Mizzou considers phasing out more than two dozen graduate programs

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch 14 hrs ago (6)

Generated from News Bureau press release: First stage of academic program analysis complete: MU officials to incorporate report data as second stage of review begins

Missouri’s flagship university is considering phasing out a series of graduate programs, including doctoral degrees in art history and archaeology, romance languages and two engineering programs.

Leaders at the University of Missouri-Columbia are considering deactivating 27 graduate certificate and degree programs. That includes almost 20 percent of all doctoral degrees and 11 percent of all master’s degrees.

It sounds like a lot of programs, but a campus spokesman said these degrees currently enroll about 6 percent of the 1,887 doctoral students and 2 percent of the 3,250 master’s students.

A team of faculty and other leaders looked at low enrollment and research productivity during the last several months when narrowing a list of programs to recommend that the chancellor consider terminating.

The list of recommended programs also includes doctoral degrees in classical studies, master’s degrees in art history and archaeology, classical studies, religious studies and rural sociology, among others.

Chancellor Alex Cartwright is expected to make a final decision on these programs sometime during the spring semester.

“Data doesn’t tell you everything always,” Cartwright said this week, adding that it’s also about understanding how these degree programs and departments contribute to other parts of the campus.

The report released Thursday is Mizzou’s portion of an ongoing, statewide effort to trim degree programs that have lower enrollment.

About 900 certificate, associate, undergraduate and graduate degrees were identified as falling short of state standards for graduates and other measures during a routine audit by the state in 2017.
A spokeswoman for Missouri’s Department of Higher Education said the final report is not finished.

Most state schools are looking at undergraduate and graduate programs, but Mizzou leaders say it’s going to take more time to figure out which undergraduate degrees should be considered for elimination.

It’s complicated, according to Mizzou interim provost Jim Spain.

The research institution is pretty steeped in interdisciplinary studies, and faculty on the task force charged with looking at degrees found a case, for example, where a capstone engineering class involved a theater professor.

It will take time to map out the ways different departments support one another while considering which programs aren’t serving their purpose, he explained.

The report outlined a campus goal to increase the freshman class to 6,000 students by 2023, and how that “raises questions about concurrently reducing undergraduate degree offerings.”

A University of Missouri task force is recommending the elimination of 27 doctoral, masters and graduate certificate programs. The cuts are part of the Columbia campus’s effort to reduce spending that began last summer.

The Task Force on Academic Program Analysis, Enhancement and Opportunities report cites low enrollment, low research productivity or low grant funding as the reasons for shutting down the programs, which range from religious studies masters and doctoral programs to a graduate certificate program in gerontology.

The report released Thursday is only the first look at the programs, Chancellor Alexander Cartwright and acting Provost Jim Spain said in a meeting with reporters. The deans and department chairs in each area will have an opportunity to challenge the conclusions by showing how the programs support undergraduate education or providing other reasons to keep them.

“But in all of those cases in talking to the deans, I have stressed that you really want to make sure you have a compelling argument, that you have really thought this through because what I am looking at there is a lot of work done by a task force and we want to make sure that if there
are shortfalls in terms of the understanding or something that needs to come forward, but we don’t want to be questioning every decision,” Cartwright said.

The task force is one of three examining how the university does business, with future reports on enrollment and finances coming later in the semester. Other actions are also examining the UM System for savings, including a consulting report on administration delivered to the curators that found $26.8 million to $70 million in savings by streamlining functions and changes in benefits.

The 15-member task force was chaired by Cooper Drury, associate dean of Arts and Science, and Matthew Martens, a professor in the College of Education. It made no recommendations on undergraduate programs because it would “require a more extensive review that solicits a broader array of information and input than we have access to at this time.”

Undergraduate programs were also difficult to evaluate because the courses could be important to other fields and provide benefits that may not be apparent from data, Spain said.

“During the review process the deans were asked by the task force about what are those programs outside your school or college that are really critical to your success,” he said. “That helped us, I think, understand how interlocked and intertwined we are, and it is going to take a fair bit of different type of work to get to those evaluations and assessments.

Reaction to the report was slow to develop Thursday. At the MU Faculty Council meeting, members focused on the likelihood that the program cuts will result in layoffs for non-tenure track faculty. Those faculty generally work on an annual contract.

Several members complained that lack of job security can make it difficult to find work if cuts are made late in the academic year. Chair Bill Wiebold, who was also a member of the task force, told members that any program slated for elimination will remain in place until its students have finished. There is a standing recommendation from the faculty council for better treatment for non-tenured faculty, he said.

“There is not in place any transition assistance,” he said. “This council is pretty strong in that there ought to be.”

Rabia Gregory, director of graduate studies for the Department of Religious Studies, said she was disappointed that the master’s degree program for her department is slated for closure.

The report cited low enrollment, few graduates and a lack of research productivity in the program.

“I regret that the task force’s charge required them to focus on quantity more than quality — both quantity of students graduated and quantity of publications,” Gregory wrote.

The report doesn’t say how much money, if any, would be saved by the program cuts. Some programs have tenured faculty that cannot be laid off and savings may come from how faculty are reassigned to other duties, allowing non-tenured faculty or other employees to be cut.
“A program from one area may have requirements in another area, and how do you determine how much each one is contributing?” Cartwright said. “That is actually going to take a much more in-depth conversation with our deans and the chairs because we need to understand ... how all of that is interconnected.”

The report is not limited to recommendations for program cuts. It also identified several areas for further study, with possible consolidation in areas such as educational psychology, foreign language studies and management. Another portion of the report recommends making investments in broad areas, including data analytics, support for improved teaching and interdisciplinary work.

The interdisciplinary research and study portion identified several problems that must be addressed, Cartwright said. In the past year, with the administration of President Mun Choi, interdisciplinary work, especially in engineering and medicine, has been a point of emphasis.

There are disincentives to interdisciplinary work identified by the report, with units providing little or no support for the work because they are judged mainly on the work done within their field.

“What many faculty felt is missing, however, is systematic university investment in initiatives designed to promote and facilitate additional interdisciplinary collaborations that would help yield major research outcomes, such as federal center grants, which would also positively impact MU’s academic programs,” the report states.

Because of the emphasis on interdisciplinary efforts, the report was very helpful to understand the barriers involved, Cartwright said.

“It was useful for me to have some of these things pointed out because I wasn’t aware of how we are structured in terms of the mechanisms that might be feeding back in and seen as incentives, or disincentives, for interdisciplinary research,” he said.

The task force’s inability to obtain the data it needed to evaluate undergraduate programs was also an issue as it focused on graduate studies.

“In many instances, a Task Force member had to enter manually relevant data for all of the campus programs, and when manual entry was not required, data had to be merged by hand,” the report states. “Instead of hours to build the data, it took days of work by the Task Force to put together the data required to review programs.”

That was another area where the report was helpful, Cartwright said. Universities nationally are struggling with developing the data needed to evaluate their programs, he said.

“I think by going through this process we started asking questions that weren’t necessarily asked before,” Cartwright said. “And they may have started thinking about things they wanted answers to and they just didn’t have that data readily available because maybe the question was slightly different than had been asked before.”
Dozens of graduate programs face closure after MU academic review team recommendations
By Edward McKinley

MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright gives a report regarding MU academic programs on Tuesday at Jesse Hall. Cartwright said Jim Spain, who will take over as interim provost next week, will meet with deans of the affected programs and issue his recommendations to Cartwright.

Dozens of MU programs found to be under-enrolled or underachieving were recommended for closure, further review or combination by the Academic Programs Task Force.

The report released Thursday is part of a larger process, Chancellor Alexander Cartwright said Tuesday, and final decisions will be made throughout the spring semester. Students in affected programs will be able to finish their degrees.

The degrees are:

Programs recommended for closure

- Agricultural Education, Ph.D.
- Rural Sociology, master’s and Ph.D.
- Applied Mathematics, master’s
- Art History and Archaeology, master’s and Ph.D.
- Classical Studies, master’s and Ph.D.
- Chemical Engineering, Ph.D.
- Nuclear Engineering, master’s and Ph.D.
- Romance Languages, Ph.D.
- Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences, master’s
- Dispute resolution, master’s
- Personal Financial Planning, master’s, doctoral emphasis area within a degree and graduate certificate
- Religious Studies, master’s
- Nuclear Safeguards Science & Technology, graduate certificate
- Center for the Digital Globe, graduate certificate
- Gerontology, graduate certificate
- Lifespan Development, graduate certificate
The School of Medicine already had been looking to consolidate five Ph.D. programs into a single interdisciplinary degree, which were listed in the report as well: Biochemistry, Medical Pharmacology and Physiology, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology, Nutrition and Pathobiology.

**Programs recommended for further review**

The report lists 16 programs where “significant concerns were identified” that should be addressed.

They are:

- American Law, master’s
- Biological Engineering, Ph.D.
- Industrial Engineering, Ph.D.
- Food Science, Ph.D.
- Genetics Area Program, Ph.D.
- Neuroscience, graduate certificate, master’s and Ph.D.
- Geological Sciences, bachelor’s, master’s and Ph.D.
- History, Ph.D.
- Learning, Teaching and Curriculum, master’s and Ph.D.
- Sociology, Ph.D.
- Truman School of Public Affairs, graduate certificates

**Programs recommended for combination**

The report lists four examples of combinations the task force thinks would be effective, but cautions that data were lacking in some cases and administration should weigh the pros and cons.

They are:

- Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology in the College of Education; Health Psychology in the School of Health Professions and Psychological Sciences in the College of Arts and Science. The report stops short of firmly recommending their combination but says that it should be explored.
- German and Russian Studies in the College of Arts & Science and Romance Languages and Literatures in the College of Arts & Science
- Management — The report says not enough data are available to make a specific recommendation, but there are multiple programs with management focuses and a combination should be explored.
- Policy Studies — Again, there is no specific recommendation, but a combination is said to be possible between different programs.

**Birth of the academic review**
The review process was initiated in early April when UM System President Mun Choi, in response to a budget crisis created by downward spirals in enrollment and state funding, sent a system-wide email calling for an 8 to 12 percent budget cut and a top-to-bottom review of how the schools conducted themselves.

Another piece of that puzzle was a report issued by accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers at a December curators meeting that identified between $44 million and $74 million in budget cuts for the system.

The task force was created in early August with Cooper Drury, Arts & Science associate dean, and Matthew Martens, professor and provost office faculty fellow, at the helm. The team has met biweekly since then in multi-hour sessions.

Jim Spain, who will take over as interim provost when Garnett Stokes departs next week to lead the University of New Mexico, will meet with deans of affected programs over this semester and look at more data, and then will issue his recommendations to Cartwright. From there, Cartwright will present to Choi and the UM System Board of Curators.

Spain was initially a member of the task force but recused himself when he accepted the position as interim provost.

Cartwright said he hopes for final decisions to be made by the end of this semester, for both graduate and undergraduate programs. This is an aggressive timeline, Cartwright said.

The task force examined data from the student census, Missouri Department of Higher Education; the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity, known as the “Delaware Data”; and others. The team also met 39 times with members of the campus community, including faculty, staff, administration and students.

Information that was key to the task force’s decision-making included: student credit hours, degrees awarded, average graduates by program statewide, racial or ethnic makeup; average applicants, acceptance rates and enrollment; time to degree rates, credit hour cost and research productivity.

But some questions were raised regarding final decisions made and the process used to make them.

**Unanswered questions**

“It's a difficult decision because you have to look at the data,” Cartwright said. “But the data doesn’t tell you everything always.”

Over the summer, the Department of Ancient Mediterranean Studies was created combining the Classical Studies faculty with several Archaeology faculty members. The closure of the graduate programs for those two programs is recommended in the report.
The rationale in the report for the closure of the Art History and Archaeology and Classical Studies programs includes small number of graduates per year, high number of years to degree for Ph.D. students and low research productivity compared to peer institutions.

“Some of the specifics connected with our new department got lost in the shuffle,” said Anatole Mori, chair of Ancient Mediterranean Studies.

The recommendation is based on outdated data, Mori said, and the department anticipated some of the task force’s concerns, of which some already have been addressed.

Ancient Mediterranean Studies has received nearly twice the applicants this year than last, Mori said, and research productivity would be badly damaged by the elimination of the graduate program. Faculty in the department, especially archaeology, rely on graduate students to conduct their research, Mori said. For instance, the department works with the Gabii Project, an international collective effort with the dual goal of excavation and study of an ancient Roman city-state, and MU participation relies heavily on graduate students.

Another factor that should be considered, Mori said, is the history of the department. Classical Studies is a legacy program for MU — it traces its roots to the mid-1800s, not long after MU’s founding in 1839.

MU, as a land grant university created by the Morrill Act of 1862, also has a specific mission to teach “agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts as well as classical studies,” according to the Association of Public Land Grant Universities.

“We recognize that there might be information that we don’t have or that the task force didn’t have,” Cartwright said. “We are giving opportunities for deans to come forward and to say, ‘Here’s what we know about this particular program, and you may not have this information or that information.’”

Mori said she already has spoken to the dean of Arts & Science to advocate for her department.

**Data problems**

There’s a trend across all of higher education to be more data-driven in decision-making, Cartwright said, but MU data are not available that are complex enough to answer every question.

The report highlighted data as a problem for MU: “The activities of the Task Force illustrated the significant problem MU has in terms of data storage and organization.”

The report goes on to say that data across campus are not stored centrally or consistently defined.

“Many institutions are struggling with these same types of challenges,” Cartwright said.
“By going through this process, we started asking questions that weren’t necessarily asked before,” Cartwright said, “and they may have started thinking of certain things they wanted an answer to and we didn’t have that data readily available.”

“Am I happy with where we are?” Cartwright asked. “No. We need to have much better data systems.”

“We did good work within the time constraints and data that we had,” said Nicole Monnier, an MU faculty and task force member. She expressed concerns, echoing those in the report, about how MU collects, organizes and shares its data.

The only decisions released by the task force were those supported by the data it had access to, Monnier said, but it’s certainly possible there may be more data that would change minds. She emphasized that the task force’s decisions are merely recommendations, and it’ll be the job of Interim Provost Spain to take a deeper look and make final decisions.

Opportunities for investment

The task force also was charged with identifying particularly strong academic programs worthy of further investment. The report says this was difficult because, when the team held meetings, the perception was that the team was only looking for areas to cut. As a result, questions and suggestions from constituents were mainly focused on that.

But there were some areas the task force recommended increased investment:

- Big data analytics
- The Center for Teaching and Learning
- Coordinated and integrated health research
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Interdisciplinary degree programs
- Interdisciplinary research programs
- Sustainability and security

“We have to narrow our focus to programs of excellence,” Spain said.
University of Missouri Group Recommends Grad Program Cuts

A task force at the University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia has recommended cutting 27 doctoral, masters and graduate certificate programs.

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A task force at the University of Missouri's flagship campus in Columbia has recommended cutting 27 doctoral, masters and graduate certificate programs.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports that the 15-member group released its findings Thursday. Programs on the proposed chopping block include religious studies masters and doctoral programs and a graduate certificate program in gerontology. They were selected for possible elimination because of low enrollment, few graduates and a lack of research productivity.

The group also recommended studying possible consolidation in some areas. It made no recommendations on undergraduate programs.

The review process is part of an effort to reduce spending that began last summer. The report doesn't say how much money, if any, would be saved.

The deans and department chairs will be able to challenge the findings.

*Similar stories ran statewide.*
MU discussing cutting 27 graduate programs

By CLAIRE KOPSKY


COLUMBIA - University of Missouri students in specific majors will see changes to their degree programs next fall.

A task force, which began meeting on June 30, was made up of 17 professors, directors and deans in programs across the university. After dozens of meetings, the 39-page report went public Thursday.

MU’s Chancellor Alexander Cartwright explained the mission of the task force, “We asked the Task Force of faculty to look at all of our programs, a comprehensive review of our programs and to make recommendations in terms of which programs we might want to strengthen.”

He said they thought about “consolidation and what are the opportunities where we may have some programs that we might consider inactivating or rethink what types of degree programs there are.”

The report outlined 19 programs with extremely low or no enrollment the task force recommends cutting. Among those are programs in the College of Education, School of Medicine, College of Engineering, School of Law, College of Business, College of Agriculture Food Natural Resources, College of Human Environmental Sciences and School of Health Professions.

Twelve emphasis areas were also recommended to be “deleted” in the College of Education and College of Human Environmental Sciences.

Other current programs recommended for inactivation include the Agricultural Education PhD.; Rural Sociology MS, PhD.; Applied Mathematics MS; Art History and Archaeology MA, PhD.; Classical Studies MA, PhD.; Clinical and Diagnostic Sciences MHS; Chemical Engineering PhD.; Dispute Resolution LLM; Nuclear Engineering MS, PhD., Nuclear Safeguards Science
and Technology Graduate Certificate; Personal Financial Planning Graduate Certificate, MS, PhD.; Religious Studies MA; Romantic Languages PhD.; School of Medicine PhD programs; three Graduate Certificate Programs.

Cartwright stressed the cuts are not effective now; instead this report was merely a list of recommendations from within the university.

Cartwright explained the report focused on the graduate programs because “the undergraduate programs are much more complex, there’s more overlap between programs and how you determine total enrollment and total credit hours is a little more complicated.”

He said, “We just need to think more about numbers of students who are in those programs.”

In the next steps this spring, Jim Spain, the vice provost for undergraduate studies for MU, will be discussing the recommendations with the university’s deans.

“We’re not done looking. We’re not finished evaluating and assessing, and we’re going to be leaning on the deans and the chairs now to say, ‘Okay in this next step, how can we, let’s look at the efficiencies that we might be able to gain,’” Spain said.

The earliest students will not see changes is next fall. Both Cartwright and Spain stressed that any student in a program affected by the changes will still be able to complete his or her degree program within a “reasonable” timeline. They did not specify whether that timeline will be up to the student.

MU task force recommends 27 programs for deactivation, chancellor says too soon to talk layoffs

By ALYSSA TOOMEY

An MU task force is recommending 27 programs for deactivation at the University of Missouri.
All of the programs are either doctoral, masters or graduate certificates. No undergraduate programs have been recommended for deactivation at this time.

Over the past six-and-a-half months, the University of Missouri's Task Force on Academic Program Analysis, Enhancement and Opportunities was charged with doing a top to bottom review of every academic program at Mizzou. Their final report, which has been submitted to the provost's office, outlines which programs they believe the university can no longer sustain. It also includes recommendations for areas of investment and collaboration.

Per the report, the task force did not make recommendations for inactivating undergraduate programs because they are "often more interconnected in terms of providing a comprehensive education to MU students." The report also states that MU has a strategic goal of increasing the size of its incoming undergraduate class to 6,000 by 2023 "which raises questions about concurrently reducing undergraduate degree offerings."

"That's actually going to take a much more in depth conversation with our deans and the chairs," MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright said in an interview ahead of the report's release. "We need to understand much more of how all of that is interconnected and once we can get to that stage, I think we'll be in a better position to say what we should be doing."

Cartwright said he hopes to still make decisions about undergraduate program cuts in the spring, but said that's an aggressive timeline.

"The next phase is going to require a lot of engagement with all of our units—the deans, the chairs, the faculty and understanding what is happening in each of those programs before we make any decisions," he said.

Cartwright said they are working to determine how much the university will save by potentially deactivating more than two dozen programs. He also said it's too soon to say whether any jobs are on the line.

The task force gathered both qualitative and quantitative data before making their recommendations. They looked at things like student credit hours, enrollment the number of degrees awarded, racial and ethic composition of degree programs, research productivity and more. They also held 39 meetings with campus constituents.

For master's and doctoral programs, the task force examined the average number of applicants, the average acceptance rate, and the average matriculation rate. For doctoral programs, the time to degree was also reviewed.

"It's a difficult decision because you have to look at the data. But the data doesn't tell you everything, always," Cartwright said.
Any student currently enrolled in a degree program that is eliminated will be able to finish and get their degree.

The task force does not have the final word on which programs will be deactivated. Cartwright said interim provost Jim Spain will make recommendations to him, and then he will discuss them with President Choi and the UM Board of Curators. He said the goal is to make Mizzou the best institution it can be.

Here is a list of the programs recommended for inactivation. You can read the full report and see the rationale for each program here.

**Analysis of MU programs leads to recommendation of cuts**

By DAN CLAXTON

COLUMBIA — An academic program review task force at MU has completed the first phase of its analysis of campus programs by issuing a report recommending the elimination of 33 programs.

According to a press release, the program cuts were based on several criteria including low enrollment, lack of faculty, and curricular changes. Low enrollment accounted for the majority of the rationale behind the cuts.

The task force was formed in response to a call by University of Missouri System President Mun Choi in April of last year on the topic of budget guidance in which he expressed concern that MU was supporting programs that were unaffordable.

31 of the proposed cuts are in master's and doctoral programs. They include at least 11 degree programs in the College of Education. The two undergraduate programs set for elimination are Agricultural Economics and Science and Agricultural Journalism. Two law school programs are affected, as are two programs in medicine.
The task force was also charged with recommending programs that could be combined or consolidated, such as interdisciplinary degree programs.

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COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

GOP lawmakers skeptical of Missouri governor's budget plans

NO MU MENTION

By Summer Ballentine, Associated Press

Fellow Republicans in the Missouri Legislature gave a chilly reception Thursday to several of Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens' key budget recommendations, including his calls for a 10 percent higher education cut and $250 million loan.

Greitens' 2019 budget plan would give higher education institutions $92 million less than originally budgeted for the 2018 fiscal year and $68 million less than they were expected to receive after the governor's previous cuts.

Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard said lawmakers will pare that down to "considerably less" of a hit.

"We're not going to let those cuts happen," he said.

Lawmakers' defiance of some of Greitens' budget priorities comes less than a month after the governor acknowledged having an extramarital affair in 2015. Some legislators have called for his resignation in response, and others have questioned his ability to lead. But Greitens has said he has no plans to step down and is moving forward with his agenda.

Lawmakers also were resisting Greitens' request for a $250 million short-term line of credit to help pay tax refunds back more quickly. Both House Budget Chairman Scott Fitzpatrick and his counterpart in the Senate, Appropriations Chairman Dan Brown, said they're unsure if that would be constitutional.

"We're not going to do that either," Richard said of the loan request.
Brown on Thursday proposed taking $25 million Greitens wants for a matching infrastructure grant program and instead putting it toward higher education or other areas short on funding — a potential change that would zero out another one of the governor's priorities.

Fitzpatrick said he told Department of Economic Development staff that the grant program would be a "hard sell."

"We want to make sure that we have competitive economic development opportunities in the state," Fitzpatrick said. "But in a year like this where we're not necessarily making it rain, I don't know if that one's going to make it."

**Boone Hospital, MU end negotiations over lease**

By Rudi Keller

The effort to merge Boone Hospital Center into University of Missouri Health Care ended Thursday with an announcement that the two providers can’t reach an agreement after 18 months of negotiations.

In a joint statement, the Boone Board of Trustees and MU Health Care stated that they “were unable to fully align at this time on the mission and strategic direction necessary for the proposed partnership.”

In the joint statement, MU Health Care and the trustees wrote they “have decided to pause exclusive negotiations.”

The negotiations were looking favorable as recently as a month ago, said Brian Neuner, chair of the trustees, in an interview. But the negotiating teams could not resolve how to align Boone’s role as a community hospital and MU Health Care’s role as a teaching hospital, he said.

“We just got to the point where we felt like the negotiations were not moving in a positive direction,” Neuner said.

Boone Hospital is considering a new management arrangement after 29 years of affiliation with BJC HealthCare in St. Louis. The trustees sought proposals for a new lease in 2016 and received four responses. Along with a short letter from BJC suggesting that another arrangement would be better for both, MU Health, Kansas City-based not-for-profit St. Luke’s Health System and Duke LifePoint, a Brentwood, Tenn.-based for-profit company, submitted proposals.
The trustees will now approach St. Luke’s and Duke to determine if they are still interested, Neuner said. Both companies have been informed negotiations have reached an impasse, he said.

“All the proposals we considered had attractive elements,” Neuner said. “MU separated itself because they are local – the jobs would stay here, tax dollars would turn over here and we would compete against the bigger markets and not necessarily against each other. We felt we had to look at MU first because it had greater impact on our community.”

The competition between the two providers has at times been fierce and the negotiations put that rivalry on hold in some ways. Boone in 2015 successfully fought a proposed 10-bed hospital affiliated with Fulton Medical Center, then jointly operated by MU and Nueterra, to be built on Lenoir Street.

The negotiations have provided a better understanding between the two providers even if they did not reach an agreement, said Jonathan Curtwright, CEO of MU Health Care.

“While our decision to pause negotiations is difficult, there is a tremendous amount of mutual respect for the BHC Board of Trustees and we know that they share our ultimate goal to do what is in the best interest of those we serve,” he said.

Boone has until the end of the year to inform BJC whether it will negotiate a lease with another management company or remain with the St. Louis-based provider.

“That is just telling them whether we will be staying with you or not,” Neuner said. “We don’t have to identify what we are doing.”

The deadline at the end of the year is not a problem, Neuner said.

“We continue to have options and a lot of what we learned in this process, and the due diligence especially, will expedite the next phase of this process,” he said.

In a letter to the trustees in 2016, BJC wrote that it wasn’t happy with the current lease structure. The short lease term, with an exit option every five years, rent changing with hospital cash flows and governance model with a county-elected board of trustees “is no longer responsive to what the hospital will need to succeed, indeed, to thrive in the years ahead,” BJC wrote.

In a letter to hospital employees, Neuner wrote that the trustees will work to find the right partner.

“While this decision to pause negotiations is difficult, there is a tremendous amount of mutual respect between our two organizations, and we remain willing to explore future collaborations that would improve healthcare for the citizens of Boone County and all of Missouri,” Neuner wrote.
UPDATE: Boone Hospital, MU hit pause button on partnership talks

By Missourian staff

Updated Information

This story has been updated to include comments from BHC trustees chairman Brian Neuner.

Talks of a partnership between Boone Hospital Center and MU Health Care have ended for the time being.

Boone Hospital Center’s board of trustees and MU Health Care issued a joint statement by email on Thursday morning announcing that after 18 months of negotiations they have decided to pause exclusive negotiations.

The trustees and representatives of MU have been talking behind closed doors regularly about a possible collaboration as the 2020 expiration of Boone Hospital Center’s lease with BJC HealthCare approaches.

BJC has informed the trustees it believes the best interest of both parties is for Boone Hospital Center to find a new arrangement for management of the hospital. It recommended last year that Boone seek a partnership with MU Health Care.

If either Boone or BJC intends to discontinue the current lease arrangement, it must notify the other party by the end of 2018.

“Our guiding principle has been to do what is in the best interest of our patients, employees and communities we serve as we explored many options,” the Thursday statement from the trustees and MU said. “The BHC Trustees and MU Health Care leadership were unable to fully align at this time on the mission and strategic direction necessary for the proposed partnership.”

BHC trustees chairman Brian Neuner said in an interview on Thursday that Boone Hospital Center and MU Health Care’s interests don’t align at this time and cited mission differences between the two.

“They’re an academic center; their mission is teaching, and that’s wonderful,” Neuner said. “But we’re not in that same approach, so how you get those two cultures and approach it together can present a lot of challenges. And how both sides see the future, we have a little different approach to that as well.”
Neuner said the “complicated” process of finding a new partner involves both parties — the BHC trustees and UM System Board of Curators — looking out for their best interests.

“We have to ask ourselves, ‘Is this enough in common to move forward with the deal?’ And right now that’s a no,” Neuner said.

Boone Hospital fielded multiple proposals before initially settling into talks with MU Health Care. It has not yet pursued talks specific to proposals from Tennessee-based Duke LifePoint and Kansas City-based Saint Luke’s Health System. It also has mentioned the option of standing alone.

“We began (talks) with MU because we thought it represented the greatest opportunity for the central Missouri community, and it would’ve kept the jobs here locally,” Neuner said. “With BJC, some of the jobs have been moved to St. Louis and certainly some of the revenue, too. That’s one of the main reasons why we began looking at MU first.”

He said the trustees now will take a deeper look at the other proposals to see if anything’s changed since they were submitted. The trustees also will consider the stand-alone option.

Jonathan Curtright, chief executive officer of MU Health Care, said in the statement the hospital is “grateful and appreciative” of the chance to talk about a partnership.

“As an academic health system, we are committed to being good stewards of our resources and ensuring balance across the three priorities central to our mission: advancing clinical excellence, driving world-class research, and fostering educational opportunities,” Curtright said. “While our decision to pause negotiations is difficult, there is a tremendous amount of mutual respect for the BHC Board of Trustees and we know that they share our ultimate goal to do what is in the best interest of those we serve.”

The statement said both organizations remain willing to explore future collaborations.

“We’re not the biggest hospital, but I think most people in mid-Missouri consider us the best,” Neuner said. “We have some great accolades that have generated some tremendous pride at Boone ... So we’re going to maintain those things.”

*Missourian reporter Claire Mitzel contributed to this report.*
Boone Hospital and MU Health Care decide to "pause negotiations" on merger

By ELIZABETH DUESENBERG


COLUMBIA, Mo. - Boone Hospital Center trustees and MU Health Care officials released a joint statement on Thursday announcing the decision to pause negotiations for their potential partnership after more than six months of exclusive negotiations.

ABC 17 News previously reported that the two hospitals were in talks to merge after the Boone Hospital lease with BJC Healthcare ends in 2020.

Officials said in the statement they "were unable to fully align at this time on the mission and strategic direction necessary for the proposed partnership."

"I think we just came to a point where we couldn’t agree on some things and it wasn’t in really either sides best interest to keep moving forward," said Brian Neuner, chairman of the Boone Hospital Board of Trustees. "So we decided to push the pause button. We’re going to reevaluate our options and then try to move forward from there."

Both hospitals agreed that their primary interest is to do what is best for their patients, employees and communities they serve.

MU Health Care CEO Jonathan Curtright released the following statement Thursday:

"We are extremely grateful and appreciative of the time and energy all parties invested to discuss what a partnership could look like. As an academic health system, we are committed to being good stewards of our resources and ensuring balance across the three priorities central to our mission: advancing clinical excellence, driving world-class research, and fostering educational opportunities. While our decision to pause negotiations is difficult, there is a tremendous amount of mutual respect for the BHC Board of Trustees and we know that they share our ultimate goal to do what is in the best interest of those we serve."
Officials ended the statement by saying the two hospitals are committed to providing patient-centered care and will remain willing to explore future collaborations.

"I hope they hit the reset button on that pause," said Columbia Mayor Brian Treece.

Treece said he believes the partnership would help the city's economy and strengthen Columbia's position as a place for health care.

"We have the opportunity to be a real model when it comes to creating the type of synergy and that type of local cooperation on health care," he said.

The hospital partnership was also on the Columbia Chamber of Commerce's list of legislative priorities for 2018. President Matt McCormick said the chamber supports the hospitals' decision.

"We always support the hospitals," he said. "They’re going to continue to work on making sure what’s best, and it’s really 'Where do we play a part, if we can play a part, in assisting the hospitals?'"

Boone Hospital Center has until the end of 2018 to make a decision on its current partnership with BJC Healthcare.

For more background on the merger, click here.

MU Healthcare and Boone Hospital Center halt negotiations

By ELLI FITZGERALD AND DAYTONA EVERETT


COLUMBIA - After more than a year of negotiations, MU Healthcare and Boone County Hospital trustees have decided to put a pause on their mission to collaborate.
In a release sent out Thursday, the two organizations said they were unable to align on the mission and direction needed for a successful partnership.

Both parties spoke highly of the collaboration efforts despite the halt of negotiations.

“It would’ve kept the focus right here, it would’ve kept jobs here, we would’ve grown here,” Boone Hospital Board of Trustees Chairman Brian Neuner said. “Resources wouldn’t have left Boone County like they are now going to Saint Louis with BJC.”

"We are extremely grateful and appreciative of the time and energy all parties invested to discuss what a partnership could look like," said Jonathan Curtright, chief executive officer of MU Health Care, in a joint statement. "While our decision to pause negotiations is difficult, there is a tremendous amount of mutual respect for the BHC Board of Trustees and we know that they share our ultimate goal to do what is in the best interest of those we serve."

Neuner is optimistic about BCH’s mission to continue grabbing any opportunity to improve patient care.

"The Boone Hospital Board of Trustees will continue to pursue opportunities that effectively position our community hospital as a vital health care resource for the people and communities we serve," Neuner said.

MU Healthcare and BCH Trustees said their mission to best serve their patients and communities remains a priority.

Now that the organizations are no longer seeking out a partnership, Neuner said they’re back to friendly competition with MU Health.

“It’s friendly competition, but competition is great. If you don’t have competition, you have mediocrity.”

At the end of 2018, Boone Hospital will have to choose whether they continue with BJC in St. Louis.
How the brain adapts to a hand transplant

Generated from News Bureau press release: Brain reorganization supports recovery of function in hand transplant recipient, MU researcher finds

When a person loses a hand, nerves that control sensation and movement are severed. This trauma deprives sensory and movement areas of the brain of stimulation, causing them to reorganize their functions. Whether these reorganizational changes are reversible in the adult brain is of broad relevance to neurorehabilitation.

A new study shows that higher-level regions of the brain may compensate for persistent reorganizational changes in brain areas responsible for hand sensation and movement.

“Currently, there are approximately 75 former amputees worldwide who have received hand transplants,” says Scott Frey, chair in cognitive neuroscience in the University of Missouri School of Medicine departments of psychological sciences, physical medicine and rehabilitation, and neurology.

“While conceptually similar to heart, lung, and kidney transplants, hand transplants present unique challenges. For successful recovery, the brain that has reorganized following hand loss must relearn how to feel with, and control voluntary movements of, the new hand. How this is possible has been a central question in my work for the past decade.”

In this recent paper Frey and his team studied a trauma victim who had lost his left, non-dominant hand through a crush injury at the age of 23. He underwent the transplant procedure over a decade later and essentially had to “re-learn” sensory perception and basic motions, such as reaching and grasping.

In the study, the hand transplant patient completed a series of ordinary reaching and grasping tasks at different intervals following the hand transplant procedure. Regions of the brain were monitored by functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to observe how sensorimotor areas
in both sides of the brain reacted to the tasks. The researchers found that at 26 and 41 months post-surgery, the patient showed marked improvements in hand function that were accompanied by some surprising adaptations in the brain.

“While areas involved in basic sensory and motor functions exhibited persistent amputation-related changes, higher-level regions that typically control reaching and grasping actually took over their old functions again,” Frey says.

“The results from the study suggest that even in the middle-aged brain, when stimulation is provided, areas of the rain that are ‘upstream’ may compensate for persistent reorganizational changes in ‘down-stream regions.’ This fresh perspective, if correct, may have broad implications for how approach the challenge of neurorehabilitation in a variety of conditions.”

Frey and his team’s work on amputees may inform rehabilitation of amputees and stroke patients.

The paper appears in *NeuroImage*. Funding for the study came from the Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health.

The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the funding agencies.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**Sen. McCaskill to hold forum for Mizzou students**

By Columbia Daily Tribune

**U.S. Sen. Claire McCaskill will host a forum for University of Missouri students Friday, one of three events locally that will combine campaigning for re-election with official business.**

The forum, hosted by the Mizzou College Democrats, will begin at 3 p.m. Friday in Jesse Wrench Auditorium of the Memorial Union. An advance notice of the event stated McCaskill wanted to hear from students about debt, net neutrality, campus sexual assault and other issues on their minds.

McCaskill’s official business visit will be an 11:30 to 1 p.m. lunch meeting with members of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce in the Reynolds Alumni Center at MU.
McCaskill will also be the featured speaker at the Boone County Democratic Party’s annual chili supper from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Parkade Center.

McCaskill, first elected in 2006, will be seeking her third term in November. Republicans have a contested primary with Attorney General Josh Hawley the current frontrunner.

**Senator McCaskill scheduled to speak in Columbia Friday**

By DEBORAH KENDRICK

Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill will be in Columbia and is scheduled to hold two events during her visit.

First, the senator will be speaking with the Columbia Chamber of Commerce to talk with its members about federal legislation and issues that are important to Missourians.

**That event is scheduled to start at 11:30 a.m. at Reynolds Alumni Center on the University of Missouri campus.**

Also, the senator will be part of a student forum at Mizzou to learn more about what’s important for students.

Some of those topics will include student debt, net neutrality and campus sexual assault.

That event is scheduled to start at 3 p.m. at Wrench Auditorium.
Kansas Fraternity Landlord’s League members who raised concerns this month that the University of Kansas might require freshmen members to live on campus instead of in fraternity houses were informed this week that the university has no plans to do so.

“The university will not be making a policy change that would require freshmen in the Greek system to live on campus,” a spokesperson said this week.

Still, the issue has quietly troubled members of the league — a nonprofit made up of Greek alumni associated with 10 KU fraternity chapters — since the University Senate Ad Hoc Committee included recommendations to require all freshmen to live on campus in a gender equity report in 2017.

Though the committee report was not commissioned by the university, it was the second time such recommendations had been made to school officials since former Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little created a sexual assault task force in 2015.

That task force recommended that freshmen fraternity members should be required to live on campus so that they are exposed to campus programming aiming to prevent sexual assault.

It also suggested that fraternity houses should delay recruitment until the second semester of freshmen year so that the pledging process does not interfere with the “unfamiliar and rigorous academic demands of the first year.”

Later that year, administrators announced that requiring all freshmen to live on campus was not feasible, in part because the University of Kansas does not have enough housing to accommodate all freshmen students.
And while administrators said they had conversations with Greek organizations, freshmen recruitment hasn’t changed at the university.

Spokesperson Erinn Barcomb-Peterson said this week that school officials have no plans to revisit the 2015 recommendations.

Kansas Fraternity Landlords League member David Steen said he and other alumni had wondered if the university would reconsider as it prepares to open more dormitories this year.

“We thought, ‘Is there a possibility this could be implemented?’” Steen said this week.

The gender equity report also made them also wonder if the “issue is still on the table,” Steen said, and prompted members to examine both the 2015 and 2017 reports this fall.

Steen said he found that some of the studies cited by the 2015 task force were flawed and outdated and that some data, including graduation, retention and academic performance, shows that Greek students perform better academically than non-Greek students.

He said reported crime data in the most recent Clery Act Annual Security Report did not indicate a greater risk of assault in non-campus facilities.

“We hadn’t heard that there was any disproportionate problem (related to sexual assault),” Steen said. “To be candid, we were offended by the implication and deeply concerned about the flawed data.”

**While fraternity chapters at both the University of Kansas and the University of Missouri can recruit freshmen members after high school graduation, some universities have opted to delay the pledging process, as many sororities do, to second semester.**

The University of Southern California announced new Greek recruitment standards earlier this year. Students will not be able to rush until second semester — and only if they achieve a certain GPA.

And consultants who examined risk factors affecting University of Missouri’s Greek students this past fall also recommended that fraternity members should live in dorms for their freshman year in a report released this fall.

Mizzou has not made any decision related to whether or not the recommendation will be implemented.

But such policies are not uncommon, the Columbia Missourian reported last year. Of the 14 schools in the Southeastern Conference, eight have clear policies that ban freshmen from living in fraternity and sorority houses.
Post-Presidency Benefits at Michigan State

NO MENTION

By RICK SELTZER

Lou Anna Simon could have the option of collecting her full presidential salary for two years, plus perks, after resigning as president of Michigan State University in the wake of the Larry Nassar sexual abuse scandal.

Simon’s employment contract gives her the option of returning to the faculty after she steps down as university president. She would be entitled to a one-year research leave, in which she would be paid her full presidential base salary of $750,000. After returning to the faculty, she would then be paid another year at her full presidential salary.

Thereafter, her pay would dip to 75 percent of her presidential base salary, or about $563,000. It would be subject to annual review, salary increases and fringe benefits, according to her employment contract.

Simon announced late Wednesday that she was resigning from Michigan State after she faced fierce criticism for the university’s handling of the Nassar scandal. In her resignation letter, she apologized to victims and said she loves Michigan State.

“As tragedies are politicized, blame is inevitable,” Simon wrote. “As president, it is only natural that I am the focus of this anger. I understand, and that is why I have limited my personal statements. Throughout my career, I have worked very hard to put Team MSU first. Throughout my career, I have consistently and persistently spoken and worked on behalf of Team MSU. I have tried to make it not about me. I urge those who have supported my work to understand that I cannot make it about me now. Therefore, I am tendering my resignation as president according to the terms of my employment agreement.”

Details about the transition will be announced as soon as possible, according to a statement from Board of Trustees chair Brian Breslin. The board will be working through those details for the rest of the week, it said.
Nonetheless, Simon remained a central figure in news coverage throughout the day, and the terms of her departure were included in scrutiny.

Michigan State provided a copy of Simon’s most recent employment agreement Thursday. Inside Higher Ed also requested a copy of any severance agreement the president is signing, but the university did not send such a document. A spokesman did not provide comment, and it is not clear whether Simon will sign an additional severance agreement.

Simon’s contract clearly outlines terms in which she can be terminated or resign. The board can vote to terminate her with 60 days' written notice. She can also resign by giving 60 days' notice. The terms are notable among presidential contracts, which often run for a set number of years.

After Simon’s service as president, she is given the option to return to the Michigan State faculty along with all fringe benefits an officer of the university would receive. The contract also calls for her to receive an office in a “mutually agreeable university building, along with appropriate secretarial services, computer and technology equipment, technical support, a telephone and other necessary office tools.”

She is also guaranteed certain lifetime benefits for her and her spouse. They include two all-events parking passes, two tickets to home football games in the university’s Spartan Club, two tickets to home women’s basketball games, the option to purchase up to four season tickets for men’s basketball games, tickets for postseason games for several sports -- including football -- and tickets for on-campus performances on terms normally offered to university leaders. She is also to hold the title of president emeritus.

The postemployment benefits would likely make Simon, whose field of study is higher education, Michigan State’s highest-compensated faculty member. C. Konrad Gelbke, university distinguished professor of physics at the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory, was the university’s highest-paid faculty member in 2016, according to data compiled by MLive. He earned $433,440. University documents do not appear to show any faculty members earning substantially more in 2017.

Full professors at Michigan State earned an average of $150,100 annually, according to an American Association of University Professors annual report. Simon, who has been at Michigan State in various capacities for more than 40 years, was appointed a distinguished professor at the university in 2017. She was first appointed a professor of educational administration in 1984.

Still, critics of large compensation packages for former college presidents -- so-called platinum parachutes -- argued she will be able to earn more than twice the salary of other top professors in
Michigan State’s College of Education. Between the first two years of her postpresidential appointment, she will be able to earn $1.5 million, said James Finkelstein, a professor emeritus of public policy at George Mason University who studies presidential compensation.

“But that’s just the money,” he said. “There are things we’ve never seen, or maybe only seen once before in a presidential contract.”

It’s common for presidents to receive lifetime benefits associated with emeritus status, Finkelstein said. They would include email accounts, library access and even discounted tickets to performances or sporting events. Less common are perks like lifetime technology support.

The compensation package raises questions, Finkelstein said. “While I’ve read these statements saying what a successful president she’s been, and I don’t think there’s any doubt that she’s done a lot for the institution, I also believe that a university president is like the captain of a ship,” he said. “When you have a president who is ensnared in some of these huge scandals for which the university is going to have years, in all likelihood, of legal battles and potential liability ahead of it, should the president of the university receive these kinds of benefits?”

Many who have sat in the president’s chair would answer that question with a resounding yes. Backers argue presidents are placed in a fishbowl on campus and asked to do a job that is sometimes impossible. It can be argued that presidents deserve to be well compensated in return for all they give up and working constant long hours. And contracts often do peg postpresidential salaries as a percentage of amounts earned in the role.

Additionally, research shows that tenure for college and university presidents is less than six years, shorter than the tenure for CEOs in the private sector. And the case of Simon, ousted from her presidency even though she has said she did not have firsthand knowledge of the Nassar case, shows that a president’s job can quickly go from seeming safe to being gone.

In such a climate, it can be argued presidents need a parachute. Yet many would say that a tenured job at a standard rate of faculty pay would be enough of one. So Simon’s postpresidency plans may be important in the ongoing discussion about the college presidency moving toward a chief executive officer model. I think this is going to be one of the real tests of whether or not university presidents really want to continue to be seen as CEOs and have all the benefits,” Finkelstein said. “If they’re willing to accept the benefits, they have to be willing to accept the risks.”

Also worth noting is that Simon’s presidential salary is not out of line for leaders at nearby major public universities. University of Michigan president Mark Schlissel had a base salary of $795,675 in 2016, and Purdue University’s president, Mitch Daniels, earned $728,569.
Meanwhile, Michigan State’s handling of allegations against Nassar in the years before he was fired continue to draw scrutiny. On Thursday, several Michigan lawmakers demanded unredacted copies of police reports and other investigations into Nassar for several years starting in 2014. The university has already asked the state attorney general to review the situation, and it faces a National Collegiate Athletic Association probe. Additionally, about 150 of Nassar's victims have brought civil lawsuits against the university.