These apps boost literacy of struggling young readers
Posted by Cailin Riley-Missouri January 26th, 2018

Generated from News Bureau press release: Speech recognition apps can improve literacy, MU study finds

Using speech recognition apps in early elementary classrooms can help give children who struggle to read an early boost in literacy, a new study suggests.

More than 71 million children and adults in the United States, or 22 percent of the population, are functionally illiterate. Past research, however, shows that when schools support children who struggle to read early in life, they are more likely to become sufficiently literate and perform better in school.

“If speech recognition is available on mobile devices, then the mobile device becomes the proverbial pen,” says Elizabeth Baker, professor of literacy studies at the University of Missouri. “This means that the student controls what they learn to read; that can be very empowering.”

In the past, an intervention strategy called the Language Experience Approach, where teachers transcribe students’ words for them, was used to help students learn to read. Baker says that while the Language Experience Approach was effective with individual students, it was a time-consuming strategy for teachers and gradually fell out of popularity.

Speech recognition technologies, on the other hand, can be used on mobile devices in classrooms to provide a similar individualized experience to students without overwhelming a teacher.

Baker observed a classroom of first-grade students who were learning to read by using speech recognition apps on mobile devices. Baker found that students who used speech recognition apps to learn to read were more eager to try new words and phrases, possibly because the apps allowed them to make mistakes and grow as readers without any embarrassment.
A more significant end result, Baker found that the students averaged a 97.4 percent accuracy rate on their post-study reading tests.

“Speech recognition technologies are supportive of the learner because it allows them to use personally, culturally relevant grammar,” Baker says. “Children all have different backgrounds, and this technology allows them to learn to read while using their own frame of reference.”

Baker says the results provide encouraging evidence that speech recognition technologies may not only be beneficial for young students, but also could be adapted to help elementary, middle, and high school students, as well as adults who struggle to read. Baker warns, however, that many apps on the market do not yet have the safety features necessary to protect young children and be appropriate for school use.

“There’s the possibility that a student says a phrase and an inappropriate word will pop up,” Baker says. “One teacher may not be able to monitor the screens for all the students; an app that has a child safety button would make this learning method more practical.”

Baker reports her findings in the journal Reading Research Quarterly.

Baker is currently reaching out to potential investors about her idea for a speech recognition-based app that has all the necessary features to help keep kids safe while they learn to read.

**Missouri study finds speech recognition apps can improve literacy**

By Alisa Nelson

Generated from News Bureau press release: Speech recognition apps can improve literacy, MU study finds

A recent study by Elizabeth Baker, professor of literacy studies at the University of Missouri, finds that speech recognition apps used in early elementary classrooms can help give children who struggle to read an early boost in literacy. More than 71 million children and adults in the United States, or 22% of the population, are functionally illiterate. Past research shows that when schools support children who struggle to read early in life, they are more likely to become sufficiently literate and perform better in school.
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“Apps, iPads, and Literacy: Examining the Feasibility of Speech Recognition in a First-Grade Classroom” was published in Reading Research Quarterly. Baker is contacting potential investors about the need for a speech recognition-based app that has all the necessary features to help keep kids safe while they learn to read.
Young children benefit from speech recognition apps, MU study finds

By MAIA MCDONALD


Generated from News Bureau Press Release: Speech recognition apps can improve literacy, MU study finds

COLUMBIA - For those who struggle with literacy and other communication skills, speech recognition apps like Siri and Alexa can help to improve the reading skills of young students. According to Betsy Baker, a professor of literacy studies at MU, the 71 million children and adults in the U.S. who are functionally illiterate can be empowered through the voice capturing capabilities of the average smart phone or tablet.

"I got to be one of the teachers aides in the classroom and I oversaw the writing center," Cathey said. "So students circulated around the classroom and one of the places they circulated around was the writing center. The school I was in had iPads and they had school-wide Wi-Fi which is required for speech recognition to work."

In the study, Baker observed a classroom of first grade students who were learning to read via speech recognition apps.

"Speech recognition can write down what you say, but it isn't always accurate. So I wanted to know if it isn't always accurate is it going to be supportive? Are children going to read words that they've never said? So how useful is that?"

What Baker found was that students averaged 97.4 percent accuracy rate on post-study reading tests.
"What it actually caused was opportunities to ask questions about why that wasn't what they said. So students were real good about being able to say 'hey, that's not what I said' and then we can have conversations about well how do you know that?"

Despite many of the students coming from different backgrounds and homes, Baker says the apps can help empower students in their own learning.

"Students can learn to read the words they dictate. There's evidence the students developed a sense of self-efficacy. Instead of being discouraged that they couldn't read or write, they got fired up. 'Hey, this is cool! I wish I could do write everyday!' So they developed of sense of 'yes I am a writer. Yes I can read these texts.' Those are really important."

According to Baker, not only is digital technology a useful asset in helping differently-abled students, it's also the future of learning itself.

For Corey Cathey, a childhood speech therapist at Therapy Unlimited who works with different forms of technology in her own work, technology is extremely important in helping children learn and grow.

"I think that as technology grows, and even just in the last ten years beyond what I ever thought it would be, Cathey said. "I think as we continue to progress in our society and our ability to create things and develop technology that make our teaching and learning more effective and efficient, I think that we're going to see that it will help to create success overall."

Although Cathey doesn't consider herself a "technology person", she does she the benefits of its use and continued development.

"I don't always like to be on my phone or using the internet and things like that. I enjoy it, but I don't want that to consume," Cathey said. "But I think sometimes when we're presented with families that are like 'oh we don't want the technology part, sometime we have to break through that barrier of yes, it is a technology, but it's really sometime that can help promote growth in your child."

Baker believes that despite her own concerns on the accuracy of speech recognition apps, the change it can promote in children is even more important.

"The essence of being able to read and write is to communicate and so I value social media and email and YouTube," Cathey said. "To me, all of these digital forms of communication support literacy; engage people in literacy. So while there are lots of stories out there about warning about the psychological impact of technology, my study doesn't look at that. What I've found is that they learn the words that they dictate even speech recognition can be inaccurate. They develop a sense of self-efficacy. They say 'yes, I'm a reader! I can do this!' They get to maintain their background and culture and learn the words that are important to them. This is a powerful way to read and write."
MU Provost Stokes leaves legacy of calmly leading a campus in crisis

Kacen J. Bayless and Kathryn Palmer

On a chilly November night in 2015, still in her first year at MU, Garnett Stokes walked through a campus embroiled in national controversy.

During the months that preceded that night, a wave of racially charged incidents and conversations swept over campus. Earlier in the week, University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin resigned after a series of well-publicized protests and complaints.

It was a period of uncertainty for the campus, including real threats and misleading rumors. On the evening of Nov. 11, Stokes, MU's provost and executive vice chancellor, took action. With members of the news media beside her, Stokes walked through Greek Town and parts of campus to get a better understanding of what was happening.

"She's very calm when we have a crisis," said Noor Azizan-Gardner, assistant deputy chancellor of diversity. "Nothing ever perturbs her."

Many of Stokes' colleagues laud the calm, collected way in which she has led institutions in times of crisis.

After a relatively short tenure of three years at MU, Stokes prepares for a new chapter in her academic career. Starting March 1, she will become the University of New Mexico's first female president. This is her last week at MU.

To those who worked closely with her, Stokes will be remembered for her leadership during turbulent times, expanding the Title IX office, her relationships with students, faculty and staff and the hiring of MU administrators.

Emily Nevils

Revitalizing campus culture

Loftin, who appointed Stokes as provost in December 2014, emphasized her impact on revitalizing MU’s staff and campus culture.
During the 2015 protests, Loftin said he and Stokes met just about every day to talk about the outcomes of the open forums held on campus and discuss where the university was headed.

"Her insight was invaluable, not just to me, the chancellor, but to the entire chancellor staff," he said. "Many of the administrators on campus at the time were not people who had come from outside like she and I. They were people who had been here for longer periods of time. She brought an outside perspective, which I think the entire leadership team appreciated."

Loftin credits this to Stokes’ experiences at the University of Georgia and Florida State University. As interim president at FSU, Stokes inherited another nationally publicized scandal involving Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback Jameis Winston.

"Her ability to work through that was very important," Loftin said. "It’s good to have a lot of people at the table who come from different places because you can pool your experiences, you can pool your ideas, you can come up with a better solution."

Loftin particularly praised Stokes’ focus on appointing new deans and staff members as her legacy.

"The most visible legacy she will leave is that she’s replaced most of the deans that were in place when she came here as provost," he said. "Those deans are usually long-serving, they have profound impacts on both their own colleges and this institution as a whole, and they affect students in so many ways in terms of their learning experience here. So, that will be something that will live long beyond her time here — that’s why I call it a legacy."

Her commitment to diversity on campus stretched beyond the student community as she worked to staff top-level administrative positions with more women and minorities. During her tenure, Stokes hired nine new deans, five of whom are women.

Patricia Okker, dean of the College of Arts and Science, said she has worked closely with Stokes since she was named provost. After working together in the Provost’s Office, Stokes hired Okker as A&S dean.

Okker said Stokes’ accomplishments include hiring Ellen Eardley as MU’s first full-time Title IX coordinator, Pelema Morrice as vice provost for enrollment management and most of the current deans.

"Although she was here at MU for a relatively short time, she leaves a lasting legacy," Okker said. "I will miss her sense of humor, her smart and sometimes challenging questions and her uncompromising commitment to excellence."

Kathryn Chval, dean of the College of Education and another Stokes hire, described the provost as "an invaluable mentor and a dear friend."
"She initiated significant improvements through her commitment to effective processes, shared governance, and inclusive learning and work environments for staff, students and faculty," she said.

Nadav Soroker

**Strengthening Title IX**

Loftin said that when he came to MU as chancellor, he recognized the need to expand and update MU’s Title IX office. "Garnett was very much a part of developing a robust and successful Title IX coordinated process," Loftin said.

Stokes renamed the Title IX office the Office for Civil Rights & Title IX and reshaped it to become a centralized point of contact for addressing all forms of discrimination on campus.

She brought that initiative from her experiences at FSU, where she served as provost from 2011 to early 2015 and briefly as interim president. While at FSU, Stokes was faced with handling the high-profile controversy surrounding sexual assault allegations against then-football player Jameis Winston. There, she was instrumental in strengthening communications between FSU’s Title IX office and the larger administration and increasing efforts to raise awareness and prevention.

Alyssa Salela

"One sexual assault is too many," Stokes told a Tallahassee Democrat reporter back in 2014. She was a finalist for the FSU presidency before coming to MU.

So, one of the first things Stokes did as MU’s new provost was hire seasoned anti-discrimination lawyer Ellen Eardley as the inaugural Title IX office administrator and vice provost. Loftin credits Stokes as the person who "closed the deal" to bring Eardley to MU.

Eardley, who left MU last summer to return to her work as a civil rights advocacy lawyer in Washington, said Stokes’ strong leadership style was instrumental in her decision to work for MU.

"I was excited for the opportunity to work with a leader like her," Eardley said. "Garnett is a wonderful listener, and I think that is so critical in leadership — to collect a variety of perspectives."

People come first for her, Eardley said. "Whenever I had a difficult decision to make, Garnett Stokes was the one I turned to time and time again because I had confidence in her leadership and also her compassion for people on our campus."

In her first year on the job, Stokes had a cacophony of voices to not only listen to but answer as unrest over racial bias and graduate student rights consumed the campus conversation.
"Having her as provost was so important during the time that students were protesting, and we were seeing too many racist incidents" both on and off campus, Eardley said.

Brittani Fults, the education and prevention coordinator at Office for Civil Rights & Title IX, met Stokes in spring 2015 while still a graduate student at MU at an event for the Association of Black Graduate and Professional Students. The group held a series of forums aimed at strengthening communications between black graduate students and university administration, and Stokes, as Fults recalled it, made an effort to reach out.

After the 2015 protests, Stokes’ decision to expand the Title IX to include civil rights concerns and allocate more resources to investigating discrimination affected lasting change at MU instead of letting the conversation sparked by the protests die out, Fults said.

MU Provost Garnett Stokes and MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley listen to the opinions of MU graduate student Alex Howe following an MU Faculty Council meeting in November 2015 at Memorial Student Union.

Serving as a role model

Rachel Bauer, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Theatre and past president of the Graduate Professional Council at MU, was serving as the organization's vice president during fall 2015, when graduate student rights were prompting discussions and protests. Bauer was impressed by Stokes’ willingness to hear their concerns.

"Since she had been a faculty member for so long, she had had graduate students of her own," Bauer said. "She really came to understand why we were asking for things like our health insurance back. She and the chancellor at the time were really receptive to hearing our concerns."

After the protests, change did come: Graduate student health insurance subsidies were reinstated and stipends for graduate assistantships saw an increase.

"I think she was at the university during a really tough time," Bauer said. "Mizzou is doing a lot of growing, and with that comes a lot of growing pains."

In her time at MU, Stokes served as a role model for women such as Bauer, who said seeing women like Stokes in university leadership positions sends a strong signal to women of all ages "… that women can lead and can succeed in these areas and can contribute to the overall missions of the universities and can be just as qualified to lead an institution. … I want to see a lot more of it."

When Stokes takes the helm at UNM, she will become part of the 30 percent of women who serve as college and university presidents in the U.S., according to a 2017 study by the American Council on Education.
"Having women fulfilling these executive leadership positions in higher education really negates the historical basis of how higher education even started," a place historically reserved for men, Fults said.

"Provost Stokes is an excellent mentor and role model for everyone who wants to be a leader in higher education regardless of their gender, but it is important for women and people who identify as women to see other women in leadership roles," Eardley said. "It helps others understand that we value women’s voices at Mizzou — that we value women’s leadership at Mizzou — and it helps inspire others. The great thing about Provost Stokes is that she is an amazing leader who just happens to be a woman."

"It’s a big loss to the campus, to have Garnett leaving."

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Questions abound after MU Health, Boone end talks

By Rudi Keller

The future of Boone Hospital Center after negotiations with the University of Missouri failed to secure a lease agreement will mean acting quickly to determine if there is another willing suitor or if the hospital must go it alone.

The Board of Trustees must let BJC Healthcare know by the end of the year whether it wants to continue the 29-year relationship or end it when the lease expires in 2020. The April election for the board, pitting former trustee Greg Steinhoff against athletic trainer and businessman Mark Dempsey will be a chance to put the issues that must be solved into focus.

“We have the same questions everybody has,” Matt McCormick, CEO of the Columbia Chamber of Commerce, said Friday when asked what his members want to know about the hospital. “What’s the timeline you have now and where are you with the previous suitors, and what’s the future plan?”

MU Health Care and the trustees issued a joint statement Thursday that the exclusive negotiations begun in 2016 have been paused. The trustees began the negotiations after seeking proposals to take over the lease that drew responses from MU, St. Luke’s Health System in Kansas City and Duke LifePoint Health, a Tennessee-based firm.

Trustee Randy Morrow called St. Luke’s and Duke LifePoint to inform them the negotiations with MU Health had ended, trustees chair Brian Neuner said Friday.
Now the board must wait to see if either company wants to talk or if a new request for proposals must be issued. St. Luke’s did not respond to messages left Friday with its public relations team. Michelle Augusty, spokeswoman for Duke LifePoint, did not state in an email response whether her company is still interested in Boone.

“We are aware that the negotiations between Boone Hospital and University of Missouri have ceased,” Augusty wrote. “We are confident that the Boone Hospital Board of Trustees is carefully assessing next steps. Out of respect for the board’s efforts, Duke LifePoint will not comment on that process.”

The issues the trustees asked potential lessees to address in 2016 are still important, Neuner said. The request for proposals asked about the guiding principles for operating the hospital, including whether it would seek partnerships with private practices, develop a strategy to compete with MU and how to address other financial issues.

The provider network covered by the MU employee insurance plan, for example, excludes Boone. An affiliation with the university would have solved that problem.

Whether Boone stays with BJC, finds a new lessee or reverts to its pre-lease position as a standalone provider should be determined by what best solves the financial issues it faces, Steinhoff said. He’s disappointed the negotiations with MU are over because they held promise to address the financial questions and provide other benefits for both institutions, he said.

“When you add up all those things that hurt it, primarily on the revenue side, the question is which one of these options give the best chance to address those concerns,” Steinhoff said.

Becoming a standalone provider would be a lot of work, he said.

“There would be capital investment in IT, all the pension costs, human resources, everything comes back to Boone,” he said. “That is an enormous amount of work, with some advantages that come with standalone.”

Dempsey said he’s happy the negotiations with MU have ended because he was never certain it was a good deal for the county.

That doesn’t mean he couldn’t be convinced if the option re-emerges, he said.

“I would totally be in favor of looking at all options and the university would certainly be an option,” Dempsey said.

In the public’s view, the plan to affiliate with the university seemed to be moving smoothly until Thursday, he said. That left the public with little information about how deeply other options, including operating as a standalone hospital, had been investigated, he said.

“I absolutely think that has attraction,” he said. “I don’t know if that was ever really and truly looked at but I think it needs some serious attention now.”
Mizzou to ditch overnight getaway business

By: Alisa Nelson

Some Mizzou football fans and other campus visitors can kiss the dorm room rental experience goodbye. The flagship school is getting out of the overnight getaway business. University of Missouri System President Mun Choi tells Missourinet residence halls will be full of students next fall.

“Part of that is due to additional student interest in attending Mizzou, as well as reductions that were announced to reduce the costs of dining and residence halls at the university,” says Choi.

Starting this fall, the school is dropping rates between 2.2 and 5% for more than one-third of its more popular residence halls. They will be nearly $350 less annually than the least expensive current campus housing plan. Dining rates will also be about $300 less annually than the lowest option currently available.

The reductions are in response to last fall’s tuition hike of 2.1% for all four campuses.

“The tuition increase that they will see, because it was capped, is only about $210. There’s a net savings, even though the tuition went up this year. We are doing whatever we can to ensure that we have an affordable educational experience for our students,” says Choi.

Last year, the university system had to find ways to handle a $40 million negative hit in state funding for the current fiscal year and about $60 million in shrinking student enrollment and campus housing demand. To help offset costs, Mizzou closed seven dorms to students last fall and rented out rooms at Respect, Excellence and Discovery halls to the public.

The response to the lodging experiment has been positive. Weekend room rentals sold out and created a waiting list for the $120-per-night suites.

Despite the venture’s popularity, one of the university’s top priorities is student success. School leaders say living on campus can help with student achievement.
Classical studies, romance languages and other Mizzou programs could end

By: Alisa Nelson

Mizzou is considering whether to eliminate programs like classical studies, nuclear engineering, romance languages and personal finance planning. University of Missouri System President Mun Choi tells Missourinet a task force is recommending 33 program cuts.

“By having a large number of programs that are not very successful in meeting the level of excellence that we expect, would take away from those programs that do require the investment that can reach or maintain the level of excellence,” says Choi. “What are those programs we are going to focus on to continue to grow?”

A $40 million reduction in state aid for the current fiscal year and about $60 million in declining enrollment led the system to cut programs and jobs and increase tuition by the capped rate of 2.1% last year.

Republican Governor Eric Greitens’ fiscal year state budget that begins in July includes about $70 million in proposed cuts to higher education. Several members of the Missouri Legislature have been critical of the recommendation and hope the body will not go along with that part of the governor’s plan. We won’t know the end result until after Greitens takes action on the budget.

Choi describes the potential cuts as pruning the overall life of a plant – the life of Mizzou’s academic enterprise in this case – to ensure the strength of the plant. Most of the programs targeted, which have low enrollment, are masters and doctorate programs.

“As we evaluate some of these programs, we also have to evaluate the quality. Not just the numbers but the quality,” says Choi. “What are the graduates doing after they graduate? Are they trained sufficiently so that they can make an impact in their chosen career field?”

One continuing message Choi has expressed during these stages of pruning is the University of Missouri cannot be all things to all people. All four campuses are evaluating possible cost-
cutting measures that include the closure or consolidation of programs. Distance learning and online classes are part of the discussions about consolidation and generating revenue.

“We want to explore ways that our four campuses can collaborate. So students at UMKC can take classes in nuclear engineering, which is not offered at UMKC, but can be taken as a distance learning from Mizzou or from S&T,” says Choi. “And vice versa, students can take classes at Mizzou from UMSL, which is nationally renowned for their work in criminal justice. These are ways that we can make more course offerings available to our students regardless of where their home campus is located.”

Choi emphasizes that the recommendations are in the early stages of a multi-stage process. He says a collaborative effort involving public input will occur before the fate of the programs are finalized.

School mental health screenings may miss kids who need support

Generated from News Bureau press release: Current mental health screenings alone not accurate enough to help elementary students

While many educators, counselors, and social workers are working to improve practices to identify children who need help through risk assessments such as mental health screenings, there is a high degree of variance between teacher reports when using these screenings, a new study indicates.

Creating a more holistic view of a student’s behavior may be the key to identifying more children who need additional support, says study author Melissa Maras, a research consultant at the University of Missouri Assessment Resource Center.

“For many children, one risk assessment completed by a single teacher on any given day may not provide enough insight as to whether or not a child needs additional mental health supports,” says Melissa Maras, a research consultant at the University of Missouri Assessment Resource Center.
“But if we can get input from several different sources, such as teachers, counselors, parents, and other adults involved in a young person’s life, we may have a better understanding of their overall needs and resources.”

Maras says that building the capacity of schools’ mental health programs and investigating the accuracy of screening processes is crucial because many states depend heavily on schools to meet the mental health needs of students.

For example, the ratio of school-employed mental health professionals to students in Missouri presents significant challenges. The ideal ratio is 1 social worker for every 250 students; the ratio for the 2016-2017 school year was 1 social worker for every 2,065 students.

Statewide data show that Missouri also does not meet the recommended student-to-professional ratio for school counselors or school psychologists.

The Missouri Department of Mental Health reports that more than 80 percent of the 97,000 young Missourians who needed treatment for serious mental health problems in 2015 did not receive public mental health support.

Data from three different risk assessments were collected from three samples of elementary schools in different states. The findings show that as much as 20 percent of the variance in universal risk assessments is due to teacher and classroom factors rather than student-level differences.

Teacher factors include possible biases and personality differences. Classroom factors include how students are grouped in classrooms and the number of students with greater academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.

“More research on best practices for identifying children with mental health needs must be done,” Maras says. “While it’s important to look further into what teacher and classroom factors are causing these discrepancies, it’s equally as valuable to devote time to honing multi-faceted ways to identify young people in need.”

Schools might be able to strengthen current identification practices by supplementing assessments with other data, such as a student’s discipline referrals, attendance, and academic performance over time, Maras suggests.

“Strengthening school mental health programs to be as effective and efficient as possible increases the likelihood that young people will get the additional mental health supports they need to be successful,” she says.

The findings are published in Advances in School Mental Health Promotion.

Additional coauthors of the study are from the University of Florida and Miami University.
Missouri Title IX office investigating basketball player Terrence Phillips

BY AARON REISS AND ALEX SCHIFFER
January 28, 2018 02:59 PM
Updated January 28, 2018 05:45 PM

SIMILAR STORIES RAN IN LOCAL, STATEWIDE AND NATIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS

The University of Missouri-Columbia’s Title IX office has opened an investigation into Mizzou basketball player Terrence Phillips, according to a copy of an email sent from the office to an alleged victim and obtained by The Star on Sunday.

The Title IX office investigates issues of sexual violence, harassment and discrimination. Its investigations are conducted independent of law enforcement.

The team indefinitely suspended Phillips on Friday for a “violation of team policy,” saying that his “future status with the program will be determined in coordination with campus and department leadership.”

The Title IX email said that “based on additional information received by our office, the university is proceeding with an investigation against Terrence Phillips.”

The email was sent Friday. The team announced Phillips’ suspension Friday evening. He practiced with the team, according to a source, but he did not join Missouri for its Saturday game at Mississippi State.

Mizzou basketball coach Cuonzo Martin told reporters after the game at Mississippi State that Phillips’ future status with the team is “up in the air.” The coach said he did not know when Phillips’ suspension might end.

The university issued a statement late Sunday afternoon saying it can neither confirm nor deny that any action has been taken by the Title IX office.

“We want to reiterate that the safety of our students, faculty and staff is paramount,” the statement read, in part. “The university takes alleged violations of Title IX very seriously, and any allegations are investigated thoroughly and fairly. In some cases, interim measures are taken while an investigation is pending.”
Phillips, a junior from Orange County, Calif., has been the Tigers’ third-string point guard this season after starting for most of his first two years at MU.

**Ehren Earleywine fired as Mizzou softball coach**

BY ALEX SCHIFFER

[aschiffer@kcstar.com](mailto:aschiffer@kcstar.com)

January 26, 2018 10:42 AM

Updated January 26, 2018 01:18 PM

**SIMILAR STORIES RAN IN LOCAL, STATEWIDE AND NATIONAL MEDIA OUTLETS**

**Missouri softball coach Ehren Earleywine, who took the Tigers to 11 straight NCAA Tournaments but whose recent tenure was marked by controversy, was fired Friday by athletic director Jim Sterk, days before the 2018 season opener.**

Sterk said in a release issued by Mizzou Athletics that he met with Earleywine on Friday morning and informed him of his decision. The school is expected to announce an interim coach early next week.

“We do not take action of this magnitude without careful thought and consideration, however, we have lost confidence in Coach Earleywine’s leadership to foster the type of healthy environment we expect for our student-athletes, and as a result, believe it is in the program’s best interest to make a change at this time,” Sterk said.

“Since my arrival at Mizzou, I have had a chance to consider concerns within the softball program that arose before my time and observe Coach Earleywine’s leadership of our program. This decision was based upon a culmination of leadership concerns, not just one incident, which caused me to reevaluate his position within our softball program at this time.”

A message left with Earleywine seeking comment was not returned.

He entered 2018 in the final year of his contract and was 482-182 (.726) in 11 seasons at Mizzou, reaching eight NCAA Super Regionals and three Women’s College World Series in 11 tries.
But Earleywine had multiple issues off the field.

He was investigated for four months in 2016 under former A.D. Mack Rhoades for alleged verbal abuse of players. Earleywine was retained as coach for the 2017 season in August with the conditions that he seek help to improve on his coaching methods. Rhoades left Missouri to take the job at Baylor shortly after.

He was in the news in May 2015 after an ESPNW story revealed Earleywine had a heated email exchange with Missouri State softball coach Holly Hesse. In the emails, Hesse accused Earleywine of comparing her program to a high school team. In his response, Earleywine used derogatory and expletive comments at Hesse for her job performance.

**Story continues:** [Ehren Earleywine fired as Mizzou softball coach](http://www.abc17news.com/sports/mizzou-opens-investigation-into-mu-basketball-player-terrence-phillips/692603268)

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**Mizzou opens investigation into MU basketball player Terrence Phillips**

By ANDREW KAUFFMAN


**UPDATE 6:30 p.m.:** ABC 17 News has independently confirmed that the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX is investigating Phillips.

ABC 17 News received an email from an alleged victim saying "the University is proceeding with an investigation against Terrence Phillips."

The email was originally sent by an investigator in the Title IX office.

**UPDATE 4:52 p.m.:** Mizzou released a statement saying, "While we cannot confirm or deny any actions from the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX, we are aware of today’s media reports regarding one of the university’s students."

"We want to reiterate that the safety of our students, faculty and staff is paramount. The university takes alleged violations of Title IX very seriously, and any allegations are investigated
thoroughly and fairly. In some cases, interim measures are taken while an investigation is pending."

**ORIGINAL:** The University of Missouri Title IX office has opened up an investigation into junior guard Terrence Phillips, per a report from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The Post-Dispatch received an email from an alleged victim which said, "based on additional information received by our office, the university is proceeding with an investigation against Terrence Phillips."

The Mizzou men's basketball team suspended Phillips Friday night. The team released this statement:

"Terrence Phillips has been suspended indefinitely from the Mizzou Men’s Basketball program for a violation of team policy. Phillips’ future status with the program will be determined in coordination with campus and department leadership."

Phillips is averaging 2.5 points per game. The junior guard has played in 20 games for Mizzou this season.

On Saturday, Mizzou basketball coach Cuonzo Martin told reporters Phillips' status with the team moving forward is "up in the air." We reached out to the team on Sunday morning, but we have not heard back yet.

An MUPD spokesperson told ABC 17 News Saturday he does not know of any investigations into Phillips. We reached out to the Columbia Police Department and the Mizzou Title IX office, but we have not heard back from either of them yet.

We will continue to follow this developing story.
Suspended Mizzou guard Phillips being investigated by university

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Missouri basketball player Terrence Phillips has been suspended from the team and is being investigated by university officials.

The University of Missouri-Columbia’s Title IX office that investigates allegations of sexual discrimination and violence said in an email that it is investigating Phillips. Both the Kansas City Star and St. Louis Post-Dispatch obtained a copy of the email.

The newspapers reported that the Title IX email was sent Friday to an alleged victim.

The team announced Phillips’ indefinite suspension Friday. The junior from Orange County, California, had been a backup point guard for the Tigers this season after starting most of the previous two years.
Title IX office opens investigation into MU basketball's Phillips

By Alec Lewis and Will Jarvis

Missouri’s Terrence Phillips sidesteps Alabama’s Dazon Ingram moving the ball up the court during a 2017 game at Mizzou Arena. MU's Title IX office revealed in an email to an alleged victim that it is investigating the recently suspended junior guard.

The University of Missouri’s Title IX office is investigating recently suspended basketball player Terrence Phillips, according to an email obtained by the Columbia Missourian on Sunday morning.

The email, sent to an alleged victim by the Title IX office — which investigates issues of sexual violence and discrimination on campus — was received Friday, the day of Phillips’ suspension.

“I am writing to inform you that based on additional information received by our Office,” the email reads, “the University is proceeding with an investigation against Terrence Phillips.”

Privacy laws allow the university to withhold details on open cases — which are independent of investigations by law enforcement — and it is unclear how many people are involved in the investigation.

The alleged victim, who spoke to the Missourian on a condition of anonymity, said she filed her complaint with the Title IX office more than a year ago but asked that the office not move forward with her case. The complaint involved allegations of physical abuse.

She also said she knows others who have filed complaints, too. When they came forward and the investigation was launched, she then learned her information would be included in the investigation.

Later on Sunday, MU released a statement in response to the media reports on Phillips.

“While we cannot confirm or deny any actions from the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX, we are aware of today's media reports regarding one of the university’s students.

“We want to reiterate that the safety of our students, faculty and staff are paramount. The university takes alleged violations of Title IX very seriously, and any allegations are investigated thoroughly and fairly. In some cases, interim measures are taken while an investigation is pending.”
Phillips, a junior from Orange County, California, was suspended indefinitely from the team Friday. According to a team statement, Phillips’ “future status with the program will be determined in coordination with campus and department leadership.”

According to the email, Phillips was notified of the investigation on Friday. News of his suspension came later that night.

The junior did not travel to Starkville, Mississippi, for the Tigers’ game against Mississippi State on Saturday.

Asked after the game about Phillips’ status, coach Cuonzo Martin said, “It’s up in the air.”

**THE KANSAS CITY STAR.**

**Former Mizzou softball coach Ehren Earleywine says he was ‘totally blindsided’ by firing**

BY ALEX SCHIFFER AND AARON REISS

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January 27, 2018 11:05 PM

Updated January 28, 2018 05:44 PM

STARKVILLE, MISS. - Ehren Earleywine, the former Missouri softball coach who MU unexpectedly fired Friday, told The Star in a statement Saturday that he feels “totally blindsided” and is “as confused as anyone else as to why this has happened.”

Missouri’s softball season begins Feb. 8 in Tempe, Ariz. Earleywine said in nine-paragraph long statement that there was no singular incident that led to his termination. He said when he asked why the school was letting him go, athletic director Jim Sterk told him, “I’m not required to give you a reason.”

“I don’t know what’s ‘required’ administratively speaking, but I do know what’s right -- looking someone in the eye and telling them specifically why they are being fired after giving 11 years of their life to the university is the RIGHT thing to do,” Earleywine wrote.
Earleywine said associate athletic director Brian Brown, who oversees the softball program, was not present in the meeting when Sterk told him Missouri was firing him.

“Maybe because for the past several months, he has been telling my staff and I repeatedly what a great job we’ve been doing,” Earleywine said. “On the other hand, known critic and major player in the investigation from two years ago, (Senior Deputy Athletics Director) Sarah Reesman, was in attendance.”

Earleywine believes Mizzou let go of him because of a “philosophical coaching difference” between the administration and himself. He had a reputation for being fiery, outspoken and hard on his players.

“Winning isn’t always warm and fuzzy,” Earleywine wrote. “It’s not a love fest, it’s a fight. Being a highly competitive coach means occasionally getting on your players when they aren’t giving their best effort. A tool they will need if they want to be successful in life.”

The former coach, who is from Jefferson City, said the athletic department is still recovering from “a series of bad decisions over the past few years.” He seemed to be referencing the football team’s boycott in November 2015 that forced top university leadership out of their jobs.

**Story continues: Former Mizzou softball coach Ehren Earleywine says he was ‘totally blindsided’ by firing**

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**Earleywine releases statement on his firing**

By Cameron Teague-Robinson

On Friday morning, Missouri fired softball coach Ehren Earleywine 13 days before the regular season, his 12th as the program’s coach. On Saturday, after not returning a phone call to the Tribune on Friday afternoon, Earleywine sent a response detailing his feelings about the program and the details that led to his firing.

His response reads:

“I’ve been totally blindsided by all that has happened in the past 2 days and as confused as everyone else as to why this has happened.
“First and foremost, I want to make it clear that I was told that there was no singular incident that lead to my termination. Subsequently, I asked what culminating factors lead to this decision and the response I got from Jim Sterk was, “I’m not required to give you a reason.” I don’t know what’s “required” administratively speaking, but I do know what’s right - looking someone in the eye and telling them specifically why they are being fired after giving 11 years of their life to the university is the RIGHT thing to do.

“You would also expect your immediate boss to be in the room while being fired, but mine (Brian Brown) was not present in the meeting at all, nor has he had the decency to reach out to me since. Maybe because for the past several months, he has been telling my staff and I repeatedly what a great job we’ve been doing. On the other hand, known critic and major player in the the investigation from 2 years ago, Sarah Reeseman was in attendance.

“I think this all boiled down to a philosophical coaching difference between MU and myself. We’ll never know for sure, but here’s what I think: I believe in winning. Winning isn’t always warm and fuzzy. It’s not a love fest, it’s a fight. Being a highly competitive coach means occasionally getting on your players when they aren’t giving their best effort. A tool they will need if they want to be successful in life. That approach is heavily frowned on at Mizzou (and is the trend nationwide nowadays) which is evident by the response I received from Brian Brown a couple of months ago when I asked “do you think Nick Saban and Geno Auriemma with their hard-nosed approach could coach at Mizzou?” He responded, “You know, I don’t know, that’s a good question.” You know there’s great administrative confusion about what a good coach is when those two can’t qualify as “Mizzou-Made.”

“The University and Athletic department is obviously trying to straighten things out and find itself after a series of bad decisions over the past few years, but somehow keeps stepping in it. Political correctness, allowing kids more power than people in positions of authority, and their love affair with soft-coaching has gotten the University where it is today. I used to care deeply, now its someone else’s problem.

“Looking back, I’m honored to have been a small part of what we all accomplished in my 11 years as the head coach and the results speak for themselves. Doing it at the university I grew up cheering for as a boy growing up just 30 minutes away in Jefferson City was a dream come true for me. When I looked down at my chest and saw Mizzou on it, it meant something to me … something I wanted to fight for. Now, I’m indifferent.

“The plan was always to lead this program to an eventual National Championship and I know we would have won one eventually. And in the meantime, continue to be one of the top programs in the country. There were tremendous recruiting classes stacked up all the way back to the 7th grade and a current freshman class ranking 8th in the country. I had a great coaching staff, the team GPA was a 3.0 or higher every semester, the program hovered in the top 10 and top 15 for most of my tenure, we had 100% graduation rate, averaged the highest attendance for Olympic sports, have an extremely loyal fan base which was never more evident than during our investigation, 11 straight regional tournaments, 8 super regionals and 3 college world series, a thriving booster club, no public incidents regarding off the field behavior by our players, and the
highest winning percentage of any coach in the history of the Missouri Athletic Department....in ANY sport. But according to Jim Sterk there is “a lack of confidence in my ability to lead.”

“It’s now time for me to close this chapter and move forward. Of course, I am sad to see it go, but excited about what God has in store for me. I know initially, I’m looking forward to being more available for my kids, who are the most important things in my life. Coaching has kept me from being with them more than I would’ve liked, but now I can steal back some of the time I missed. I don’t know what career path I will take at this time, nor do I know if I want to continue to coach again. Like I said, I’m going to try to take His lead and see what’s next.”

“Thank you to all of the athletes, coaches, staff and fans for your contribution to one of the most successful era’s in Missouri Athletics history. We did ok.”

The Missouri softball team is scheduled to have its Black and Gold game Saturday before opening the season Feb. 8 against San Jose State at the Kajikawa Classic in Tempe, Ariz.

KC comic strip readers remember ‘Beetle Bailey’ cartoonist Mort Walker, a Mizzou alum

BY IAN CUMMINGS
icummings@kcstar.com

January 28, 2018 10:12 AM

Updated January 28, 2018 05:56 PM

When Mort Walker, creator of “Beetle Bailey,” died over the weekend many readers noted the comic strip artist’s connections to the Kansas City area.
Born Addison Morton Walker in El Dorado, Kan., in 1923, Walker grew up in Kansas City. He graduated from the University of Missouri, where a statue of the lazy, insubordinate Army private “Beetle Bailey” stands in a garden on the Columbia campus.

Walker’s fraternity brothers became models for many of the early “Beetle Bailey” characters and the fictional Camp Swampy took inspiration from Walker’s Army stint at Camp Crowder near Neosho, Mo.

Walker, a World War II veteran, entertained millions of readers over the decades as he satirized the Army through the antics of Bailey and his fellow enlisted men.

Walker died Saturday at his home in Stamford, Conn. He was 94. Readers reacted to the news on social media Saturday.

“I read this cartoon every morning when I was kid. R.i.p.,” reader Angela Burkett wrote in a message posted to Twitter.

Walker’s advanced age was the cause of death, said Greg Walker, his eldest son and a collaborator.

Walker began publishing cartoons at age 11 and was involved with more than a half-dozen comic strips in his career, including "Hi and Lois," "Boner's Ark" and "Sam & Silo." But he found his greatest success drawing slacker Beetle, his hot-tempered sergeant and the rest of the gang for nearly 70 years.

Growing up in Kansas City, Walker attended Northeast High School. He spent a year at a junior college in Kansas City before heading to the University of Missouri.

Walker completed one semester before being drafted into the U.S. Army to serve in Europe during World II. Discharged as a first lieutenant, he returned to the Columbia campus where he served as editor of the student humor magazine the ShowMe, according to the University of Missouri archives.

Staff meetings for the ShowMe were often held in The Shack, a student hangout that was popular at the time and burned to the ground in the 1980s. The spot is now marked by the statue of Beetle Bailey, sitting in a booth with a foamy mug in front of him.

**Walker graduated from the University of Missouri in 1948, pursuing his career as a cartoonist in New York.**

In 2000, Walker was honored at the Pentagon with the Army's highest civilian award — the Distinguished Civilian Service award — for his work, his military service and his contribution to a new military memorial.

Besides sons Greg and Brian, Walker is survived by his second wife, Catherine; daughters Polly Blackstock and Margie Walker Hauer; sons Neal and Roger Walker; stepchildren Whitney Prentice and Priscilla Prentice Campbell and several grandchildren.

Funeral services will be private.
'Beetle Bailey' cartoonist Mort Walker dies at 94

By EMILY HANNEMANN

Photo courtesy of MU Archives.

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A family member says comic strip artist Mort Walker, who tickled newspaper readers with the antics of the lazy Army private "Beetle Bailey," has died. He was 94.

Walker's son, Greg, said his father died Saturday at his home in Stamford, Connecticut. Greg Walker attributed the cause of death to his father's advanced age.

Mort Walker began publishing cartoons at age 11 and was involved with more than a half-dozen comic strips in his career, including "Hi and Lois," "Boner's Ark" and "Sam & Silo." But he found his greatest success drawing Beetle, his hot-tempered sergeant and the rest of the gang at fictional Camp Swampy for more than 60 years.

Walker was an MU student. According to Sheena Rice, senior communications consultant and outreach manager at the MU News Bureau, Mort graduated from MU in 1948. During his time there he was a staffer at the Savitar and at the student humor magazine Missouri Showme.

According to the MU campus dining website, Walker and his friends spent lots of time at a restaurant called "The Shack" when he was on campus. Walker, the restaurant he frequented and the Beetle Bailey comic strip were inspirations for Mort's restaurant, which is located inside The Shack at the MU Student Center.

Similar stories ran in multiple outlets nationwide.
LOS ANGELES — Comic strip artist Mort Walker, a World War II veteran who modeled “Beetle Bailey” on his life as a University of Missouri student and later remade the character into a lazy Army private, satirizing the military and tickling millions of newspaper readers, died Saturday. He was 94.

Walker died at his home in Stamford, Connecticut, said Greg Walker, his eldest son and a collaborator. His father’s advanced age was the cause of death, he said.

Walker began publishing cartoons at age 11 and was involved with more than a half-dozen comic strips in his career, including “Hi and Lois,” ”Boner’s Ark” and “Sam & Silo.” But he found his greatest success drawing slacker Beetle, his hot-tempered sergeant and the rest of the gang at fictional Camp Swampy for nearly 70 years.

Walker, who grew up in Kansas City, graduated from MU in 1948, finishing an education interrupted when he was drafted in 1943. He is honored on campus with a statue of Beetle Bailey as a student outside the Reynolds Alumni Center and at Mort’s, a restaurant in the Student Center.

“Mizzou is a traditional place and I know he felt honored to have these places,” said Todd McCubbin, executive director of the Alumni Association.

Conversations about whether there should be a local remembrance will take place next week, McCubbin said.

The character that was to become Beetle Bailey made his debut as Spider in Walker’s cartoons published by the Saturday Evening Post in the late 1940s. Walker changed Spider’s name and launched “Beetle Bailey” as a college humor strip in 1950.

At first the strip failed to attract readers and King Features Syndicate considered dropping it after just six months, Walker said in a 2000 interview with The Associated Press. The syndicate suggested Beetle join the Army after the start of the Korean War, Walker said.

“I was kind of against it because after World War II, Bill Mauldin and Sad Sack were fading away,” he said. But his misgivings were overcome and Beetle “enlisted” in 1951.
Walker attributed the success of the strip to Beetle’s indolence and reluctance to follow authority.

“Most people are sort of against authority,” he said. “Here’s Beetle always challenging authority. I think people relate to it.”

“Beetle Bailey” led to spin-off comic strip “Hi and Lois,” which he created with Dik Browne, in 1954. The premise was that Beetle went home on furlough to visit his sister Lois and brother-in-law Hi.

Fellow cartoonists remembered Walker on Saturday as a pleasant man who adored his fans. Bill Morrison, president of the National Cartoonists Society, called Walker the definition of “cartoonist” in a post on the society’s website.

“He lived and breathed the art every day of his life. He will be sorely missed by his friends in the NCS and by a world of comic strip fans,” Morrison said.

Fellow cartoonist Mark Evanier said on his website that Walker was “delightful to be around and always willing to draw Beetle or Sarge for any of his fans. He sure had a lot of them.”

“Beetle Bailey,” which appeared in as many as 1,800 newspapers, sometimes sparked controversy. The Tokyo editions of the military newspaper Stars & Stripes dropped it in 1954 for fear that it would encourage disrespect of its officers. But ensuing media coverage spurred more than 100 newspapers to add the strip.

Shortly after President Bill Clinton took office, Walker drew a strip suggesting that the draft be retroactive in order to send Clinton to Vietnam. Walker said he received hundreds of angry letters from Clinton supporters.

For years, Walker drew Camp Swampy’s highest-ranking officer, Gen. Amos Halftrack, ogling his well-endowed secretary, Miss Buxley. Feminist groups claimed the strip made light of sexual harassment, and Walker said the syndicate wanted him to write out the lecherous general.

That wasn’t feasible because the general was such a fixture in the strip, Greg Walker said Saturday. His father solved the problem in 1997 by sending Halftrack to sensitivity training.

“That became a whole theme that we could use,” said Greg Walker, who with his brother, Brian, intends to carry on his father’s work. Both have worked in the family business for decades.

“Beetle Bailey” also featured one of the first African-American characters to be added to a white cast in an established comic strip. (“Peanuts” had added the character of Franklin in 1968.) Lt. Jack Flap debuted in the comic strip’s panels in 1970.

In a 2002 interview, Walker said that comics are filled with stereotypes and he likes to find humor in all characters.
“I like to keep doing something new and different, so people can’t say I’m doing the same thing all the time. I like to challenge myself,” he said.

Walker also created “Boner’s Ark” in 1968 using his given first name, Addison, as his pen name, and “Sam & Silo” with Jerry Dumas in 1977. He was the writer of “Mrs. Fitz’s Flats” with Frank Roberge.

In 1974, he founded the International Museum of Cartoon Art in Connecticut to preserve and honor the art of comics. It moved twice before closing in 2002 in Boca Raton, Florida. Walker changed the name to the National Cartoon Museum and announced in 2005 plans to relocate to the Empire State Building in New York. But the following year, the deal to use that space fell through.

In 2000, Walker was honored at the Pentagon with the Army’s highest civilian award — the Distinguished Civilian Service award — for his work, his military service and his contribution to a new military memorial.

He also developed a reputation for helping aspiring cartoonists with advice.

“I make friends for people,” he said.

Addison Morton Walker was born Sept. 3, 1923, in El Dorado, Kan.

Walker most recently oversaw the work of the staff at his Stamford studio, Comicana.

Besides sons Greg and Brian, Walker is survived by his second wife, Catherine; daughters Polly Blackstock and Margie Walker Hauer; sons Neal and Roger Walker; stepdaughters Whitney Prentice and Priscilla Prentice Campbell and several grandchildren.

Funeral services will be private.

MU documentary students join faculty at Sundance Film Festival

Jessi Dodge

Four students, two faculty and one documentary made their way from Columbia to Utah last weekend for the 2018 Sundance Film Festival. The trip was inspired by the the acceptance of Assistant Professor Robert Greene's film "Bisbee '17" into the festival.
Greene learned of his film's acceptance into the festival in late November. Both Greene and Stacey Woelfel, fellow MU professor and director of the Jonathan B. Murray Center for Documentary Journalism, knew they wanted to take students to the festival if the film was accepted.

"Our hope is to get the students to get a sense of the industry they are interested in joining," said Woelfel. More specifically, Woelfel hopes that students will look at and learn from the short documentaries in the festival. "We didn't submit enough (student) films last year," Woelfel said. Their goal is to increase the number of student films — which are the work of graduating seniors — accepted into Sundance next year.

The festival, which ran from Jan. 18-28, is based in Park City, Utah. Documentaries and films were shown in 23 different theaters spread through Park City, Salt Lake City and at the Sundance Mountain Resort. The festival hosts four competition categories, musical performances, upcoming film previews, artistic exhibitions and presentations throughout the 10 day event.

The four students from the documentary program chosen to attend the festival were sponsored by Mizzou Advantage, an initiative created to help sponsor and support networking and research among students and faculty. Two seniors, Nicky Cook and Wyatt Wu, and two juniors, Olivia Jacobson and Phoebe Mussman, made the trip to Utah to experience what Woelfel describes as "probably the most important film festival in the U.S."

Students left Columbia early Jan. 19 and returned late Tuesday. This allowed the group to spend three full days attending festival events, including viewing between two and three films each day.

"I went in wanting to get a lot of career insight for what I want to do when I graduate," said Cook. He said the trip helped him realize there is no limit to your imagination and vision, and he is excited to start his career as he finishes his degree at MU.

Wu left the festival with a similarly positive experience. "It was really great to see shorts that got into a big film festival, and kind of get an idea of what it's like outside of Columbia and Mizzou," Wu said. "I came out knowing that I actually do have a chance of getting into Sundance."

Greene's film, "Bisbee '17," first screened at Prospector Square Theatre in Park City on Saturday, Jan. 20. The film was scheduled to show a total of five times throughout the festival as one of the 16 films in the U.S. Documentary Competition.

The film tells the story of the Bisbee Deportation of 1917 in Bisbee, Arizona. The town was home to a copper mine, and in the year 1917, 1200 miners on strike were removed from their homes and relocated to the New Mexico desert without supplies or resources. Greene's documentary combines interviews with the town's residents and reenactments of the original event from 100 years ago.

The MU festival goers were also joined by MU alumni, former students who worked on Greene's documentary, and Cassidy Minarik, a student who interned with Sundance at the festival.
The U.S. Documentary Grand Jury Prize was awarded to "Kailish," and the Audience Award went to "The Sentence." "Bisbee '17" is awaiting distribution.

**MU organization celebrates India's Republic Day**

By JOSHUA TYLER


COLUMBIA - Almost seven decades ago, India's constitution became official. On Saturday, a group in Columbia will celebrate.

**The Cultural Association of India (CAI) is hosting India Day at MU's Memorial Union.**

CAI is having the event to celebrate India's 69th Republic Day which was Friday. Sairam Yadavilli, cultural secretary of CAI, said he's looking forward to coming together with other Indian students.

"It was the day that the constitution actually came into effect. we take that as an opportunity to get all the Indians together and celebrate our academic success at Mizzou and also our cultural heritage," Yadavilli said.

"We'll be talking to a host of guest speakers who will be coming all the way from India, and a few of them, notable speakers from here," Aishik Das, 2018 CAI president said. "They'll be talking about culture, they'll be talking about region, and they'll be talking about the various aspects of visiting our country and everything."
The event will have Indian food, dance performances, and guest speakers, including MU's Vice Provost for International Programs Dr. James Scott and MU's School of Business Dean Dr. Ajay Vinzé.

"India has a lot of dance forms, music, and movies, so we want to showcase all that and have some entertainment for the people who come," Yadavilli said.

The event is open to the public. It is set to begin at 1 p.m.

"I would encourage all of you to come to the Memorial Union. It's in the Jesse Wrench Auditorium," Yadavilli said. "Have a taste of the Indian food, the Indian culture, and be a part of the Indian feeling."

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UMKC downtown conservatory loses huge donation

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
mdwilliams@kcstar.com
January 26, 2018 10:32 AM
Updated January 26, 2018 04:45 PM

Plans for a University of Missouri-Kansas City Downtown Conservatory have taken a tremendous blow, with a main contributor pulling a pledge to fund nearly a fourth of the $96 million project.

The Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation has withdrawn its $20 million pledge, a move that could set back, if not jeopardize, the project. It has been billed as a big boost to the cultural and economic development of downtown Kansas City.

News reports indicate the Kauffman Foundation made the decision months ago after Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens backed out on a state promise to fund half the conservatory cost by matching $48 million raised by the university. The foundation hasn’t responded to requests for comment.

CitySceneKC, an online news site, reported that Kauffman decided the project was no longer viable. But other local supporters say they’re still committed to finding the money to make it a reality.
“I still think that this is a terrific idea,” said Greg Graves, whose Graves Family Foundation is one of several that pledged money to the project early on.

UMKC officials said while the project has met a tough setback, it is far from sunk.

“To paraphrase a famous quote, reports of the death of our UMKC Conservatory project are greatly exaggerated,” Barbara A. Bichelmeyer, interim chancellor and provost of UMKC, said in a statement to The Star.

“While we have been facing headwinds since we lost a state match this past summer, we have been hard at work, with renewed energy as we develop new ideas on how we might accomplish the project. Rest assured, it continues to move forward.”

While Graves was serving as president of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, the downtown conservatory was among the chamber’s “Big 5” proposed goals to remake Kansas City.

Julia Irene Kauffman, daughter of Muriel Kauffman and Ewing Kauffman, the former owner of the Kansas City Royals, made the $20 million foundation pledge for the Downtown Conservatory in 2013. It helped jump-start the university’s drive to raise its portion.

In the spring of 2017 the General Assembly passed a bill to issue up to $48 million in bonds for the project, planned for a site near the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts.

But Greitens then announced he would veto the bonds, reneging on the state match despite support from Missouri legislators. University officials said they would take up the torch in a campaign to raise the remaining funds on their own.

UM System President Mun Choi said in a statement in June that “details of the financial plans for the $96 million construction project and the $2 million operating costs are being developed without reliance on state funding.”

That announcement made raising the money more of a university system-wide effort rather than one resting solely on the shoulders of the Kansas City campus.

And system officials said then that shifting away from depending on state bonds would speed up the project because it would not rely on budget decisions by the legislature and governor.

The plan calls for moving the university’s Conservatory of Music and Dance from the Volker campus to a downtown location bounded by Broadway, Central, 17th and 18th streets just south of the Kauffman Center.

Local supporters are still optimistic the project will move forward.

“We remain committed to our Big 5 vision of creating a new downtown campus for the University of Missouri-Kansas City’s renowned Conservatory of Music and Dance,” Joe Reardon, president and chief executive officer of the chamber of commerce, told The Star Friday afternoon.
“The new campus would add even more impetus to the growth and energy of downtown, bringing a constant stream of young students and performers to the site adjacent to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. It is in Kansas City’s collective interest to see this project through.”

Reardon said that while it was “unfortunate that our original plan for state support did not come through as we envisioned. We still believe in and are committed to this project.”

Graves, who said he is committed to “working until the last moment before ever giving up,” also noted that like the Kauffman pledge, all the early pledged financial gifts were made contingent on the state match.

“So I don’t blame the Kauffman Foundation at all,” he said. “I think it is safe to say that those who have already pledged and those considering a pledge now will wait to see what plan B UMKC puts together.”

Bichelmeyer, in her statement, urged supporters to “keep the faith,” adding that “together, we will make this happen.”

**Greitens bears responsibility for the latest blow to UMKC downtown conservatory**

*By The Kansas City Star Editorial Board*

January 26, 2018 06:17 PM

Updated January 26, 2018 06:32 PM

Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens’ disdain for higher education and Kansas City’s arts community continues to have consequences.

The *loss* this time is substantial. A *$20 million pledge* from the *Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation* for the planned downtown arts campus will not come to fruition. And it appears that the specifics and the scale of the project might change.

Last year, Greitens put the planned $96 million campus in grave jeopardy when he *vetoed legislation* that would have fulfilled the state’s promise of matching the $48 million raised by the Kansas City philanthropic community.

At the time, *civic leadership accepted* the reality that our governor does not understand the economic benefits of the arts in urban centers, especially as it relates to higher education. Local leaders vowed to find the funding elsewhere.
But the Kauffman grant was always contingent upon both the funding matches from the state and from private fundraising, said Dave Lady, president of the foundation. The governor’s veto meant that those requirements would be impossible to meet, and eventually, the board had to make a decision.

“It just became apparent that it was fundamentally a different project,” Lady said, adding that the board remains supportive of the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance.

This blow to UMKC is just one example of the governor’s determined efforts to destabilize the University of Missouri System and of his refusal to be a partner in development in one of the state’s two major cities. Greitens declined to keep the state’s commitment to the arts campus, and he ignored the legislature’s wish to raise the funds by issuing bonds.

The campus was to be adjacent to the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts and was to house the conservatory of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, shifting it downtown. The plan was for 165,000 square feet, four floors and two state-of-the-art performance spaces.

On Friday, UMKC and University of Missouri System leadership emphasized that efforts are continuing to “develop new ideas on how we might accomplish the project.”

Announcements around “new developments” can be expected soon, Barbara A. Bichelmeyer, UMKC’s interim chancellor and provost, and Mun Choi, president of the UM system, wrote in a guest column for The Star.

But what is indisputable is that the governor continues to threaten not just this project, but Missouri higher education in general. UMKC has lost $12.6 million through budget cuts in recent years, and the entire system has lost $70.6 million.

The value of a well-educated workforce apparently escapes the governor. Kansas City, like the entire state, must have a readily employable talent pool to continue attracting new businesses and to keep Missouri healthy fiscally.

This is becoming increasingly difficult with an underfunded educational system.

The arts play a role not only in driving economic development but also in attracting new residents.

The arts campus was enthusiastically embraced by a wide cross-section of political, civic and philanthropic leadership. The project was a part of the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce’s Big 5 initiatives. It should have been an easy “yes” for the governor to add his support.

No one would describe the gleaming beauty of the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts as merely concrete and glass. Yet during a visit to Kansas City last year, Greitens condescendingly termed the arts campus a “building for dancers and artists,” dismissing the fact that a well-developed artistic community often helps cities attract educated millennials. The campus was to be much more than bricks and mortar.
The governor’s stubborn reluctance to acknowledge the economic benefits of the arts could cost Kansas City dearly.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**Phill Brooks: Missourians, watch out for looming budget cliff**

**NO MU MENTION**

By Phill Brooks

Missouri’s Legislature is facing one of greater budget precipices I’ve covered in some five decades.

The magnitude of the budget crisis was demonstrated by Gov. Eric Greitens when he unveiled his spending plans.

It includes the largest percentage cut in state funds for public higher education in more than one quarter of a century — a 10.8 percent cut in the prior-year appropriation.

Further, in this current budget year that runs until June 30, the state will not have enough cash to pay your tax refunds on time.

So, rather than delaying tax refunds until next summer or cutting funds from other agencies to pay your refunds, Greitens' budget proposes borrowing more than $250 million from private lenders to pay your refunds on time.

That would kick the cost of tax refunds into the next year when those loans will have to be repaid.

The budget calamity facing Missouri is so bad that the governor had to engage in a bit of financial fantasy to put a rosy face to his budget.

He proposed $163 million in new funding for state highway construction and maintenance.
But the Transportation Department is funded primarily from dedicated funds — such as the gasoline tax — over which the Constitution gives the governor and the Legislature little control.

The governor's budget already has come under attack from legislative Republicans.

Just hours after the governor's budget announcement, the Senate's Appropriations chair voiced concerns about the proposed higher education cuts.

Greitens' plan to borrow money for prompt payment of tax returns raised immediate concerns about Missouri's constitutional ban on the legislature authorizing loans to fund budget obligations.

"We're probably not going to do this, I think," proclaimed House Budget Committee Chair Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob.

Just think of the financial turmoils of Illinois and California to understand the wisdom of the authors of Missouri's Constitution banning deficit spending.

In his defense, the budget problems Greitens now faces are, in part, the result of earlier Republican-controlled legislative sessions that passed business and other tax cuts despite warnings about the long-term financial consequences.

In response, tax-cut proponents argued the cuts would spur economic growth which would generate more tax revenue.

But that has not happened to the degree promised by supporters — despite a rebounding economy.

At the start of this year's legislative session, Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard, R-Joplin, warned of the damage to the state from any new large tax cuts.

Later, a legislative budget leader expressed concerns about the past tax cuts.

The answer to Missouri's current budget woes won't come from the politically easy proposals like improving efficiency. Reducing paper clip purchases will not resolve the budget cliff Missouri now faces.

The alternative of raising taxes would seem unlikely in an election year. Besides, any significant tax increase would require statewide voter approval.

So, what about restructuring government in ways that truly reduce costs?

What about consolidating the more than 500 separate school districts to lower the cost of education administration?
What about consolidating the various competing higher education institutions. That could reduce both duplication and administrative costs.

What about returning to counties rural roads the state maintains that really are not part of the statewide highway system?

What about consolidating the departments of Social Services, Health and Mental Health to reduce administrative overhead for an array of family, medical, nutritional and well-being programs?

If the vision for welfare is a pathway to work, why not consolidate welfare programs with the Labor Department, as one Senate Democratic leader proposed years ago?

These are not the kind of structural ideas I'm hearing from our state leaders to provide long-term solutions to the state's budget realities.

Instead, so far, it strikes me this could be another year when the budget problem again is kicked down the road.

Phill Brooks has been a Missouri statehouse reporter since 1970, making him dean of the statehouse press corps. He is the statehouse correspondent for KMOX Radio, director of MDN and an emeritus faculty member of the Missouri School of Journalism. He has covered every governor since the late Warren Hearnes.

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Higher education is headed for a supply and demand crisis

NO MU MENTION

By Jeffrey J. Selingo, special to the Washington Post

During a recent assembly at the elementary school my two daughters attend, a visitor asked how many children planned to go to college. Nearly every hand in the room shot up.

Colleges better hope those kids were being honest because, a decade from now when they are applying to school, the outlook for enrollment in higher education is dire. The number of high school graduates nationwide is projected to remain relatively flat for the next several years before rising a bit in the middle of next decade. But between 2026 and 2031 — a period of
graduating classes that includes both of my daughters — the ranks of high school graduates are expected to drop by 9 percent.

Beyond the overall numbers shifting, high school graduating classes will become more diverse. Those classes will have fewer white students and more Hispanic students, according to demographers, and a greater range of academic abilities. Family incomes remain stagnant, so student financial need will increase. In other words, the decade ahead will be tumultuous for college enrollment.

Already, we’re beginning to see the impact of demographic changes in higher education. A survey released last week by the Chronicle of Higher Education found that 52 percent of private colleges and 44 percent of public colleges didn’t meet their enrollment goals this past fall.

“We’re an expensive product,” Kathryn Coffman, vice president and dean of admissions and financial aid at Franklin College in Indiana, told the Chronicle. “Now more than ever, outcomes are critical, and people want to know that the investment they’re making is going to result in something.”

For the last year, I’ve been studying projections regarding high school graduates nationwide. What I found is that the country is heading into a lengthy period of significant differences in growth by region. The South and to a certain extent the West will account for nearly all the growth in the high school population over the next decade-plus. At the same time, the Northeast and Midwest — home to the highest density of colleges in the United States with a history of student migration between states — show a continued and steady decline.

The South, which accounted for one-third of the nation’s high school graduates around the turn of this century, will be responsible for nearly half at the peak of its growth in 2025. The West will account for 30 percent of the nation’s graduates by the midpoint of the 2020s.

As a result, the question I’ve been wrestling with is whether the next generation of college students will make the same choices as their predecessors and travel far distances to attend college. Evidence based on demographics and traditional student migration suggests they won’t. Even as more schools expand their search areas for admissions — Northeast universities, for instance, setting up shop in California — many indications suggest the market for students willing to get on a plane or drive several hours to college is not growing at the same rate.

The raw numbers are sobering. But then a new book landed on my desk a few weeks ago that put the figures in a new, and disturbing, light. In “Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education,” Nathan D. Grawe, an economics professor at Carleton College, in Minnesota, explores the overall decline in high school graduates in greater detail.

The enrollment forecast for regional colleges outside of the top 100 that tend to attract nearby students is grim.

As he notes early in the book, just because someone graduates from high school doesn’t mean she will go to college. The past two decades in higher education have been about expansion as
the percentage of high school graduates going to college has increased even when high school enrollments plateaued. Higher education leaders have generally assumed that the college-going rate in the United States, now just shy of 70 percent, would continue to inch up. Few have considered it could move in the opposite direction.

In researching his book, Grawe created something he calls the “Higher Education Demand Index.” It attempts to adapt population trends into college-attendance forecasts, using federal education data to estimate the probability that different populations from different cities and states will go to college.

“Unless something unexpected intervenes, the confluence of current demographic changes foretells an unprecedented reduction in postsecondary demand about a decade ahead,” Grawe writes.

The overall number of high school graduates, he argues, is not sufficient in determining the future for colleges. For the most part, higher education is a local market. Most students, especially those with average academic records, go to schools close to home that have a reputation for attracting close-by applicants. Far fewer potential students means these regional schools are likely to struggle to fill seats.

Meanwhile, demand for elite colleges, those in the top 50, will remain strong nationwide.

According to Grawe’s demand index, several historically large markets of students, such as New York, Philadelphia and Boston, will post “dramatic losses of 15 percent or more” in college-going students. Overall, he estimates that four-year colleges nationwide in just one four-year period at the end of the 2020s stand to lose almost 280,000 students.

Not all schools will be affected equally, Grawe argues. Elite colleges— those ranked in the top 50 in U.S. News & World Report nationally — will have about half the drop-off in student demand as those outside the top 100 because household brand names attract students willing to travel far distances.

That presents interesting opportunities for those schools ranked 50 to 100, Grawe writes, because they could benefit from a spillover of students who can’t get in to top 50 schools (historically, the top schools haven’t expanded the number of spots to accommodate demand).

The consequences of what is about to happen will have an impact on schools and applicants. For a few schools in certain pockets of the country, it certainly means closure. While we’re unlikely to see massive numbers of colleges going out of business — just look at the turmoil that surrounded the unsuccessful campaign to close Sweet Briar College in 2015 — many colleges will need to merge or form deeper partnerships with schools in equally tough situations.

For students, the changes in demand will mean even more competition to get them to enroll. If schools can afford it, students with solid academic records and the means to pay something toward tuition are likely to get showered with financial incentives. So for parents such as me lucky enough to have kids born in the middle of the demographic trough that arrives at the end of
the next decade, perhaps saving for higher education won’t be so worrisome as it sometimes seems.

**COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE**

**Education and its economic impact in Missouri**

NO MU MENTION

By Dr. Rik Hafer

Recent forecasts predict reductions in the revenue flowing into state coffers. Gov. Eric Greitets, in his State of the State address, again called for reducing taxes. With reduced funding likely, will higher education, as it was last year, be on the chopping block? Let us all hope that this year those in Jefferson City make responsible choices.

Why? Two good reasons. First, additional cuts to higher education will further diminish the prospects of those who planned to advance their education at one of our community colleges or public, four-year universities. Attending our state educational institutions, not those in another state, is for many their most practical path to economic success.

Second, Missouri has one of the worst performing economies over the past 20 years. Last years’ ill-advised cuts to higher education reduced the state’s prospects for faster economic growth in the future. Another round of cuts will further diminish the standards of living for future generations of Missourians — at least those who do not migrate to better opportunities in other states.

A recent study conducted by Gail Heyne Hafer and myself makes the point. We asked two questions. First, what is the relationship between education today and future income? Second, how does educational attainment today affect future health and social outcomes?

To answer these questions, we collected data for each county in Missouri. We then compared educational attainment by adults in 1990 to household incomes and several measures of social behavior in recent years. This gave us the ability to see how education now might influence future outcomes.

We found that counties in which a larger percentage of the adults in 1990 lacked a high school diploma or its equivalent have on average lower household incomes today. These counties also tend to have a greater prevalence of negative health and social outcomes, such as higher rates of
smoking and obesity, and more childhood poverty. Not too surprisingly, completing high school has a critical effect on individuals’ lives and the future of the communities in which they live.

But there is much more to our story. The most striking result of our analysis is that a distinctive “switch” in these relationships occurs when we consider the effects of higher education. And by higher education we do not mean only a bachelor’s degree.

We found that families in counties where a larger percentage of the adult population finishes high school and extends their education at a community college, vocational training or completes just a couple years of university coursework, are much more likely to be living financially comfortable and healthy lives today. A four-year college degree is not the only ticket to success.

Our results show that when a larger proportion of the adult population in 1990 met the condition “high school plus two” years of education, today those counties also had significantly higher levels of household income, a smaller incidence of smoking and obesity, and less childhood poverty.

Finding that the “switch” to better futures occurs at “high school plus two” instead of at “bachelor’s degree” is important. It means that reducing individuals’ opportunity to advance their education and training beyond high school by budgetary decisions that severely restrict the role of community colleges and similar institutions is likely to harm many.

More cuts in state funding to community colleges and other institutions of higher education in the name of smaller government imperils the economic future of individual citizens and the state as a whole.

If policy makers continue down this misguided path, require them to explain why Missouri’s economic growth continues to lag behind most other states in the nation.