Universities offer solutions to revive rural Missouri

Editorial pitched by the MU News Bureau

By Mun Choi

In December, The Chronicle of Higher Education published “A Dying Town,” a story about the challenges facing the Missouri Bootheel. It details the struggles too many Missourians face in staying healthy and prosperous, including the unflinching stories of several residents who, without a college degree, had no safety net when jobs left their towns, the economy stuttered or medical bills piled up. There is no question that the story lights a fire under anyone working in the fields of public health or education. As we continue to strive toward making higher education as beneficial and accessible as possible, it is vital that we make sure no community falls between the cracks.

Higher education has numerous real, proven benefits, but unfortunately we often hear only about the obvious ones. It’s true — college graduates earn about 65 percent more over their lifetimes than those with only a high school education. This is an important statistic, and it frames the benefits of higher education in a handy, easily digestible number. But as the story showed, money doesn’t tell the whole story. Those with a college education also are less likely to suffer from debilitating conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. These characteristics have economic components, but studies have clearly shown that a college education, in and of itself, plays a role.

Yet public higher education does not operate solely on the individual level. As a land-grant institution, the University of Missouri has an obligation to carry the benefits of university research beyond the campus. We do this by supporting our student and faculty researchers, who constantly are making strides toward bettering lives in Missouri communities and in society as a whole. Research, after all, is consequential precisely because it helps people. Think of a recent study by Mizzou researchers that explored the psychological impact of the 2011 Joplin tornado, finding that even amid a disaster of tragic proportions, there were opportunities for personal growth. Think of the team of Mizzou scientists, cardiologists and engineers fighting heart disease by working to develop revolutionary new cardiovascular stents, a project that has received millions of dollars in federal grants. The Family Nutrition Education Program through the MU Extension office provides thousands of families with guidance on healthy and affordable food options.
At Missouri University of Science and Technology, we are empowering teachers to educate the next generation of researchers through Project Lead The Way, a precollege program that inspires students to become involved in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math. During the past five years, more than 3,000 elementary and secondary education teachers attended Project Lead The Way classes at Missouri S&T, giving them the tools they need to provide their students with quality science and engineering education.

We are committed to improving the lives of Missourians, and this means cost must not be a barrier to quality higher education. Recently, we signed the Missouri Land Grant Compact, which allows all Pell Grant recipients who are residents of Missouri to attend Mizzou tuition-free, provided they meet admissions requirements (honors students will have room and board covered as well). We also have worked to lower the cost of educational materials by adopting open source and lower-cost textbooks. For students from low-income families across Missouri, these efforts mean the prospect of a college education is less burdened by financial concerns. Education, not bills, should be the focus of any student’s time at a university.

Mizzou is helping to broaden access to medical care across the state. The Springfield Clinical Campus and Missouri Telehealth Network from Mizzou’s School of Medicine are integral parts of that task. One telehealth initiative, Show-Me ECHO, helps rural physicians treat chronic pain and conditions like Hepatitis C. ECHO Autism trains care providers to diagnose and treat autism.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City houses the UMKC School of Dentistry, which, as the only public dental school in Missouri, includes courses that deploy students to provide dental care in underserved areas throughout the state. In addition, the University of Missouri-St. Louis, together with Mizzou, recently received a joint $1.8 million federal grant to train social workers to serve underserved populations with educational and health access programs.

While all these efforts are geared toward different aspects of the community, they operate in service of a single guiding principle: building a stronger, more connected Missouri in which the benefits of the University of Missouri can be felt by anyone of any background or means. Our mission is service, an ethic that guides us in all the work we do.

To see what that ethic looks like, look no further than Freda Kershaw, who was profiled in The Chronicle’s story. Freda works in Pemiscot County for Mizzou’s ParentLink program, which provides research-based information and resources to parents and youths across Missouri, as well as working to help families bridge gaps in services by collaborating with communities. ParentLink has expanded its services in the Bootheel, and with the help of community liaisons like Freda, the program is inspiring communities to work together to improve the health and wellness of their residents. We’re so proud of her and many other University of Missouri System faculty, students and staff who are making a difference in their communities throughout our state.

For some, wellness means planting a garden where there was an empty lot. And just as that garden serves as a symbol of the will to change lives for the better, our hope is that the University of Missouri, too, is more than a system of brick-and-mortar institutions. It is an ethic, and we are striving to ensure that ethic continues to spread across Missouri in all its forms.
Our opinion: MU gets its roar back

The University of Missouri has reason to feel good about a rebound in enrollment trends, but the real news is the story behind the numbers.

We know the state’s flagship university has been hard at work burnishing its image after the 2015 racially charged protests on campus. The campus leadership has bought in to the notion that perception is reality, and we see evidence of genuine interest in building bridges to diverse segments of the university community and society.

It’s important for MU to make clear it is committed to equality of opportunity and welcoming of people of all backgrounds. But these efforts, and the image campaign that goes along with them, hardly account for all of the interest from students applying for entrance.

Consider the other practical steps that have been taken:

The university has boosted advertising expenditures supporting recruitment. Further, its staff last fall attended more than 450 college fairs nationwide and visited more than 600 high schools in Missouri.

It also hosted more than 20 events — from Los Angeles to Washington D.C., from Chicago to Houston — to educate high school counselors about the opportunities to be found at MU.

The recruitment staff also added new off-campus events, including “Scholars Nights” in St. Louis and Kansas City. It also increased communication with admitted students and with students still making up their minds.

The university also joined The Common Application. Called the “Common App,” the program makes it easier for high school seniors to apply to hundreds of colleges and universities.
The list of aggressive steps to boost enrollment continues with a focus on seeking transfer students, such as from community colleges. Also, importantly, the campus has taken several steps to make attending MU more affordable.

These include making scholarships available for students from bordering states; expanding scholarships for out-of-state children of alumni; and introducing a new scholarship for incoming ROTC students.

The university also lowered the cost of MU’s most common housing and dining plans and adopted initiatives that have lowered textbook costs, on average, by 18 percent compared to fall 2016.

The numbers show that at the end of January freshman applications to MU were up 16.8 percent, from 15,060 this time last year to 17,583. Transfer applications had increased 12.2 percent, from 806 applications to 904.

These are entirely encouraging trends, enough to prompt one administrator to proclaim, “Mizzou is roaring back.” Count some of this a result of image-polishing, but much should be attributed to practical steps focused on telling MU’s story and lowering the cost to attend.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Despite criticism, Senate approves proposal to expand four-year degrees**

BY LEXI CHURCHILL

JEFFERSON CITY — The Senate gave initial approval on Tuesday to a bill that would give two-year colleges the opportunity to offer some four-year bachelor’s degrees. But the proposal wasn’t passed without disagreement.
Senate Bill 807, legislation two years in the making, was largely the product of public university recommendations. Last year, higher education leaders gathered to discuss what would be most cost-efficient for the state in terms of spreading out and creating academic programs, supporters of the bill said.

**Schools would need to show the Coordinating Board of Higher Education that the degrees would not duplicate other programs and that collaboration with another institution is not an option, among other requirements. The bill also provides exclusivity for MU, including that it would be the only institution that could offer research doctoral degrees and specific professional degrees.**

**While supporters applauded the collaborative efforts, opponents like Sen. Rob Schaaf, R-St. Joseph, questioned what they saw as the monopolistic nature of the bill.**

For example, the Senate bill stated that no other public university besides MU could open a chiropractic, osteopathic or podiatry school — three medical programs the flagship university does not currently offer.

“One university actually competes with another,” Schaaf said. “When you have a whole bunch of competitors get into a room and agree to allocate markets, and they’re going to allocate education and all of these career programs and allocate it to the University of Missouri, now all of a sudden the anti-monopoly part of me is awakened.”

Other opponents focused on what universities other than MU were lacking that this bill did not solve, comparing the smaller institutions to stepchildren.

Sen. Jamilah Nasheed, D-St. Louis, said that when a similar proposal was first discussed last year, she noted that Lincoln University is treated inferiorly to MU. For example, Nasheed said both Lincoln and MU are land-grant schools, but only MU gets the funding necessary to earn federal matching money. She suggested that in the spirit of Black History Month, the Senate should work out the historically black university’s funding.
Despite their opposition, Schaaf and Nasheed were able to push for two amendments that were added to the bill. The clause regarding other universities not being able to have chiropractic, osteopathic or podiatry programs was changed in a proposal made by Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia. With the amendment, if another university wanted to establish one of these programs, it would first ask MU if collaboration were possible, and if not, then the school could request approval to establish a program on its own.

Influenced by MU students, Nasheed added a mental health amendment stating that by 2020, the Coordination Board for Higher Education would have to create standards and regulations such as average wait time for counseling facilities at state colleges and universities.

Following the amendments and in spite of continued opposition, senators gave initial approval to the bill.

Proponents, including Rowden, celebrated the vote as a positive step toward spreading out educational resources.

He noted that MU, “as the big guy on the block, we can’t any longer try and be good at everything because we’re not.... Our ability and willingness to collaborate, which this bill encourages, needs to be heightened. The reality is that two-year institutions can do things better in certain circumstances than four-year institutions.”
Faculty surprised that UMKC provost didn’t win chancellor post

BY STEVE VOCKRODT AND MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

In a surprise move Tuesday the University of Missouri System named a University of Texas vice president as UMKC’s new chancellor, passing over the woman who held the post on an interim basis and was a candidate for the job.

C. Mauli Agrawal, vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio, was chosen chancellor by UM System President Mun Choi.

UMKC Provost Barbara Bichelmeyer, who has served as interim chancellor since August, had been the expected front-runner.

Bichelmeyer was named interim chancellor when, after nine years, Leo Morton stepped away from the post to take a job with DeBruce Companies, a grain firm in Kansas City.

“I know there are people who are surprised that Dr. Bichelmeyer is not the choice that Dr. Choi made, but nevertheless this was a splendid choice,” said Professor Linda Mitchell, chair of the UMKC Faculty Senate.

“The best outcome was to have Dr. Agrawal as our chancellor and Dr. Bichelmeyer as our provost. They are the dream team.”

Bichelmeyer will return to her duties as university provost once Agrawal is in place June 20. She said in a statement she was excited to partner with Agrawal.

“His background and experiences complement the mission and vision of UMKC – and together, with all the great partners on this campus and in this metro area, we will keep the momentum going as we grow UMKC into the great university this region needs.”

Agrawal said in a statement that he, too, was excited.

“UMKC has all the elements necessary to make a great university.” he said. “With strengths in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, business, engineering, arts and theater, the university is an exceptional anchor for economic development in the Kansas City region.”
Bichelmeyer has been leading several key initiatives at the university, including academic reorganization, strategic plan development and the budgeting process.

Choi said those initiatives will move forward but did not say whether Bichelmeyer will continue to lead them.

“I will work closely with Bichelmeyer to make the important and necessary changes during the transition period,” Choi said. “We are indebted to her for her work in continuing to move UMKC forward. She will be a great asset to Dr. Agrawal as he moves into this position.”

Some faculty members said they were taken aback by Choi’s choice.

“I was surprised,” said Allan Katz, a UMKC distinguished professor of public affairs and political science. “I believed that Dr. Bichelmeyer would be the chancellor. I think there were a lot of people who supported her candidacy and were hoping she would be in that position. I’m sure it was a hard choice.”

Mitchell, who was involved with the system’s chancellor search, said “Dr. Bichelmeyer was very much a part of it.” She said the search committee had “an incredible group of finalists.”

Agrawal was identified by a search team of UM System administrators who reached out to higher education leaders across the country.

The team was looking for a chancellor with characteristics developed by a UMKC chancellor search committee formed by Choi. The characteristics were drawn from a series of public forums held at UMKC.

Traditionally the UM System has hired a search firm to look nationally to fill a chancellor position.

UM System spokesman Christain Basi said that wasn’t done in this case “in an effort to save money on the search.” He said using an in-house search team saved the university about $150,000.

Agrawal was one of two dozen resumes reviewed by the search team. The list of candidates was narrowed first to eight for interviews. From among three finalists, Choi chose Agrawal.

As chancellor he will be paid a $400,000 a year base salary and a one-time moving cost of up to $20,000. He also will receive a $15,000-a-year housing allowance and a $15,000-a-year auto allowance.

Ramin Cherafat, CEO of McCownGordon Construction and president of the UMKC Alumni Association, said Agrawal “demonstrated a clear passion for working with alumni and civic leaders...”

He said Agrawal “understands the important role that higher education institutions play in economic development, including new research discoveries and the development of a highly trained workforce...”

Agrawal joined the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2003 as a professor and associate dean for research in the College of Engineering. He advanced to dean in 2006. In May 2013 he was named interim vice president for research, a position he held until being named vice president the following year. In 2016, he was appointed interim provost.
Agrawal earned a doctorate from Duke University in 1989, a master’s degree from Clemon University in 1985 and a bachelor’s degree from IIT-Kanpur in India.

His work was well regarded in San Antonio, where the College of Engineering’s enrollment increased 40 percent and funding increased by 400 percent. In 2010 he worked with San Antonio city leaders to launch the Texas Sustainable Energy Research Institute at USTA.

“Mauli is a beloved member of the San Antonio community who has earned admiration and respect from the university community, the business community and civic leadership,” San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg said in a statement.

USTA President Taylor Eighmy said Agrawal has “left a profound impact on our institution with great work supporting engineering, research and the academic enterprise.”

Eighmy said the UMKC chancellorship is “a wonderful opportunity” for Agrawal and his wife, Sue.

Choi said he was thrilled that Agrawal had accepted the post. “I’m confident that the university will reach new heights of success in research, education and outreach through his leadership.”

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

UMKC taps Texas university administrator as next chancellor

By Ashley Jost

ST. LOUIS • The interim provost at a university in Texas has been tapped to lead the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

University system president Mun Choi announced Tuesday that C. Mauli Agrawal will join UMKC in June as the next chancellor.

Agrawal is currently the interim provost — the second in command — at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Prior to that, he was the vice president for research and worked for eight years as the dean of the campus' engineering school.

According to the University of Missouri announcement, Agrawal has a history of focusing on economic development in San Antonio, and it earned him high regards from Texas politicians.
“UMKC has all the elements necessary to make a great university,” Agrawal said in a statement. "With strengths in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, business, engineering, arts and theater, the university is an exceptional anchor for economic development in the Kansas City region."

David Steelman, chairman of the University of Missouri's governing board, said Agrawal "understands the mission of UMKC, but he also knows that mission can only be fulfilled through innovative approaches and risk; he is not a status quo leader."

UMKC’s longtime Chancellor Leo Morton retired last year after almost 10 years leading the second-largest University of Missouri campus.

Agrawal earned his doctoral degree from Duke University, his master's degree from Clemson University and a bachelor's degree at a university in India.

UM names new chancellor for Kansas City campus

By Columbia Daily Tribune

The new chancellor of the University of Missouri-Kansas City will be C. Mauli Agrawal, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio, UM System President Mun Choi said in a news release.

Agrawal will take over from interim Chancellor Barbara Bichelmeyer on June 20, the news release stated.

Agrawal was a professor of orthopedics and bioengineering at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio before moving into university administration. He was vice president for research and dean of the College of Engineering before his current appointment.

Agrawal boosted enrollment 40 percent, increased the faculty by 50 percent and secured a 400 percent increase in research funding as research vice president, the release stated.

Agrawal received his doctorate from Duke University in 1989, a master’s from Clemson University in 1985 and a bachelor’s degree of technology from IIT-Kanpur, India.
UM System president appoints new chancellor for UMKC

By MOICA DUNN

COLUMBIA-- The president of the University of Missouri System announced a new chancellor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City on Tuesday morning.

President Mun Choi said Dr. C. Mauli Agrawal was selected for his academic achievements and his entrepreneurial skills.

“[Agrawal] understands the mission of UMKC, but he also knows that mission can only be fulfilled through innovative approaches and risk,” Choi said. "He is not a status quo leader.”

Agrawal is currently serving as interim provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He will begin at UMKC in late June.

“I’m very excited to be chosen to help lead this great university. The potential for the University of Missouri-Kansas City is immense and exciting,” Agrawal said.

Agrawl has also served as vice president of research and dean of the College of Engineering. He was a professor of orthopedics and bioengineering at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, one of the largest medical schools in the United States.

Agrawl obtained a doctorate from Duke University in 1989, a master’s degree from Clemson University in 1985 and a bachelor’s degree of technology from IIT-Kanpur, India.
UM System president appoints new chancellor for UMKC

By ELIZABETH DUESENBERG

COLUMBIA, Mo. - University of Missouri System President Dr. Mun Choi announced on Tuesday that C. Mauli Agrawal, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs at the University of Texas as San Antonio has been appointed chancellor of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, effective June 20, 2018.

“I’m thrilled that Dr. Agrawal has agreed to serve as the next chancellor of UMKC, and I’m confident that the university will reach new heights of success in research, education and outreach through his leadership,” Choi said. “UMKC has an outstanding team of administrators, faculty, staff and alumni supporters who will work closely with him to achieve our collective vision.”

Agrawal served as vice president for research and dean of the College of Engineering. He also has been a professor of orthopedics and bioengineering at the University of Texas Health Science Center. He obtained a doctorate from Duke University, a master’s degree from Clemson University and a bachelors degree of technology in India.

“I’m very excited to be chosen to help lead this great university. The potential for the University of Missouri-Kansas City is immense and exciting,” Agrawal said. “UMKC has all the elements necessary to make a great university. With strengths in medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, business, engineering, arts and theater, the university is an exceptional anchor for economic development in the Kansas City region. I’m looking forward to working with UMKC’s faculty and staff as well as Kansas City’s civic leaders who are passionate about higher education and are constantly working to make Kansas City a great place to live, learn and work.”
New chancellor named at UMKC

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — An official from the University of Texas at San Antonio will be the new chancellor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Missouri System President Mun Choi announced Tuesday that C. Mauli Agrawal will take over the UMKC job June 20. He currently is vice president for academic affairs at Texas-San Antonio.

Agrawal replaces Barbara Bichelmeyer, interim chancellor since Leo Morton left UMKC last year.

Agrawal has been interim provost at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Previously, he was vice president of research and dean of the university's engineering college. He earned a doctorate from Duke University in 1989, a master's degree from Clemson in 1985 and a bachelor's degree from IIT-Kanpur in India.

Choi said Bichelmeyer will continue to lead several new initiatives at UMKC in the meantime.

Similar stories ran nationwide.
Missouri taxpayers hit with $23 million in legal payouts last year

BY KURT ERICKSON

JEFFERSON CITY — Lawsuits against the state cost Missouri taxpayers at least $23 million in 2017, according to a report filed by Attorney General Josh Hawley.

As part of an effort to boost transparency, Hawley began reporting a monthly tally of how much the state is paying out in legal expenses to people who have sued the state.

The year-end report shows 16 of the 45 major payouts were related to employment discrimination, with six of those stemming from cases involving Missouri Department of Corrections workers.

In all, the state paid out nearly $8.1 million in claims for employment discrimination and harassment of its employees by supervisors and co-workers in the 12 month period.

The amount reported by Hawley could be much less than the actual total of all legal payouts based on a 2017 report issued by Auditor Nicole Galloway.

In her report, she found millions of more dollars in legal expenses at agencies that use their own attorneys in lawsuits.

For example, the Missouri Department of Transportation settled 13 employment claims worth $3.6 million as part of an overall $10.8 million in payouts between January 2015 and March 2017.

The University of Missouri reported 27 medical liability claims and 213 other claims paid based on settlements or judgments totaling over $17 million.
University of Central Missouri settled seven employment claims worth $226,347, the audit found.

Hawley’s report comes as House Minority Leader Gail McCann Beatty, D-Kansas City, is sponsoring legislation that would require the attorney general to submit a monthly report similar to what he is already doing voluntarily.

A House budget committee is expected to hear testimony on the proposal on Tuesday.

The push to shine light on the state’s Legal Expense Fund came after the Pitch, a Kansas City newspaper, reported in 2016 on a series of employment discrimination cases that had resulted in significant payouts to female prison workers.

McCann Beatty said she filed the legislation “in response to the vast history of massive settlements that have gone through the legal expense fund without public disclosure.”

Among the largest payouts on the 2017 report was a $5.5 million judgment against Harris-Stowe State University, in which Beverly Wilkins said she was repeatedly passed over for promotions because she was a white professor at a predominantly black institution.

The report also shows more than $11 million in potential payouts due to cases that are being appealed.

Among those is a $4.6 million judgment brought by Patricia Daniels, a former teacher at a state youth services school in Kansas City.

Daniels, who is white, said a supervisor at the school, who is black, subjected her to racial discrimination and sexual harassment. Her case ended in October but is under appeal.

Another large payout went to Bradley Freidel, who was injured in 2015 in a car crash with a Missouri Highway Patrol trooper.
In the crash, Freidel slowed down near Moberly to avoid hitting an animal when a patrol car hit his vehicle from behind. Records show Freidel received a $4.3 million settlement.

In all, the report notes that the state could be liable for up to as much as $414 million due to contested demands against the fund. However, that number could be far lower if the state wins those cases.

**UM System Board of Curators discusses tuition, housing at February meeting**

By UNEWS STAFF WRITERS

The UM System Board of Curators met at the Reynolds Alumni Center on Thursday and Friday to discuss tuition and housing rate changes, student concerns and the dedication of an MU residence hall.

Chairman David Steelman called the Board of Curators meeting to order and introduced Courtney Lauer, student representative to the board.

**Student representative report**

Lauer has visited all four UM System campuses since her December student representative report and has spoken with students and faculty to gauge current projects’ progress.

For MU, Lauer spoke of the Missouri Students Association and its work to bring “coffee on the couch” events to campus. At these events, students meet and discuss issues such as mental health, career help and MU’s budget. Additionally, Lauer said MSA is working on a True Mizzou week and a staff appreciation week.

Lauer said Missouri University of Science and Technology students voiced concerns about the university raising supplemental student fees, which may be subject to another increase similar to the 67 percent increase that she said engineering students have seen. UM-St. Louis students mentioned construction and the safety of MetroLink stations located near campus as concerns.

After her student report, Lauer was asked about the climate of overall student satisfaction. Lauer said students report various problems, but that they are being addressed and discussed by students and faculty.
“I don’t think there’s an overall consensus that things are perfect by any means, but that there are different things that are happening where the board administrators are actually listening to students about concerns and moving towards the right path,” Lauer said.

**Residence hall naming**

The Board of Curators unanimously approved the official naming of MU’s newest residence hall to honor African-American journalist Lucile Bluford.

Bluford was denied admission to MU 11 times in the 1930s due to her race but was given an honorary doctorate from the Missouri School of Journalism in 1989, according to a UM System news release.

The atrium of the residence hall will honor Gus T. Ridgel, the first African American to earn a graduate degree from MU.

The recommendations came from Curator Darryl Chatman and Lauer, who had been leading a group in search of a hall name, according to the release.

“For this day forward, Lucile Bluford Residence Hall and the Gus T. Ridgel Atrium will stand as testaments to the spirit of justice and perseverance that animated both of these individuals,” Steelman said. “Lucile Bluford and Gus Ridgel exemplified the university’s values of Respect, Responsibility, Discovery and Excellence.”

**Housing affordability**

Ryan Rapp, UM System vice president for finance and chief financial officer, presented rates for housing in the 2018-19 school year, with a focus on “providing affordability.”

The board voted unanimously to pass the proposed rates, which will lower MU’s room and board costs by 3.5 percent for next year, increase Missouri S&T and UM-Kansas City’s rate by 2 percent and keep UMSL’s rate the same.

**Tuition changes**

The board also presented an expansion of lowered out-of-state costs for UMKC students to include the entire state of Kansas, as well as expanding the Heartland Rate, which provides 150 percent in-state tuition for students from certain states.

Beginning next year, students who are residents of Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas or Wisconsin will be eligible.

These expansions mirror the UMSL program for students in Illinois counties near the St. Louis area. The new motion passed unanimously.
**Increasing enrollment**

The number of freshman and transfer student applications have increased across all four campuses, with the exception of transfer applications at UMSL, which decreased by 6.6 percent, according to a UM System news brief.

Freshman applications to attend MU in August 2018 are up from last year by about 17 percent, according to information presented Friday.

“These numbers demonstrate that Missourians and out-of-state students recognize that they can receive exceptional and affordable educations while becoming career-ready,” UM System President Mun Choi said in a news release.

The UM System campuses have achieved mostly high rankings in regard to black and Hispanic undergraduate enrollment and faculty employment, but Choi reiterated many times that “there is still work to be done.”

MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright focused on the development and success that MU has had over the past few years and talked about his plans to take MU to new heights of accomplishment. He said the way to make a great institution exceptional is to know what one’s resources are and how to invest in them.

“I am a big believer that you can’t get to where you wanna be if you don’t know where you are,” Cartwright said. “You have to create a culture of innovation and you have to create a culture of excellence.”

He said this innovation lies in teaching, research and creative activities, engagement and economic development. Cartwright said teaching classes “from a distance” could become a possible solution to the cuts being made.

Steve Graham, UM System senior associate vice president for academic affairs, spoke about online and hybrid classes. Graham said the number of credit hours taken online has more than doubled at MU and Choi said he wants the university to further expand its online class offerings.

**MU finances**

The Finance Committee presented plans to create a newly designed operational model next quarter that more efficiently utilizes resources and administration, as well as promotes academic excellence to increase the financial sustainability of all four campuses.

Cartwright gave a presentation about the current state of MU’s finances. He emphasized a 33 percent increase in funds raised since last year and that the MU endowment has surpassed $1 billion.

The discussion then turned toward fundraising techniques.

“It’s important that I carve out the time to be thinking about where the institution’s going,” Cartwright said.
He said he plans to simplify the donation process for donors by creating one-page sheets describing the goals of various departments of the university.

The Audit Committee presented its findings from the five internal audits and risk assessment done since its September 2017 report, stating that MU Health Care was at a high risk of negatively costing the system. Vice chair John R. Phillips commented that MU Health Care “sticks out like a sore thumb” in human resources complaints.

Director of Government Relations Dustin Schnieders worked in Missouri state government for several years prior to working for the UM System and used his experience to talk about the current attitudes of legislatures toward the system.

“[The attitude is] very positive,” Schneiders said. “We’re starting to really connect with [the legislature] again, and President Choi and the chancellors have done a great job making themselves available [in Jefferson City].”

The next board meeting is scheduled for April 12-13 and will be held at the Rolla campus.

Experts say plunging DOW will have little effect, but stay alert

By CHELSEA HAYNES


COLUMBIA - Local experts say there’s no need to worry just yet, regarding Monday’s Dow plunge.

"We’ve weathered worse storms,” said Joe Haslag, professor of economics at the University of Missouri. “I don’t want to discount the fact that people lost wealth yesterday,” Haslag said, but “people understand the stock market can be volatile on a day to day basis.”
Brad Miller, Branch Manager and First Vice President of Investments at Stifel, Inc., said spikes like the ones seen in Monday's market can be violent, yet Miller encourages local investors to simply stay calm, when the market gets rough.

“We try to tell people not to lose sight of their long term goals,” said Miller.

CNN Money reporter David Goldman, chronicled four major reasons as to why the stock market took a 4.6% plunge on Monday, making it the biggest percentage drop since 2011, during the European debt crisis.

Goldman said the following four reasons are why U.S. stocks took a nosedive on Monday:

1. Fear the Feds will increase interest rates
2. Increasing the cost of borrowing money
3. Low bond yields
4. Unhealthy stock increases

One thing all three of these men can agree with is the market analysts, who according to CNN Money, said the market due for a slight drop.

Miller said one of his Chief Investment Advisors, said the market was coming up on 120 years without a 5% pull back, making it the longest time ever to have seen little change in the market.

“We have had a tremendous longevity in this bull market without much of a pull back,” Miller said. “We were due for a one [a market decline].

Although the stock market took a hit on Monday, Miller encourages clients to purchase stocks when the market drops to further their long-term investments, such college and retirements funds like the 401K and the 403B.

“I always try to tell people to have a little extra money on the sidelines,” Miller said.

“When it [the market] dips, don’t go crazy, but buy a little something on the dip. That way when the market heads back up, you’ve actually taken advantage of situations like this.”

Professor Haslag, former researcher for the Dallas Federal Reserve, said sometimes there's really no direct answer for spirals like the one Wall Street saw on Monday.

"Sometimes we just hit those tipping points, and if I tip, then maybe the guy next to me tips, then the machine next to him tips, and then we're almost 1200 points down."

For a deeper look into how the stocks bounced back on Tuesday, after the dramatic plunge on Monday, take a look into CNN Money's most recent article for Tuesday.
MU professor’s research leads to discoveries in the prevention of disease spread by mosquitoes

Story generated by MU News Bureau release: Link found between genes in mosquitoes and the spread of diseases in new MU research

By REGAN MERTZ

Dr. Susanta Behura, an assistant research professor in the Division of Animal Sciences, has studied mosquitoes and their role in the spread of dengue fever for around seven years. Behura’s recent work has uncovered a connection between the genetic molecules of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes and the dengue virus.

Dengue fever, a disease that resides mainly in tropical regions, is spread by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes and can emit joint pain throughout the body in addition to fever. It affects upward of 390 million people each year, Behura said.

Behura began his research in vector mosquitoes, those that spread disease from person to person, while working at the University of Notre Dame with professor David Severson.

Their findings have been published in the Public Library of Science’s Neglected Tropical Diseases journal and has led to the identification of a new class of small RNA molecules in the Aedes aegypti mosquito that is responsible for spreading the virus to humans.

“It’s exciting because this [research] provides clues that these molecules may play a role in transmission of the virus,” said Behura’s colleague at Notre Dame, Dr. Matthew Eng.

Eng said their research was conducted using colonies of mosquitos raised in an insectary that had experiments and analysis performed on them in a research laboratory at Notre Dame.

“We looked at a short type of short genetic molecule related to DNA called small RNA,” Eng said.

Very little is known about these RNA molecules in mosquitoes, but in other animals these molecules are vital to the regulation, expression and function of certain genes.

One of the goals of their study was to discover whether the level of small RNAs was different between mosquitoes that were vulnerable to carrying dengue and mosquitoes that were resistant, Eng said.
“Interestingly, we found that some of these small RNAs were increased in the resistant strain only when they were fed blood with dengue virus,” Eng said. “It’s exciting because this provides clues that these molecules may play a role in transmission of the virus.”

There are methods to protect from mosquito bites during the night, such as mosquito netting, but the Aedes aegypti mosquito attacks during the daytime, which proves to be more difficult to prevent bites, Behura said.

“There is literally nothing you can do to protect yourself from this mosquito,” Behura said.

Because of the lack of prevention methods, time of day bites occur and limited resources, dengue fever affects large populations in the tropical regions it is present.

Behura has had personal experiences with dengue fever, as many of his friends and family live in India, where he is from.

“I have seen a lot of my friends and relatives hospitalized because of this infection,” Behura said. “Some have almost died from it.”

Behura said dengue fever is a “neglected disease which is a growing problem.”

The mosquitoes breed in small, swampy areas, which can be devastating to the populations of people near them. The summer and rainy seasons also influence mosquito breeding.

Dengue fever has also shown prevalence in the United States, especially in parts of Florida and Texas. When travelers visit from countries where dengue fever is common, they can pass on the disease.

“We are not at risk in the U.S. yet, but we should definitely continue survey of mosquito populations that may cause local transmission of the virus in small pockets,” Behura said.

Typically, it takes seven to eight days for the symptoms of dengue fever to take effect.

Children are more at risk to exhibit severe symptoms because they have weaker immune systems. Behura said more than 20,000 children die every year from dengue infection.

Currently, there are no existing vaccinations or treatments for dengue fever.

Behura and his colleagues have plans to use genetic molecules of the mosquitoes and the receptors in the mosquito that transmit the disease to prevent its spread.

“One way to control the disease is to make the mosquitoes incapable of spreading the virus,” Behura said.

Severson has collaborated with Behura on the research involving the mosquitoes and dengue fever and has traveled to multiple locations around the world to gain first-hand experience and knowledge.
Severson was among the first to develop genetic linkage maps for mosquitoes using DNA-based markers and led the initial Aedes aegypti genome sequencing project.

“It was amazing to me, as it allowed us to see how particular cellular pathways [in the genome] respond to the virus, and these results have given us ideas for new studies, always with the goal of eventually identifying new disease control methods,” Severson said.

Behura said the way to prevention is to focus on the female mosquitoes because they are the sole perpetrators when it comes to spreading dengue fever. Male mosquitoes only go from flower to flower to collect nectar, but females need human blood to maintain the ability to reproduce.

“We know a lot about how dengue fever is transmitted from mosquito to human but we still do not have the power to control the disease,” Behura said. “This is a big problem, but we should not give up. We are working really hard to come up with a solution that might, one day, eradicate this problem.”

Dick Vitale says ‘don’t be surprised’ if Mizzou’s Michael Porter Jr. returns

By: Aaron Reiss

OXFORD, MISS.

Missouri forward Jontay Porter had one of his best games of the season in Missouri’s 75-69 win over Mississippi on Tuesday, but his injured big brother still drew attention.

That’s because during the broadcast of the Tennessee-Kentucky game, ESPN commentator Dick Vitale said he had heard it was possible Michael Porter Jr. could return for the Tigers this season.

Porter Jr. has played just 2 minutes for MU, and the program said in November 2017 that the elite NBA prospect was “likely” to miss the remainder of the season while recovering from back surgery.

But Vitale said that SEC Network broadcaster Tom Hart — who was calling Mizzou’s game on Tuesday — had texted him with juicy information. According to Vitale, Missouri coach Cuonzo Martin told Hart “don’t be surprised if he (Porter Jr.) plays this year.”

Martin added some clarity during a postgame interview with the SEC Network.

“This week, he started working out — not on the floor, but just doing different things with our strength and conditioning coach Nicodemus (Christopher), agility work, bouncing the ball, but nothing with practice,” Martin said. “I wouldn’t be shocked if I saw him on the floor. And I’m
not saying that, because he hasn’t practiced or anything, so don’t misinterpret that, but I wouldn’t be shocked.

“I know he’s fighting hard to get on the floor. He’s looking good, his body’s great. He’s actually gotten bigger, just looking at him. And he’s been one of my best cheerleaders on the sideline.”

When Martin spoke to reporters in a press conference after that TV interview, he seemed less interested in the topic. He emphasized that Porter Jr. has not practiced with the team – the same answer the coach has given for weeks.

“I didn’t talk to Dick Vitale,” Martin said, cutting off a follow-up question.

After Tuesday’s win, the Tigers are 16-8 (6-5 in the Southeastern Conference) without Porter Jr. It would likely take time for the players to develop chemistry with him back on the floor, but graduate transfer guard Kassius Robertson said he would “love to him back.”

As for when, or if, that will happen, Robertson did not know.

“You’d have to ask the trainer,” Robertson said. “I’m no doctor.”

MU professor first woman to receive James B. Eads award

By JACOB HORTON

MU professor and researcher Elizabeth Bryda received the James B. Eads Award from the Academy of Science in St. Louis for her research on the use of animals to study human disease.

Bryda is the first woman to receive the James B. Eads Award in its 17-year history. The award is given to regional scientists who have distinguished achievement in engineering or technology with a preference given to researchers who have a record of community engagement.

Bryda said she was “really surprised” when she found out she had won the award. She said that she believes the award usually goes to engineering types and that her field of genetic engineering is “a different kind of technology.”

While Bryda received the award for her research at large, her work at the Animal Modeling Core and the Rat Resource & Research Center has been at the center of much of her research. There, she genetically modifies animals through various methods, including a process called cell ablation, in order to create animal models used to understand either specific genes of interest or human disease through mimicry of it.
These animal models go on to be used in labs at MU and other universities. Bryda has even used them in her own research of inflammatory bowel disease and polycystic kidney disease.

Bryda’s students are also involved in her research. Doctoral students do projects for their dissertations and undergraduate students work in the lab to gain experience for graduate school.

Along with research at MU, Bryda has worked at the research facility in Columbia known as RADIL, where she has largely investigated cell lines, a process that uses cells normally found inside the body and grows those cells outside the body using a culture dish or in vitro.

Specifically, she and her colleagues tested methods of cell line authentication in order to ensure that cell lines don’t get contaminated. Preventing contamination of cell lines ensures that results aren’t skewed.

A dinner will be held April 5 at the Missouri Botanical Garden to celebrate Bryda and fellow winners of awards recognized at the 24th Annual Outstanding St. Louis Scientists Awards.

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**In wake of increasing enrollment, six residence halls to reopen for fall 2018**

By WILLIAM SKIPWORTH

_The university announced at the UM System Board of Curators meeting on Thursday that six of the seven residence halls that were offline this year are set to reopen for the 2018-19 school year. The seventh, Responsibility, will be rented out by MU Health Care for an administrative building._

MU closed Center, Discovery, Excellence, McDavid, Responsibility, Respect and Schurz residence halls during the 2016-17 school year after seeing low freshman enrollment.

Some of those residence halls were used as guest housing for football weekends and other special events.

The reopening of these halls comes in the wake of a report that next year’s freshman class may see a rise in enrollment due to increased applications. This could end a two-year stretch of falling enrollment that many attribute to racial controversies on campus in 2015.

The university has received 16.8 percent more freshman applications than it had at this time last year, jumping from 15,060 to 17,583, according to a Jan. 29 MU News Bureau release. This is
significant for MU Residential Life, as the only students required to live on campus are freshmen.

Transfer applications also saw an increase, rising from 806 to 904.

Residence Halls Association President Maggie Recca is also excited about some of the residence halls reopening.

“I know last year we were a little bummed whenever some of the halls got closed, which really they went offline because of enrollment, and enrollment is looking really good for next year,” Recca said.

Recca said that growth in the number of operating residence halls and students living on campus means growth for RHA.

“Just on a logistical level, if there’s more students and more halls, we’re gonna have more hall governments,” she said. “We’re gonna have more representatives.”

She said she is also optimistic about what this means financially for RHA.

“We are completely funded by the social fee money that students pay,” Recca said. “We’re a completely student-run organization, completely funded by students. So if we have more students, we have more money and we’re able to do more things.”

These reopenings aren’t just for first-year students. Recca said RHA and the Department of Residential Life have been pushing for returning students to live on campus as well.

“I know there’s this idea that you live on campus one year and then you move off, which is totally fine because that works for some people, but ... if you are a freshman and you want to live on campus again next year, we hope you would consider living on campus just as much as living off of campus,” Recca said.

As for the university in general, Recca said she sees this as a sign of MU bouncing back.

“I think this is just a very positive step for Mizzou because it means that we are making improvements,” she said. “I think that every university goes through a time when they might hit a bump, where enrollment goes down, and we’re kind of coming up from that, and I think that we’re coming back stronger.”
The Incredible Shrinking Book Exhibit

By LEONARD CASSUTO

The Modern Language Association’s annual convention is not so much a conference as a traveling city. For four days each year, more than 5,000 members of one of academe’s best-known scholarly organizations take over a cluster of hotels to hold the largest conference in the humanities and social sciences. Members don the requisite nametags as they attend panels, convene disciplinary groups and subgroups, interview job candidates, bestow awards, and conduct a sometimes-raucous legislative forum, the MLA Delegates’ Assembly.

Main Street of this traveling city is surely the book exhibit. It’s the downtown hub, where crowds gather and wander the aisles lined with publishers. Old acquaintances meet as they browse the booths. What does Duke have out this year? Did you see that display by Minnesota? Expectant authors excitedly pitch their latest books to the editors, who also check out the offerings of their peers. As passers-by scan the book displays, they get a snapshot of the state of literary humanism today.

Judging by last month’s convention, Main Street is considerably less populated these days.

The book exhibit has been shrinking for some years now. When I first started attending MLA more than 20 years ago, every press I could think of — and some I’d never heard of — had a booth there. Now many of them stay away. What’s happening, and why?

Of course the answer begins with money. The size of the MLA book exhibit dipped after the financial crash of 2008, and lately the numbers have declined further: The past three years show a drop of more than 40 percent in the number of exhibitors compared with 20 years ago. (General attendance at the meeting has similarly gone down by about 40 percent. However, some of that reduction surely arises from the increased number of departments that do their first-round interviews from a distance — via Skype or some other platform — a move as humane as it is expedient, since it spares job candidates the financial burdens of traveling to the convention.) Publishers pay a lot to set up shop at the MLA convention. Its exhibitors’ booths are among the most expensive on the conference circuit. Drayage fees — the money to ship the books to and from the conference — also add up, as do the costs of paying staff to travel and work the show itself.

But it’s not just the direct costs that affect a publisher’s decision to attend MLA. Along with the rest of academe, scholarly presses have come under crushing financial pressure in recent years. Many have shrunk and focused their lists. Instead of welcoming submissions across a large field, they now focus on a handful of subfields. Some have eased themselves out of literary studies altogether, or have compressed their offerings to a couple of niches within it.
For such presses, the traffic at a big show like MLA isn’t as valuable as it used to be. Instead, they take more precise aim at scholars whose specialties match their own. "Our travel budget has been constrained for years," wrote Scot Danforth, editorial director of the University of Tennessee Press, in an email. "In recent times, we have traveled to smaller, more focused conferences where our heaviest disciplinary interests lie."

Likewise, Sian Hunter, senior acquisitions editor at the University Press of Florida, described its decision to concentrate on niche conferences as a simple matter of "scale and ROI" (that is, return on investment).

A more surgical strategy allows a press to sell more books while paying less rent for a booth. As important, it also gives acquisitions editors added efficiency to do their job. "We see the exhibits as primarily an acquisitions tool," said Danforth — not so much to sell a lot of books as to sign up authors of new ones.

For wealthier presses, the MLA remains a place to see and be seen. "Publishers with a large presence in a given field can still exhibit and chalk it up to the cost of doing business," said Mark Simpson-Vos, editorial director at the University of North Carolina Press, in an email.

Indeed, an editor at a large university press described the MLA as "a flagship conference" that remains an "unparalleled chance to show our wares to more people than anywhere else." It is, he said, a "great place to announce new books to the world." Such a marketing strategy is akin to a retail chain choosing to open a store on Fifth Avenue: The stratospheric rents make it unlikely that the outlet will make a profit, but it’s a terrific showcase for the brand.

**Samuel Cohen, an associate professor of English at the University of Missouri and editor of a book series at the University of Iowa Press, invokes this showcase idea in more conscience-driven terms.** "Having a full exhibit hall at a major conference like MLA," he said, "demonstrates the commitment of universities to the production and dissemination of knowledge, which is supposed to be a key part of the mission of higher education."

Cohen’s emphasis on commitment is worth a further look. Principled commitment rarely comes cheap, but it costs a lot more these days in the book business.

The academic book world is "a moral commons," said Hunter, of the Florida press. We’re all connected within that commons, she said — from the administrators who fund the presses, to the departments that require books for tenure, to the professors (and graduate students) who write with an eye on tenure or promotion.

"The commons is getting chipped away," said Hunter, "because no one has any money." In the end, presses have to sell books. But who’s going to buy them?

Library sales were once the foundation of university press marketing. These days, they "continue to decline beyond what we could have imagined," said Jerome Singerman, senior humanities editor at the University of Pennsylvania Press. The MLA used to be a place where scholars would buy armloads of books in their field at discounted prices and carry them home. No more. "The market," he says, "is shrinking to a point where it’s not sustainable."
What’s the answer? "Buy books," said Singerman.

Well, yes, but what can be done toward that end, and who should do it? The MLA needs to step up, said Singerman, and respond to the changed landscape with "forward thinking" and "sustainable models." In the case of scholarly publishing, there hasn’t been enough of either.

"In the midst of all the things that have changed in scholarly communications and scholarly publishing" over the past 20 or 30 years, said Simpson-Vos of North Carolina, the MLA book exhibit "seems to have changed hardly at all."

Greg Britton, editorial director at Johns Hopkins University Press, wrote in these pages that conference book exhibits "are more than just places to buy a book." They occupy "a middle ground between scholarship and commerce," he said, "where the rubber of ideas hits the road of the marketplace." Those ideas go beyond the books themselves.

Singerman points out that the connections that draw together scholars, colleges, and books form not just a commons but an "academic ecosystem." Declining book sales "make it increasingly difficult for presses to fulfill the publishing mission that the academy has given us" as "proxy grantors of tenure and promotion" (and these days, of postdocs, too): You write a book, and the book gets you, or helps you keep, a job.

The MLA, Singerman says, needs to confront the threats to the equilibrium of the publishing ecosystem "in a public way," as it has confronted the more visible contraction of the academic job market. The two are connected and interdependent. "If the system of scholarly publishing as we have known it is unsustainable in the long run," asks Singerman, "what will replace it?"

More than 10 years ago, the MLA convened a task force (full disclosure: I was a member of it) and published a 2007 report in an effort to "de-fetishize" the book. In 2014, another task force report sought to destigmatize nonfaculty career paths for Ph.D.s. That work has made some valuable difference, but it hasn’t solved the problem, to say the least — and it hasn’t considered the point of view of the publishers.

It’s time, Singerman says, for the MLA and other large professional associations to confront the open-access elephant in the room. We all need to keep working to "shift the protocols for tenure and promotion." But apart from that, he wonders whether the MLA could help organize and anchor an open-access model that might take the pressure off presses to publish tenure books that might be hard to sell, and authors who often must subsidize their own books.

The problems facing the conference book exhibit are really just the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Simpson-Vos is surely right that we need "a broader rethinking of the book exhibit as an institution." But that conversation needs to encompass the larger publishing landscape. The MLA can facilitate such a conversation. It is, says Simpson-Vos, "long past time" for it to begin.