Mizzou admissions director to give update on enrollment

Number of applications increased

By: Kirstie Crawford

Watch the story: Mizzou admissions director to give update on enrollment

FULTON, Mo. - The executive director of admissions for the University of Missouri will meet in Fulton Saturday to talk about how the admissions office has been trying to increase student enrollment over the past several months, according to a news release.

ABC 17 News previously reported Feb. 2 that the university was seeing an increase in applications at every campus.

According to application data, there were 15,060 applications for Mizzou in 2017 and 17,583 in 2018, showing a 16.8% increase.

Chuck May, executive director of admissions, is expected to talk student recruitment efforts.

While the news release didn't go into further detail about the efforts, MU officials have talked about certain actions they've taken to increase enrollment.

ABC 17 News reported some of those efforts, including the university hiring a branding agency to help increase enrollment.

The meeting is free and open to the public. It takes place at the Callaway County Mizzou Alumni chapter, 1851 Underground, 111 E 5th Street at 6 p.m.

The presentation will be followed by a watch party for the Missouri-Kentucky basketball game.
Missouri frets over students' opting for UA

By Jaime Adame

FAYETTEVILLE -- With a dramatic decline in enrollment at Missouri's largest public university, talk in the state has turned to the role of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville in attracting students.

"In Kansas City, they are taking a lot of our students," Missouri state Rep. Greg Razer, a Democrat who represents the Missouri city, said in a Feb. 12 budget hearing.

Missouri lawmakers are hashing out a budget after a proposal unveiled last month by Gov. Eric Greitens called for cuts of $68.2 million in funding for universities and two-year schools, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

Missourinet, a radio and online news outlet, reported Razer's comments last week. Suzanne McCray, UA's vice provost for enrollment, in an email said the university hired a recruiter in 2014 to go after students from Missouri.

"We are close to Missouri and offer really excellent educational opportunities," McCray said.

The University of Missouri saw undergraduate enrollment decline to 23,817 students this past fall, down more than 14.3 percent from 27,812 in fall 2015.

Data from UA published online shows a sharp increase six years ago in Missouri students, while recent years have seen their numbers mostly holding steady.

Degree-seeking freshmen from Missouri increased to more than 300 students in fall 2011 from fewer than 200 students in fall 2009. Over the same period, the percentage of UA freshmen from Missouri increased to 7.7 percent from 5.7 percent, according to a Democrat-Gazette analysis. Since fall 2011, enrollment of freshmen from Missouri has varied, but it reached a high of 364 students in fall 2016. In fall 2017, 362 students from Missouri made up 7.7 percent of degree-seeking freshmen.

UA offers a New Arkansan Non-Resident Tuition Award Scholarship to entering freshmen and transfer students from seven states, including Missouri. The awards, based on grades and college entrance exam scores, are for up to 90 percent of the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition.

In the 2017-18 academic year, out-of-state tuition to attend UA for a year is $22,630 for a typical course load. In-state student tuition is set at $9,062 for the same 30-hour course load.
For public universities, a widespread trend of decreasing state support has led to greater attention for enrollment as a revenue source, said Jon Boeckenstedt, associate vice president for enrollment management and marketing at DePaul University in Chicago.

"By all accounts, out-of-state students are better revenue sources for them," Boeckenstedt said. UA has seen enrollment surge in recent years, mostly through greater numbers of out-of-state students, especially Texans.

The university's degree-seeking freshman class totaled 2,899 students in fall 2007, with Arkansans making up 66 percent of that total. This past fall, Arkansans made up 49 percent of a freshman class of 5,065.

Boeckenstedt authors a blog, Higher Ed Data Stories, that displays federal data from schools in an interactive format that allows for quick comparisons between institutions.

He showed UA to be the second most popular out-of-state destination school for Missouri students in 2016, with only the University of Kansas attracting more Missouri students. For the same year, UA was the most popular destination institution for out-of-state students from Texas, enrolling more first-year Texans than the University of Oklahoma.

McCray said the university looks at data to see how UA fares in recruiting out-of-state students compared with other schools.

"We want to be aware of colleges and universities that could have a competitive impact on our enrollment, but we are not trying to be the No. 1 school for any state other than Arkansas," McCray said. "We do want to have a good mix of in-state and out-of-state students, so that all of our students/graduates will have connections across the country."

Boeckenstedt said competition between schools is continuing to heat up as schools fight to enroll students.

"When you think of the market of 17-year-olds and parents, there are probably literally hundreds of things that go into the equation," Boeckenstedt said.

Three factors that stand out are a school's reputation, price and the campus environment, he said. Sarah Komar, 19, is a first-year UA student who attended Park Hill South High School near Kansas City, Mo. She estimated that about 10 students from her graduating class are attending UA.

Komar earned an Honors College Fellowship of $70,000, and said the award was "pretty much" the reason she decided to attend UA.

But there were other factors, she said, as she considered a similar offer from the University of Oklahoma.

"I wanted to come here because my brother goes here, and also it's a little closer to home. And I just liked it better when I visited," Komar said, adding that her brother, Stephen, earned a similar scholarship award offered by UA.

Komar said that before he attended, her family had no ties to the state of Arkansas.
She said she never seriously considered attending a school in Missouri, citing "so many cuts to public education."

In Arkansas, appropriations for higher education decreased from $7,403 per full-time-equivalent student in 1996 to $7,161 in 2016, then down to $6,886 in 2016, according to inflation-adjusted data from the Colorado-based State Higher Education Executive Officers Association.

Gov. Asa Hutchinson's most recent budget proposal calls for a $12 million increase in funding for higher education, to $745 million.

Data from the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association for Missouri show a decrease from $8,039 per full-time-equivalent student in 1996 to $5,933 in 2016, the most recent year for comparative data from the association.

**CHILLCOTHE NEWS**

*The Chillicothe News is a daily newspaper serving Chillicothe, Missouri.*

**Chillicothe FFA, Chamber give salute to agriculture**

By Catherine Stortz Ripley

The Chillicothe FFA Chapter, along with the Chillicothe Area Chamber of Commerce, welcomed community members in a Salute to Agriculture breakfast Friday morning at the Mervyn Jenkins Expo Center.

The Chillicothe FFA Chapter, along with the Chillicothe Area Chamber of Commerce, welcomed community members in a Salute to Agriculture breakfast Friday morning at the Mervyn Jenkins Expo Center.

FFA members served the guests a breakfast of pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage and fruit. The program opened with remarks by Claire Shipp, Chillicothe FFA president, and comments by Mitchell Cooper, representing Woody’s Automotive Group, the event’s sponsor.

**Marshall Stewart, vice chancellor of Extension and Engagement at the University of Missouri, was the keynote speaker. He has served in this position since August 2016.**

Throughout his 30-year career, he has been recognized for his expertise in leadership development, strategic planning, legislative affairs, educational, youth and agricultural education and advocacy.
In his address, Stewart noted the goal of making University Extension programs accessible to all Missourians, punctuated the need for broadband internet service in rural areas, and emphasized the importance of education, health care and a good economy in Missouri.

The goal of Extension, he said, is to provide all the pieces of the comprehensive land grant university as a robust opportunity of research and innovation for all Missourians. He cited the findings of a recent study on the economic impact that University Extension programs provide.

“My job is to serve all Missourians and figure out how to take this institution, make a platform so that everybody has access to this institution,” Stewart said.

This includes areas such as research, innovation, and technology, to ensure that businesses grow, education is what it should be, and health services are provided across the state. He said the three basic areas of concern for Missourians are the economy, education system and health care.

Missourians, he said, agree that they want the economy to be stronger so that the next generation will have a better quality of life than the generation before them. He said Missourians want the education system to be strong.

“They want to make sure young people and adults are prepared with workforce development skills that will allow them to get jobs not only for today, but for the future,” he said. Finally, Missourians want quality health care across Missouri. “There are health care deserts across the state,” he said, adding that many areas in the state do not have what Chillicothe has in its access to health care. “We can do better,” he said.

These three things are tied together and when one areas is thriving, the other two areas are thriving.

“You show me a great health system, I’ll show you a good economy and a good education system,” he said. “You show me a good education, I’ll show you a good economy and good health care. You show me a good economy, I’ll show you good health care and good education.”

These three things are also somewhat reliant on broadband internet services, he said, noting that approximately 70 percent of rural Missourians do not have access to broadband internet service.

“If we don’t figure that out as a state, we are going to lack,” he said. “Broadband is the modern day rural electrification.”

Stewart also talked about the importance of agriculture and reflected upon the individuals who were influential to him as he studied agriculture. He urged the young people in the room to acknowledge the people who have been influential in their lives.

“There are people who put you where you are and they take you places,” he said. “I encourage you not to forget that.”

He also talked about the places agriculture can take a person and how agriculture can help develop one’s purpose.
“There is no more noble profession than you can be in than serving people through agriculture,” he said. “I know what it means to be learning to do, doing to learn, earning to live and living to serve because those are things imbedded in me by people who took me places and gave me purpose,” he said. “We can talk about technology and expansion, but it’s really about the people of agriculture doing the right things in the right places for the right purposes to feed the world.”

Stewart, originally from North Carolina, told those gathered Friday morning about the first time he heard of Chillicothe, Mo. It was during a leadership conference he attended in Washington, D.C., as an FFA member when he learned about citizenship and Congressman Jerry Litton, who was from Chillicothe. Stewart reflected that many years later, he met Ed Turner, of Chillicothe, who had served as Litton’s chief of staff.

Stewart stated that his “journey to Chillicothe was important.” In closing, Stewart challenged the young people to be purposeful in their lives, enjoy the places they go, and to not forget about the people in their lives.

**Mizzou basketball has success helping local businesses**

By: Charles Nichleson

COLUMBIA - With attendance up for both the University of Missouri men's and women's basketball teams, some local businesses are also benefiting from their success.

The Tiger's Senior Associate Athletic Director for Strategic Communications, Nick Joos, said the women's team, which enjoyed a record crowd against Tennessee on Sunday, is helping raise the stature of the community.

"A lot of those people come from outside the Columbia area, and they spend dollars within the community," Joos said. "And that really helps raise the entire community profile."

Joos also credited the Mizzou men's team, which he said might lead the nation in attendance gain compared to last season.
"With the success of men’s basketball throughout the season, as well - the arena being sold out on a season ticket basis - you’ve got a great opportunity for the local economy to really get a boost," Joos said.

And the restaurant closest to Mizzou Arena - Stadium Grill - is seeing the effects. Stadium Grill's Assistant Manager, Brandon Phillips, said the change of conference, from the Big 12 to the SEC, has also helped.

"The SEC travels well, just in general," Phillips said. "You get the influx of, not only us, but you get the influx of everybody else that comes in for the opposing team, and it's a good atmosphere."

And with Mizzou Women's Basketball expected to host NCAA tournament games, there may be more to come.

MU student from South Korea proud of home country's Olympics

By: Caileigh Peterson


COLUMBIA — Jiwon Choi moved to the United States from South Korea in 2016 to complete her Master's degree at the University of Missouri.

Choi said she remembered the day the nation found out it would host the 2018 Winter Olympics.

"It was really exciting when the IOC announced there would be the Pyeongchang Olympics. When people think of South Korea, they think of Seoul, so I am excited for them to see a new part of our country," Choi said.
Choi said the formation of a blended South and North Korean Women's hockey team could open the door for necessary conversation.

"We don't really talk to them. I think what the Olympics does is they bring countries together. This might be an opportunity for the two countries to talk and lead to more helpful conversations in the future," Choi said.

She said watching her home country host the games has given her a sense of pride.

"I'm really proud of my country that they have been doing and preparing for the Olympics so well. I am very proud of the athletes, the volunteers, and a lot of other people in my country who have tried so hard to put a lot of effort into making sure the Olympics are going well and succeed," she said.

Many of Choi's American friends have asked her more about her home country as the Olympics have aired.

"My American friends keep asking me about my country and it makes me proud. I'm excited they want to learn more about my country," Choi said.

Choi said she is experiencing a new way of watching the Olympics since being in America.

"It's fun to listen to the American announcers. Usually I just hear the South Korean announcers talking about our athletes," the MU student said. "Now, I'm hearing the American announcers talk and it's like I'm watching the games from a totally different point of view."

Choi said her family in South Korea is enjoying watching the games together.

"My family is all getting together to watch the games and they're very excited especially when the Opening Ceremonies were on," Choi said.

The South Korean native said she is disappointed she is not in her home country while the games are in action.

"It's a bummer. A lot of my friends were at the Opening Ceremony and it would have been so cool to see it in person," she said. "I know it would have also been really cool to be in Pyeongchang to see everyone from across the world in my country."
Revenge porn bill back before state lawmakers

By: Garrett Bergquist

JEFFERSON CITY — A media law expert said Monday legislation in the Missouri House closes a major legal loophole dealing with sharing sexual images.

State lawmakers could vote as early as this week on a measure that would make it a felony to share a private sexual image without the subject's consent. The bill specifies this would apply to situations where a person obtained the image under circumstances in which a reasonable person would know or understand that the image was supposed to remain private.

Sandy Davidson, an MU journalism professor who specializes in media law, said Missouri's existing invasion-of-privacy law only deals with whether a person consented to having a nude picture taken of them in the first place, not whether they subsequently agree to have the image shared with a third party.

"What you have is a consensual taking of a picture, but that was at a time when the persons involved perhaps were in a love affair," she said.

According to the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, 38 states and the District of Columbia have so-called revenge porn laws, which prohibit distributing private sexual images without someone's consent. Missouri's invasion of privacy law makes it a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail to take a photo of someone in a state of undress without their consent. The bill dealing with non-consensual distribution of such images would make that action punishable by up to seven years in prison. Davidson said the First Amendment does not protect such images.

"There is no right to publicly shame another human being by disseminating pictures of the person's body," she said.
The bill passed two House committees with no opposition. It has not yet come up for a floor vote.

Lake News Online

The Lake News Online covers news in Camdenton, Missouri.

Report: Russia sparked fear at MU during 2015 protests

By Rudi Keller, Columbia Daily Tribune

Russian Twitter trolls pounced on the University of Missouri’s woes in 2015 using the same techniques they applied to disrupt the 2016 presidential election, a U.S. Air Force officer wrote in an article published recently in Strategic Studies Quarterly.

In the aftermath of the Nov. 9, 2015, resignation of UM System President Tim Wolfe during protests over racial issues, some feared a violent white backlash.

It was fueled in part by a real post on the anonymous social app Yik-Yak from Hunter Park, then a student at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, that he would “shoot every black person I see.” The fear was enlarged and spread by a now-suspended Twitter account that warned “The cops are marching with the KKK! They beat up my little brother! Watch out!” that included a photo of a black child with a severely bruised face and the hashtag #PrayForMizzou.

The fear generated by the real and fake posts caused many students to stay home on Nov. 10, with several professors canceling classes and some stores along Ninth Street near campus closing their doors.

The tweet and photo were fake, Lt. Col. Jarred Prier, director of operations for the 20th Bomb Squadron, wrote in “Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare” for the winter edition of Strategic Studies Quarterly. Prier’s article expands on the master’s degree thesis he wrote while studying at Air University for the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies.

The Twitter account, with the handle @FanFan1911 and user name Jermaine while tweeting about Mizzou, was used to spread panic about a fake chemical factory fire in St. Mary Parish, La., in 2014 and fear of Syrian refugees in Germany in 2016, Prier wrote. The account’s original MU tweets were retweeted by an army of 70 robot accounts and hundreds of legitimate users and became part of the huge volume of tweets about the university at that time, he wrote.

“The rapidly spreading image of a bruised little boy was generating legitimate outrage across the country and around the world,” Prier wrote. “However, a quick Google image search for ‘bruised black child’ revealed the picture that ‘Jermaine’ attached to the tweet was a picture of an African
American child who was beaten by police in Ohio over one year earlier. The image and the narrative were part of a larger plot to spread fear and distrust. It worked.”

Payton Head, then-president of the Missouri students Association, took the bait, Prier notes in his article. In a Facebook post, Head warned students to stay away from windows in residence halls. “The KKK has been confirmed to be sighted on campus. I’m working with the MUPD, the state trooper and National Guard,” Head wrote.

Head quickly retracted and deleted the post, apologizing for sharing misinformation, which he said came from “multiple incorrect sources.” The Missouri National Guard confirmed it had been contacted about the rumored KKK presence on campus but an official said the Guard was “never working with anyone” to respond to the rumor.

“In a state of alarm, I was concerned for all students of the University of Missouri and wanted to ensure that everyone was safe,” Head wrote in his apology. “The last thing needed is to incite more fear in the hearts of our community.”

Prier is an MU ROTC graduate from 2003. In the article, he explains the techniques used by Russian online agents working to disrupt political life in democracies and why they are effective.

A human actor writes a fake post and it is automatically spread by robotic accounts created on the same platform. To spread the message, the post uses words or phrases that are getting a lot of attention, or trending, online. That inserts it into a conversation already underway, Prier wrote.

“One of the primary principles of propaganda is that the message must resonate with the target,” he wrote. “Therefore, when presented with information that is within your belief structure, your bias is confirmed and you accept the propaganda.”

To convince those not already disposed to believe, the key is repetition and having the story line pushed by the propaganda reported by a trusted media source, Prier wrote. Several media outlets reported on fears the KKK was on campus before the rumor was put to rest.

The episode helped create and maintain a false narrative that the MU campus was wracked by violence or experienced riots during the protests, which were peaceful.

Prier’s study “would certainly help explain the origin of that ‘news’ that we were trying to combat and in some cases continue to do so today,” MU spokesman Christian Basi said Tuesday.

The discovery of Russian trolls using events at MU to sow distrust isn’t especially surprising, said state Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia.

“I think there are a lot of people out there, maybe they are Russian, maybe they are not, but there are a lot of people out there who want to instigate and divide people on Twitter and other places,” he said.

The selection of @FanFan1911’s tweet about the KKK to highlight in the study wasn’t entirely random. Prier noticed the original tweet about the KKK on Nov. 11, 2015, and responded by
saying “stop spreading lies” and posting a link to a Huffington Post report from 2013 about the beating.

But @FanFan1911 wasn’t the only account he studied for the article, Prier wrote.

“I mention only one particular user in this article, but I also monitored a dozen or so accounts that contributed to that hoax,” he wrote. “Each account followed a pattern that also happened to align with noted Russian influence operations in Europe and eventually in the U.S. presidential election.”

The effort targeting MU may have been a warm-up for 2016. The Russian efforts to insert fake reports into the news articles covering the 2016 presidential campaign were extremely successful, Prier wrote. One of the most-shared stories about the election on Facebook was a false report that Pope Francis had endorsed Republican candidate Donald Trump, he states.

“Command of the trend enables the contemporary propaganda model, to create a ‘firehose of information’ that permits the insertion of false narratives over time and at all times,” Prier wrote.

MU theatre department’s ‘The Green Duck Lounge’ connects past and present

By Hannah McFadden


The show takes place in two time periods: first in 2015 and then in 1970. Both plotlines relate to the unsolved murder of Leon Jordan, the owner of the Green Duck Lounge and a well-known civil rights activist.

“The Green Duck Lounge” was selected for full production by the theater department for the relevance of its themes with regards to the 2015 protests at MU, director Claire Syler said.

“The central message of the play is that the same issues have always been there in terms of anti-black racism,” Syler said. “Those varying and competing and sometimes contrasting perspectives are coexisting, and you see them in both eras.”

The themes of the play showcase history’s exclusion of black communities and why these stories cannot afford to be ignored or silenced. Internalized anti-black racism, as well as the ideological and generational differences regarding its solution, are central to the show, Syler said.

Almost every actor plays two different characters, one in each time period.
“I have encouraged the actors not to create two totally separate characters so that the audience can see those characters as coexisting,” Syler said.

This idea of different yet similar characters is especially important for Ethan Phillips, one of the actors.

In the 2015 setting, Phillips plays Darius, a Black Lives Matter activist. In the 1970 setting, he plays Marcus, a member of the Black Panthers.

In creating the characters, Phillips has found that confidence and a deep understanding of the characters’ motivations are key.

“It comes from moments and lots and lots of researching the characters, from reading the script and understanding the reasons why they say things,” Phillips said.

Phillips noted that a key similarity between his characters is their involvement in activism and their ability to stand by what they believe in.

“They’re not the same person in the way of appearance and mindset, but their message is the same,” Phillips said. “A Black Panther and a Black Lives Matter protester are going to go about their recollection of how they want to get things done in two different ways, but it has the same meaning.”

While both the Black Lives Matter and Black Panther movements have related concerns and motivations, Syler said it’s important to prioritize commonalities while making sure they are viewed as distinct movements.

A lobby display with information about Black Lives Matter and the Black Panthers will aid the audience in its understanding of the evolution of civil rights movements, Syler said.

To further emphasize the importance of the show’s message, the second act is a talk-back session with the audience about the themes and issues the play focuses on. Johnson will serve as the moderator for the post-show discussions.

Syler said she hopes the show will generate a useful dialogue about the political climate of MU, the state of Missouri and the country.

“My greatest hope is that the production lingers and is something that stays with them,” Syler said. “It can become a kind of experience that is a resource for learning and growing, particularly in their understanding of anti-black racism in the United States and within Missouri.”

“The Green Duck Lounge” premieres Feb. 21 at the Rhynsburger Theatre and runs through Feb 25.
A University of, by and for the People

NO MU MENTION

By Sarah Vowell

BOZEMAN, Mont. — In 1937, Maurice Hilleman had a job lined up as the assistant manager of the J. C. Penney in Miles City. In Depression-era Montana, Penney’s was top-notch employment, especially to a senior at Custer County High who grew up raising chickens on the outskirts of town.

But Hilleman’s older brother pointed out there was that college in Bozeman and suggested Maurice should at least try to get a scholarship. He did, finished first in his class and went on to a graduate program in microbiology at the University of Chicago. Of the 14 standard recommended vaccines — including those for measles, mumps, meningitis, pneumonia and both hepatitis A and B — Hilleman developed eight of them. In a century soaked in genocide, his work saved millions of lives, including, potentially, yours and mine. J. C. Penney’s loss was humanity’s gain.

Hilleman’s college in Bozeman, Montana State University, turns 125 this month. It is one of the government-supported land-grant colleges established by the Morrill Act, which Abraham Lincoln signed into law in 1862 to educate the children of farm and factory workers, “the sons of toil.” A statue of Lincoln sculpted by the alumnus Jim Dolan is to be unveiled on campus on Friday for the anniversary.

Like Hilleman, I might not have attended college but for M.S.U. It was what I could afford. And I’ve come to appreciate the E pluribus unum implications of having been thrown together with 10,000 Mormons, Crow, Future Farmers of America and flower children’s children whose only shared experience was that we all graduated from high school within a 400-mile radius of Great Falls. No surprise, Oprah Winfrey and Johnny Carson attended land-grant colleges in Tennessee and Nebraska — you do learn how to talk to anyone.

Frances Senska, my friend and role model in how to live the life of a dignified misfit, started teaching art at Montana State in 1946 after serving in the Navy during World War II. She was a down-to-earth modernist, like an Eames chair upholstered in sod. And she liked to tell the story about how she and her students decided to start a ceramics class. One of them, Pete, knew a guy whose vehicle had just gotten stuck someplace. After getting directions, Frances and Pete headed up Bear Canyon with shovels to dig the inaugural batch of clay. Pete was Peter Voulkos, the Bozeman-born son of Greek immigrants who became the most innovative ceramic sculptor of the 20th century.
Would Voulkos’s work be in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art if he had not studied with Frances at M.S.U.? Would I be asking that question if I and everyone around me had not gotten measles shots courtesy of Maurice Hilleman?

Waded Cruzado, the president of M.S.U., graduated from the land-grant university in her native Puerto Rico. For her inauguration in 2010, M.S.U. convinced the National Archives to send the original copy of the Morrill Act with Lincoln’s signature to Montana so the faculty and students could genuflect before it and enjoy a rare moment of excitement about the federal government. She told me she is haunted by the what-ifs of Hilleman’s biography. She wonders, “How many Hillemans are out there?”

In 2016, M.S.U. established a program called the Hilleman Scholars. It provides scholarships for Montana high school graduates who are eligible for Pell grants, meaning they come from lower-income households. They are required to write an essay about Maurice Hilleman and provide a recommendation from an adult who verifies their potential, work ethic and grit.

There’s a Hilleman Scholars map of Montana with a star for every student’s hometown, like clay deposits ready to be dug up and hauled to Bozeman. There’s a star for Bailey from Brockton, a town of 255 within the boundaries of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. That’s about a nine-hour drive from Sheltah, Max and Hunter’s star in Missoula, a city of 72,000 humans and seven Starbucks. That’s roughly the equivalent geographical and cultural distance between Brooklyn and the mining towns of West Virginia.

There was an uptick in rural Hilleman Scholars in 2017 after the university’s agricultural extension agents, who get to know agrarian youngsters advising 4-H clubs, got involved in recruitment. The program’s application asks candidates to enumerate their chores so as to explain uneven report cards.

Erik Kalsta, a fourth-generation cattle and sheep rancher in the Big Hole Valley who attended M.S.U. in the 1980s and plans to send his daughter there this fall, told me he was often pulled out of school as a boy. “I was raised under a simple but fierce dictum: The animals come first, fed and watered before you get breakfast,” he said “Round-the-clock care during calving and lambing, and when the cattle go to summer pasture with a rider, then all focus goes to growing and harvesting their food for the winter.”

According to my dad, Pat, who worked as a machinist in M.S.U.’s mechanical engineering department for 26 years: “A farmer’s kid is probably going to be a better engineer than an engineer’s kid. The engineer’s kid is given a problem and sees a piece of paper. The farmer’s kid sees a problem and thinks back to that time the bridge washed out.” Josh Carter, a 2017 Rhodes scholar from M.S.U., double-majored in mechanical engineering and microbiology; he grew up on a South Dakota potato farm. Hilleman incubated the viruses for his vaccines in chicken eggs, a medium he was familiar with from his Great Plains boyhood.
If I had to predict the M.S.U. graduate who might be my generation’s Maurice Hilleman, which is to say the most effective at fighting our greatest common enemy — death — it would be a classmate who did not major in microbiology but rather graduated with a B.A. from the same art department as Peter Voulkos.

Leilani Schweitzer, the progeny of German homesteaders in Denton, was always a Fabergé-level good egg. Then the worst thing that can happen to anyone happened to her when her 20-month-old son, Gabriel, died at Stanford’s children’s hospital. A kind nurse intended to disable one alarm that was preventing the boy and his mother from getting any sleep and unwittingly turned off the alarms on all of Gabriel’s monitors.

After this fatal mistake, Leilani told me that she spent years doggedly sending the hospital suggestions for what might help other people. “I didn’t do it with any intention of it turning into anything,” she said. “I just wanted something good to come from something terrible.” The hospital eventually hired her to be a liaison among lawyers, physicians and families. She has become the leading advocate of medical transparency in a country where medical errors are arguably the third leading cause of death.

Her mission is to teach the medical establishment what she learned in her M.S.U. design classes: how to draw three-point perspectives. “Essentially,” she said at a presentation, “this process bends space and time, allowing us to see an object from three perspectives with a single drawing. This is what we need to do to fully comprehend our health care environment. We need to see multiple views” — from doctors, nurses, patients, administrators and volunteers — “at one time.” Only then, she said, will health care providers understand problems fully enough to “find true, long-term solutions.”

Here’s a problem. Every 10 years since 1948, Montanans vote on the 6-mill levy, a property tax to keep tuition low at the state universities, including M.S.U. It has always passed, but support keeps dwindling, to about 56 percent 10 years ago from around 64 percent in 1988. According to a Pew survey last year, 58 percent of conservatives believe universities have a negative impact on America, a crucial consideration in majority-Republican Montana.

This November, for the first time in seven decades, the 6-mill levy might not pass. In the meantime, while my neighbors in the party of Lincoln mull whether or not to undermine his noblest legacy in the state of Montana, I plan on stopping by the M.S.U. campus on its 125th anniversary, to witness that new Lincoln statue being unveiled.