall, saying Olson did not have a legal contract.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports (<http://bit.ly/P4SzEz>) the appeals court reversed that decision, saying a trial court should determine if Olson was offered a legal contract.

Information from: Columbia Daily Tribune, <http://www.columbiatribune.com>

theman eater

UM Press Advisory Committee discussed at Faculty Council meeting

By Jack Howland

The UM Press advisory committee, formed to aid the firm in its transition to the MU campus, held its first meeting Oct. 17.

Plant sciences professor Craig Roberts provided a summary of the group's discussion at Thursday's Faculty Council meeting. Roberts emphasized, among other things, the abundance of new information there was to offer.

"Everything that was said (about the press) was new," Roberts said. "There were just so many new sentences there."

The advisory committee meeting was led by UM System President Emeritus Mel George and MU Chancellor Emeritus Richard Wallace. The two men began the discussion by handing out histories of the UM Press for members to read, Roberts said. They emphasized the importance of learning about the business.

Additionally, Roberts said new ideas about what the press could become were discussed. Chief Academic Officer Brian Foster mentioned the press could potentially borrow from the School of Journalism and employ students. Roberts also emphasized the committee brought up the possibility of producing more content from different fields.

As a professor who admits there hasn't been much content come from his area of study, Roberts said it's something they could definitely "tap into."

"It's all about content," Roberts said. "We're sitting here on content central, and it's filtering out to (other places)."

Roberts expressed his happiness with the first meeting to the Faculty Council.

"At this point, it's a very open-minded group," Roberts said. "And to be honest with you, I'm learning a lot more than I thought I would."

Consulting Director of the UM Press Jane Lago was also at the meeting. Lago, who has voiced concern about the future of the business in the past, feels much better after the discussion.

“I think it went very well,” Lago said. “It was a good meeting because everyone there, everyone around the table, was able to talk openly about what the press’ strengths are and what the press’ strengths should be.”

Lago said there’s no longer a question of “whether there should be a press” but rather discussion about “how to make the best possible press.” She explained how they talked about the firm’s national reputation and that it should try to highlight MU’s strengths.

Although she said in August that she was “not optimistic” about the press, Lago said she has a better feeling about the future of the firm. She said since Editor-in-Chief Clair Willcox was re-hired, many authors have decided to stick with the press. She even said Willcox talked personally with many of them about their concerns.

Lago is for the most part “encouraged” about the future of the institution.

“Right now we only have a staff of seven, so we have our work cut out for us,” Lago said. “But I think things are definitely looking up.”

Roberts mirrored this sentiment to the Faculty Council.

“There is a feeling that (the press) may come out the other end better than if it hadn’t gone through this,” Roberts said.

MU Faculty Council reacts positively to non-tenure-track voting proposal

By Stephanie Ebbs

October 25, 2012 | 8:45 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Members of MU Faculty Council expressed support for extending voting rights to non-tenure-track colleagues during its Thursday meeting.

Faculty Council discussed a proposal that would expand the faculty bylaws' definition of "faculty" to include non-tenure-track, or NTT, faculty. These faculty are hired on temporary contracts without the possibility of permanent job security, which is known as tenure.

Four NTT representatives sit on Faculty Council. The proposed change would revise Faculty Council's Rules of Order, allowing the four NTT faculty representatives to vote in council matters. It also would allow all NTT faculty to vote in campuswide decisions previously limited to tenured and tenure-track faculty.

"We have representation of our staff on staff council and representation of our tenure-track faculty on faculty council, and then we have this huge group of people who are sitting out there in never-never land of shared governance," associate professor of journalism Clyde Bentley said during discussion at Thursday's meeting. "Personally, I think that's very unfair."

One of the four NTT representatives on Faculty Council, assistant professor Sam White, said he received overwhelming support for the proposal from his NTT colleagues. A letter was sent to all NTT faculty Tuesday explaining the proposal and asking for feedback.

Research professor Richard Guyette, one of the other NTT representatives on Faculty Council, also said he was in favor of the measure.

"I've been an NTT research guy for 20 years, and I know for a lot of NTT folks this would be a huge morale boost," Guyette said.

Tenured council members also supported the proposal, bringing up the fact that some schools — including MU — have large percentages of NTT faculty. NTT faculty teach 24 percent of all student credit hours at MU, according to data from MU Institutional Research.

As of November 2011, there were 708 NTT faculty at MU and 1,241 tenured and tenure-track faculty. The School of Health Professions has the largest percentage of NTT faculty at 66 percent, closely followed by the School of Journalism and School of Medicine.

On Thursday, many faculty members expressed support for allowing NTT faculty to vote, but some council members raised concern about whether having four NTT faculty members on council was truly representative of the entire NTT population.

The four non-voting NTT representatives on council each represent different types of NTT faculty — teaching, research, extension and clinical and professional practice faculty.

While NTT faculty account for 36 percent of the entire faculty at MU, the four seats make up only 11 percent of the current council, according to data from MU Institutional Research.

Professor Doug Wakefield with the School of Medicine said his school's faculty affairs council was interested in extending faculty rights to NTT faculty but was concerned about "muddying the waters" by changing another element of the proposal.

The NTT representatives said at Thursday's meeting that they support the proposal as it is — with four seats — and plan to save the question of proportional representation for a later time.

Associate teaching professor Nicole Monnier, another NTT representative, said it was important to find out how the rest of the faculty members feel before council votes on the proposal.

"We might feel warm and fuzzy here at Faculty Council, but we have been given lots of non-warm and non-fuzzies from the general faculty," Monnier said.

She said it's important to know what the objections are and address them before council votes so its position accurately represents the opinion of the faculty. Monnier has previously expressed that some faculty members prioritize research over teaching and service, so they might not agree with including NTT in the definition of faculty.

Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer said he would present the proposal at the general faculty meeting Tuesday. The meeting will take place from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Jesse Wrench Auditorium, Memorial Union South.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.

'Bear hug,' garage confrontation reported as assaults

Updated October 25, 2012 at 8:51 p.m.

University of Missouri police are seeking a male suspect after two possibly related assault reports on campus.

The first incident occurred Wednesday near Speaker's Circle. Around 9:35 a.m., police received a report of an assault on the sidewalk along Ninth Street, according to an MU police news release. A woman said she was walking to Ellis Library when a man she didn't know passed her, then turned around and grabbed her from behind, wrapping his arms around her in a "bear hug," police said. She said she struggled but could not get away. The man eventually released her when another person approached on the sidewalk; the man let the woman go — saying "I thought you were someone else" — and ran off, police said.

The second report came around 5 p.m. Thursday. A woman said a man was following her on the stairs in the Hitt Street Garage. When she stopped, the man came very close and asked, "Don't I know you?" She responded "no." The woman reported feeling threatened, but the man left without touching her, police said.

Neither woman was injured. The first described the man as white and college-aged, about 5 feet 9 inches tall and thin, with brown hair and eyes. She said he was clean-shaven with acne and braces and was wearing jeans and a white T-shirt. The second woman gave a similar description but estimated the man to be about 6 feet tall and wearing jeans and a dark sweatshirt. When she was shown a composite sketch from the first victim's description, she said she thought it might be the same man.

Anyone with information about the incidents is asked to call Detective Sam Easley at 884-3721 or CrimeStoppers at 875-8477.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MUPD reports two assaults with similar suspect descriptions

By Alison Matas

October 25, 2012 | 9:53 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — **The MU Police Department has received two reports of assault** with similar suspect descriptions.

At 9:35 a.m. Wednesday near Speakers Circle on Ninth Street, a woman said she was approached from behind by a man who put her in a "bear hug" and wouldn't let go until another person walked toward them, according to a release from the police department.

Around 5 p.m. Thursday on the fourth floor of Hitt Street Garage, another woman said she noticed she was being followed by a man. When she stopped, he approached her, stood close to her, and asked whether he knew her. When she replied that he didn't, he walked away, according to the release from the police department.

Both victims are African American women. They described the suspect as a white, college-aged male with a thin build, dark brown hair, brown eyes and braces on his teeth, according to the release.

Anyone with information about the assaults should call Detective Sam Easley at 884-3721, or CRIME STOPPERS at 875-8477.

Supervising editor is Jeanne Abbott.

Supreme Court and colleges will clash over affirmative action

By Renee Schoof McClatchy Newspapers

MU MENTION P. 2

WASHINGTON -- At South Carolina's Clemson University, ensuring racial diversity in enrollment has a special resonance because of the region's history of segregation and discrimination.

"That legacy still overshadows much of what we've been able to accomplish in more balanced enrollments," said Leon Wiles, the school's chief diversity officer.

African-Americans accounted for 6 percent of Clemson's nearly 16,000 undergraduate students who enrolled last fall, according to school records, while white students made up 84 percent. Overall, African-Americans account for 28 percent of the state's population.

Clemson and other colleges and universities across the country will be closely watching the U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday when it takes up the issue of racial preferences in admissions with an affirmative action case involving the University of Texas. Higher education officials around the country fear that the justices are on the cusp of complicating their efforts to increase campus diversity.

Their eventual ruling could narrow or possibly overturn the court's 2003 decision that allowed schools to use race as a factor in admissions.

"I don't have a crystal ball and I'm not a lawyer, but I do know it's a more conservative court," said Caryn McTighe Musil, senior vice president for diversity issues at the Association of American Colleges and Universities. "There are many who are worried it will remove one more tool that higher education has to serve the goal that there is broad diversity in the student body."

The case concerns Abigail Noel Fisher, a white woman who argued that she was unfairly denied admission to the University of Texas because of its policy of taking race, among many other factors, into consideration for admission.

Fisher graduated this year from Louisiana State University.

Interest in the case is high. Dozens of universities, education organizations and the federal government have filed briefs with the Supreme Court in anticipation.

“Diversity prepares students to engage with the modern world, but that is not its only benefit,” stated a brief filed by 40 education groups, including the American Association of Colleges and Universities. “Diversity serves time-honored, indispensable goals . . . it prepares them to maintain the robust democracy that is their inheritance; and it enables them to overcome barriers that separate them from one another.”

A recent report from the Century Foundation, a nonpartisan research group, said that race-neutral policies have worked in some of those states. But affirmative action supporters have questioned its conclusions.

Race-conscious policies have long been a controversial topic. The Texas case will turn on how the justices interpret the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Meanwhile, colleges and universities have tried to maneuver through a sensitive landscape.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which fielded 29,501 undergraduate applications this year, employs what school officials call a “highly nuanced and multi-faceted approach” that entails consideration of “more than 40 factors.”

Race is considered as one of the potential “plus” factors. Currently, roughly one-third of the university’s undergraduates are ethnic minorities.

At Clemson, Wiles said that only students who have the ability to do the work are accepted, and SAT scores are important. But he said the school also looks at recommendations, extracurricular achievement and other factors, including race, and it’s used for the sake of a more diverse enrollment.

Roger L. Worthington, an education professor at the University of Missouri at Columbia, and the school’s former chief diversity officer, said minority students nationwide still lag far behind their white counterparts in higher education.

Minority enrollments have increased modestly, he said, but haven’t kept up with the growth of their populations.

“Unless these disparities are corrected, in part by the continuation of affirmative action, the U.S. economic situation seems likely to continue downward rather than toward a robust recovery,” Worthington said.

Todd Gaziano, who directs legal studies at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative research organization, argued that affirmative action policies actually hurt the students they’re intended to help because elite schools that accept poorly prepared students doom them to getting lower grades.

“It’s a terrible recipe to disadvantage the minority students,” he said, adding the students would do better if they went to less competitive schools.

California became the first state, in 1996, where voters decided to amend the state constitution to forbid racial preferences in college admissions. A year after a state law prohibited race-conscious admissions decisions, the number of African-American, Latino and Native American freshmen at UCLA and the flagship Berkeley campus of the University of California dropped by more than 50 percent, according to a brief in the Texas case filed by the university.

“The University of California simply has not recovered,” said Gary Orfield, a professor at UCLA and an expert on school desegregation and civil rights laws. “We have a much lower level of access for Latino and African-American students than we had back then, in terms of their getting admitted to our flagship campuses.”

In 2011, only 130 African-American students were among an entering freshman class of 4,443 at the Berkeley campus. But records some minority student enrollment, such as Latinos, has been rebounding since the ban on racial preferences in admissions.

Michael Doyle contributed to this story.