



MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

June 7, 2017

[Ag journalism alumni rallying to save program](#)

By Rudi Keller

Alumni of the agriculture journalism program at the University of Missouri are rallying to save it from the budget axe.

A letter-writing campaign organized on Facebook is seeking to save the degree program, initiated in the 1920s. It is slated for elimination by the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources as part of \$3.9 million in cuts that will also see the undergraduate degree in Agricultural Economics merged with the Agricultural Business Management degree and graduate programs in the Division of Applied Social Sciences folded into single masters and doctoral programs with emphasis areas.

“The reason I care so much about it is that it has given me my entire career,” said Marilyn Cummins of Columbia, associate editor of Red Barn Media Group. Cummins is a graduate of the program and a former faculty member.

“This program has produced some of the top journalists and ag journalists working around the country,” she said. “It has always attracted the best and brightest.”

In a memo addressed to friends of the college, interim Dean Marc Linit wrote that he had protected the Food for the 21st Century and Agricultural Research Centers from cuts and looked for low-enrollment programs to combine or eliminate.

The college is losing 12 faculty positions but the professors are taking retirement. The college is able to make the cuts without layoffs, he wrote.

“It is important to note that currently enrolled students will be able to complete their degree program or transfer to another program,” Linit wrote.

The degree elimination is part of an emerging picture of how the Columbia campus will implement its share of \$101 million in cuts across the University of Missouri System. In a news release issued Tuesday, the campus announced that a reorganization of marketing and public relations efforts that will cut 14 campus jobs in addition to five jobs at the system level cut last week.

Overall, 474 jobs are slated for elimination throughout the university system.

The new Joint Office of Strategic Communications and Marketing will be led by Suzette Heiman, professor of strategic communication and director of planning and communications for the Journalism School. Her office will combine the University Relations media staff and the Marketing and Communications Division, which combined media relations with the offices overseeing the alumni magazine, campus social media accounts, trademark licensing and visitor relations.

“This merger will take advantage of the synergies that come from being a multi-campus system,” Choi said in the news release.

The office will handle alumni communications, news, marketing and branding and other roles, Heiman said.

“Basically I will be overseeing all the communication efforts,” Heiman said.

The exact functions and duties of the office, and whether they will all be done by staff or if a private contractor will be hired to help, are yet to be determined, Heiman said.

“Since that is a new venture, we have to figure out what that is and how that is going to work,” she said.

Students in the agriculture journalism program learned their news skills at the School of Journalism. Students with an interest in agriculture will still have opportunities to study but without a specific degree, said David Kurpius, dean of the school.

“The people who have been working on that have done a really good job,” Kurpius said. “We are just going to do it in a different way now.”

The journalism school is losing the third-highest number of full-time faculty positions, with 15 total slated for elimination. Some of the full-time positions actually represent many part-time adjunct instructors, Kurpius said. Their duties will be given to regular faculty and the school will save money by increasing the size of some classes, he said.

The changes in the school will not diminish its commitment to providing news to the public, he said. The school produces the Columbia Missourian newspaper, KBIA public radio and news broadcasts on KOMU-TV as well as news through other outlets.

Asked about those visible products of the university on Friday, interim Chancellor Garnett Stokes said they would not be cut.

“We remain committed to the Missouri method and I have not heard of any plans from the dean of journalism that those outlets would discontinue,” Stokes said. “We see them as important parts of the education of students.”

Kurpius said Tuesday that the school is committed to providing all of the outlets for student work that it has in the past.

“We are not getting rid of any of our agencies or newsrooms,” he said.

T COLUMBIA DAILY **TRIBUNE**

University of Missouri to pay \$750,000 to settle Britt case

By Rudi Keller

The University of Missouri will pay \$750,000 to settle claims arising from the death of Columbia Fire Department Lt. Bruce Britt in the collapse of a concrete walkway in February 2014.

The settlement, split into three parts, includes the purchase of an annuity for Stormy Britt, daughter of Bruce and Leigh Britt that will pay \$205,016 over 15 years and increase the final value of the settlement to \$867,318. The payments, \$1,138.98 per month, begin in 2032, when Stormy Britt turns 21.

The university also agreed to make a \$333,452.11 payment to Leigh Britt, her attorney and the city and a payment of \$322,698.94 to Britt and her attorney.

As part of the settlement, Leigh Britt released the university from all other liability in her husband’s death and the university admitted no negligence. The settlement also includes a \$6,151 payment for court costs.

In the lawsuit, originally filed in April 2014, Leigh Britt, whose name is now Kottwitz, accused the university of being responsible for her husband’s death because the university failed to “properly maintain and/or construct the University Village Apartments.” The lack of attention caused a “dangerous condition, of which Defendant Curators was aware.”

The settlement was finalized Monday by Circuit Judge Jodie Asel after an attempt to complete the case in February was held up by Columbia’s effort to intervene to recover workers’ compensation costs. The city dropped that effort and the settlement makes Leigh Britt responsible for settling any financial questions with the city.

The settlement approved Monday was the final action after a preliminary settlement was approved in March, subject to establishment of a conservatorship for Stormy Britt in probate court.

Leigh Britt and her attorney, Rick Barry of Columbia, agreed to remain publicly silent about the settlement.

“Claimants agree to refrain from seeking any publicity in connection herewith, unless compelled to do so by law or order of a court of competent jurisdiction,” the settlement states.

Bruce Britt died responded a call dispatched as a roof collapse at University Village, 601 S. Providence Road, on Feb. 22, 2014. A concrete walkway collapsed and trapped Britt underneath, suffocating him,

according to a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health report released a year after his death. The report cited deterioration of the walkway and a lack of information, planning and awareness as the primary contributing factors in his death.

Britt died almost six years after an internal MU report recommended closing and demolishing the apartment complex, which was built in 1956. The 2008 draft of the Graduate and Family Housing Master Plan stated that “deteriorating metal decks” were a safety hazard. The report also found other deficiencies such as termite-damaged wood, aging windows, and “damp” and “musty” interiors caused by inadequate waterproofing and ventilation.

The plan recommended renovations for several graduate housing complexes, but recommended University Village be demolished by 2011 because it was too expensive to renovate and because it is in a floodway.

After Britt’s death, the university inspected all buildings on its Columbia campus and tore down the building where Britt was killed.



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH



MU to pay \$750K to settle lawsuit over firefighter's death

COLUMBIA (AP) — The University of Missouri will pay \$750,000 to settle claims filed after a Columbia firefighter died in a walkway collapse at a university apartment complex.

The settlement finalized Monday comes in a lawsuit filed by the widow of Lt. Bruce Britt. The suit alleged that the university didn't properly maintain the University Village Apartments, where Britt died in February 2014 while evacuating residents. The apartments have since been torn down.

The university admitted no negligence. The settlement will provide payments to Britt's widow, her attorney and the city. Britt's daughter also will begin receiving payments through an annuity when she turns 21 in 2032. The annuity will pay about \$205,000 over 15 years and increases the settlement's value to more than \$867,000.



MU to Create Joint Communications Office

Watch story: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=2ced5220-af97-4cb9-911d-a108efefe805>



Mizzou to close federal lobbying office

By Deirdre Shesgreen

WASHINGTON — **The University of Missouri plans to shutter its Washington-based office by the end of this summer, nixing two staffers now dedicated to lobbying lawmakers on everything from robust funding for higher education to immigration visas for international students.**

The cuts are part of the university's system-wide budget reductions, announced Friday by system president Mun Choi.

“We know that we must maintain the good relationships we have had with our federal legislators, and so we will be carefully reviewing what responsibilities and duties we need to continue,” said university spokesman Christian Basi. “But with the state of our budget, we felt we could not continue to keep this office open.”

The University of Missouri system spent \$320,000 in 2016 on its Washington lobbying operation, according to federal disclosure reports. The two-person team pressed lawmakers on a wide range of issues, from funding for agriculture and food research to student aid and campus sexual assault.

Basi said the university will also make changes to its Jefferson City lobbying office, but he could not say whether it would be closed entirely or just slimmed down. He said the university will keep its controversial contract with Andy Blunt, the son of Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo.

Andy Blunt earns \$10,000 a month under that contract, which the university signed in 2015 as the elder Blunt was gearing up for a tough re-election battle. Andy Blunt served as his father's campaign manager.

“That’s still in effect,” Basi said, explaining the university could not cancel it because it’s legally binding.

Andy Blunt has said he does not lobby his father and focuses only on state legislation.

The cuts to the university’s lobbying staff are a small part of overall reductions at the institution, which has come under pressure amid declining state funding and rising costs. Last week, Choi said the fiscal year 2018 budget would nix more than 300 administrative, faculty and staff positions, although some of the savings would be reinvested more strategically.

Both Blunt and Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., said the university would still be able to have its voice heard in Washington despite the cuts.

"The University of Missouri system is an academic and research force to be reckoned with," she said. "I'm confident UM's leadership in our state will continue full-speed ahead, and I've got their back in D.C."

Blunt said the budget decisions were tough but he would "continue advocating for the system's priorities in Washington."

MISSOURIAN

MU Health Care begins expansion of emergency department

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COLUMBIA — **MU Health Care began construction on a \$16 million expansion of University Hospital's emergency department Tuesday.**

The project will add 6,335 square feet to the emergency department, and 20,972 square feet of the total space will be renovated. By the time the work is done at the end of 2018, the emergency

room will include 17 more exam rooms for a total of 38, 10 new fast-track exam rooms and a second triage area, according to an MU Health Care news release.

"One innovative feature of this project is fast-track exam rooms that will help us continue to shorten wait times," Matthew Robinson, interim chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the MU School of Medicine, said in the release. The fast-track rooms will be able to quickly serve patients with lesser injuries such as cuts that require stitches or broken bones.

Jonathan Curtright, interim chief executive officer of MU Health Care, said the project is necessary because of the rising number of patients the ER sees.

"In 2016, University Hospital's emergency department provided care for more than 49,000 patients; up from 37,000 in 2011," Curtright said. "That is a 30 percent increase in our emergency department patient volumes in five years, and we expect that growth to continue."

Curtright said the hospital is on track to provide emergency care to more than 52,000 patients in 2017.

The expanded emergency department will include the only American College of Surgeons-verified Level I Trauma Center in mid-Missouri: the Frank L. Mitchell Jr., M.D., Trauma Center.

University Hospital's emergency room will remain open at all times during the construction, but there will be some changes. The Missouri Psychiatric Center entrance on Deans Drive will serve as the temporary emergency room entrance. Patients coming to the ER will be able to park in the Tiger Avenue Parking Structure beginning at 7 a.m. next Tuesday, and parking escorts will be available. The current ambulance entrance will remain open.

The hospital is also renovating another 11,355 square feet of space and adding 24 new inpatient rooms for patients with medical and behavioral issues. It will add another 5,108 square feet to the second floor to make room for equipment.

The total cost of the combined projects is about \$22.6 million.

Construction begins on University Hospital project

University of Missouri Health Care began a \$22.6 million renovation and expansion project Tuesday with work to increase capacity in the University Hospital emergency department.

The project will add or rebuild 43,770 square feet at the hospital. The \$16 million project in the emergency room will add 6,335 square feet and renovate 20,972 square feet of existing buildings, providing 17 new exam rooms, 10 fast-track exam rooms and a second triage area, MU Health said in a news release.

Other parts of the construction plan include adding 11,355 square feet for 24 inpatient rooms for adults with medical and behavioral issues and 5,108 square feet for mechanical equipment including an air handler, electrical room and shelled space for future expansion.

Emergency room traffic has increased more than 30 percent since 2011, with 49,000 patients in 2016, Jonathan Curtright, interim chief executive officer of MU Health, said in the news release. MU Health expects to see 52,000 patients in the emergency room in 2017, he said.

During construction, patients will enter the emergency room through the Missouri Psychiatric Center entrance on Deans Drive. The emergency room will remain open at all times during construction.



[\\$16 million E.R. construction project kicks off](#)

Watch story: <http://www.komu.com/news/16-million-e-r-construction-project-kicks-off>

By Kyrah Davis

COLUMBIA – MU Health Care will begin renovating the emergency department next week, and it hosted a kick off ceremony Tuesday.

The \$16 million will add 6,335 square feet to the emergency department to meet growing patient volumes, according to a news release. Contractors will complete the project by the end of 2018. The new E.R. will have:

- 17 additional exam rooms
- 10 new fast-track exam rooms
- 1 additional triage area

Interim Chair of Emergency Medicine Matt Robinson said the project will create a better environment for patients.

“Some of the things that we’re adding is actually improving space so that we can see patients more rapidly,” he said. “Regardless of the emergency.”

In addition to the emergency room expansion, the project will add 24 new inpatient rooms for adults with medical and behavioral issues, according to the news release.

MU Health Care Chief Medical Officer Stevan Whitt said the hospital funded the project with patients in mind.

“We started planning this project back in 2014, and we’ve been planning how to pay for the budget since that time,” he said.

Whitt said the money will come out of the hospital budget. The total cost of all of the hospital renovations, including the emergency department and inpatient rooms, will be approximately \$22.6 million, according to the news release.



[MU hospital breaks ground on emergency-room expansion](#)

Watch story: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=83a3d0a4-77b8-4533-babf-2c250a576868>

By Jordana Marie

COLUMBIA, Mo. - University Hospital is starting an estimated 18-month expansion project for its emergency room.

The project is budgeted to cost \$16 million and will more than double the number of beds the ER currently has from, 22 to 54. The project will add 6,335 square feet to the emergency department and another 20,972 square feet of existing space will be renovated.

The construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2018. It will add 17 exam rooms ,bringing the total to 38, 10 new fast-track exam rooms and one additional triage area, making two total triage areas.

"In 2016, University Hospital's emergency department provided care for more than 49,000 patients, up from 37,000 in 2011," said Jonathan Curtright, interim chief executive officer of MU Health Care. "That's a 30 percent increase in emergency department patient volumes in five years. We are on track to provide emergency care to more than 52,000 patients in 2017."

All emergency department operations will remain open and functioning 24 hours a day during the renovations. The current Psychiatric Center entrance will serve as the ER entrance during the construction. Patient parking will also be moved to the Tiger Avenue parking garage directly across from the Psychiatric Center's entrance.

Hospital staff said the improvements will allow physicians to see and care for patients more quickly.

From April 2016 to April 2017, emergency room wait times shortened from 18 minutes to 11 minutes, according to MU Health officials.

"One innovative feature of this project is fast-track exam rooms that will help us continue to shorten wait times," said Dr. Matthew Robinson, interim chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine at the MU School of Medicine. "We'll use our new fast-track rooms to quickly treat patients with less critical injuries, such as those needing stitches or a broken bone set. This group of our patients will be able to see a doctor even faster because our fast-track exam rooms will be dedicated to their care."



[ER expansion underway at University Hospital](#)

Watch story: <http://krcgtv.com/news/local/er-expansion-underway-at-university-hospital>

By Mark Slavit

COLUMBIA — A \$16 million renovation project is officially underway at Columbia's MU Health Care Emergency Room.

MU Health Care doctors celebrated with a groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion of its emergency room facility.

The project has been drafted to include more exam rooms and more space.

MU emergency room doctors cared for more than 49,000 patients last year, and the average ER wait was 11 minutes, according to MU Health Care.

Doctors said a growing number of severely ill and injured patients would get faster treatments because of the renovation and expansion.

“We are faster than the national average on seeing patients in academic centers, significantly faster, actually,” MU Health Care Interim Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine Dr. Matthew Robinson said.

MU Health Care officials said their ER renovation and expansion would be finished in 2018.

University Hospital opened in 1957 and was last renovated in 2002.



Counseling Services to Increase on MU's Campus

By Elena Rivera

A new fee approved by Mizzou students in the spring will help fund expanded mental health services on campus over the coming school year. **That's good news for the many students who seek out the MU Counseling Center each semester.**

“The only thing I wanted my freshman year was to be normal,” said Daniaja Davis. “I wanted to have a normal college experience. I thought I really wanted to get away from home, that was the mindset I was in. If I get away and start over, life will be swell.”

For Davis, a women and gender studies major at the University of Missouri, coming to college was a tough transition.

And Davis said it was hard to establish a support group when she wasn't sharing what was going on with the people around her.

“They would just know that one day Daniaja was happy, and the next day she's crying through the hallways,” said Davis. “They don't really know what is going on.”

Davis said she had separation anxiety and severe homesickness. She said she started having anxiety attacks.

“I would have them in my sleep,” said Davis. “My poor freshman year roommate would just watch and not really know what to do. I’d wake up and not want to talk about it.”

Davis began therapy at the MU Counseling Center her sophomore year. She credits the counseling center as the reason she is at MU instead of back home in Chicago.

The Missouri Assessment of College Health and Behavior reported that almost half of Missouri college students dealt with anxiety in 2016. The MU Counseling Center is one of the main resources for students dealing with mental health issues on campus, and students recently voted to increase funding for the center.

The funding increase comes from the Student Services Enhancement fee, also known as the Enhance Mizzou fee that passed in March. The fee will increase the student activity fee by twenty percent—about 26 dollars for graduate students and 35 dollars for undergraduate students each semester starting in fall of 2017. The fee will help fund 24-hour service for Ellis Library and expand campus wi-fi, along with adding three new counselors to the permanent staff of 14 at the counseling center. A large part of the student-led marketing for the fee was centered on the increased funds for the MU Counseling Center.

The counseling center funding was an important reason why Savannah Borgsmiller, a strategic communication major at MU, decided to join the marketing team for the new fee.

“The necessity for mental health is growing, and it's only going to get larger and more intense with the years,” said Borgsmiller. “I think it’s only apt and only time that this fee came about.”

Borgsmiller said she has heard students' frustrations over the long wait times to see counselors. She said she is hopeful the hiring of three new counselors thanks to the fee will help shorten these wait times, but the fee can't be the only thing MU does to improve mental health on campus.

“I think there probably isn't as much emphasis on the counseling center as there should be,” said Borgsmiller. “I think this enhancement fee is only solving a little bit of a very large problem.”

Long wait times and lack of resources to counseling centers is an issue state-wide, not just one at MU. Joan Masters is the director of Missouri Partners in Prevention, a coalition of 21 colleges across the state of Missouri working to create safe and healthy college campuses.

“Mental health is just as important as our physical health, and everyone has mental health,” said Masters. “We shouldn't only worry about mental health when there's a crisis.”

Masters said that she regularly meets with a group of leaders from college counseling centers all across Missouri to discuss challenges and collaborate on solutions to help students. They have seen the demand for counseling services growing.

MU's counseling center has seen an increase in student demand, even though total enrollment has decreased this past academic year, said Christy Hutton, assistant director for outreach and prevention at the MU Counseling Center.

The MU Counseling Center is different from the behavioral health services offered by the MU Student Health Center. Though both provide avenues for students to access counseling, they are funded through different streams. Appointments at the Counseling Center are entirely covered by the Student Activity fee.

Masters said the student fee is a positive way for MU to keep up with students' mental health needs.

"I think it's tremendous that so many students voted in favor of this," said Masters. "I'm not sure we would have that vote 15 or 25 years ago when mental health was still a very closeted issue."

Student Daniaja Davis said she is glad the fee will equip the counseling center to serve more students. Participating in individual and group therapy at the counseling center changed her entire outlook at MU, said Davis.

"I am pretty sure I would not have made it here," said Davis. "I wouldn't have made it through my sophomore year. I've just seen so many people who have used them and were greatly impacted by [MU Counseling Center] or who didn't use them and are not here anymore."



GOP Skeptical on Trump Budget

Republicans take issue with deep cuts proposed in White House budget during appropriations hearing with Betsy DeVos. She appears open to ending the release of the names of colleges seeking Title IX religious exemptions.

NO MU MENTION

By Andrew Kreighbaum June 7, 2017

WASHINGTON -- When Education Secretary Betsy DeVos makes an appearance before lawmakers on Capitol Hill, one would expect a hostile reception from Democrats who have

opposed her since she was nominated for the job. Less expected is open skepticism from Republicans.

That's exactly what DeVos got Tuesday, however, at a Senate appropriations subcommittee hearing on the proposed White House budget for 2018, which includes deep cuts to education programs as well as other nondefense spending.

"This is a difficult budget request to defend," said Missouri Republican Roy Blunt, the subcommittee's chairman, in opening the hearing.

Blunt said it was unlikely the kinds of cuts proposed in the budget would be passed by Congress. Those cuts included reductions to college-readiness programs like TRIO and GEAR UP as well as to campus-based aid like Federal Work-Study. Taken together, those proposals would make it more difficult for students to get into college and graduate to get well-paying jobs, Blunt said.

The critical reception of the budget from Blunt and several fellow Republicans underlined how extreme many of the proposed spending cuts would be. Blunt noted that lawmakers in April were able to reach a deal on an omnibus 2017 spending bill that accomplished priorities like restoring year-round Pell Grants and slightly increased funding for several aid programs. The White House budget would take the department in the opposite direction, even for some stated priorities of the administration.

Senator Richard Shelby, an Alabama Republican, said proposed cuts to career and technical education -- which the Trump administration has praised as an alternative to traditional four-year college -- were "troubling." The White House budget cuts CTE grants to states by \$168 million -- about 15 percent.

DeVos also underwent repeated grilling from Democrats who took issue with the budget cuts she was tasked with defending, as well as recent staff hires and her approach to student loan policy. Senator Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, said the White House budget proposal would worsen the student loan crisis in the country and said the Department of Education under DeVos did not appear willing to police the for-profit colleges that are responsible for a disproportionate number of student loan defaults.

The secretary said climbing student loan debt volumes are a real concern but the government must address a much broader issue in higher education.

"We haven't done a good job of helping students know what their full menu of options are when pursuing higher education," DeVos said. "We've segmented our career and technical education so that it seems like the lesser of two choices."

Year-Round Pell

The Trump administration has endorsed restoration of year-round Pell Grants, a policy change already enacted by Congress that allows eligible college students to use Pell benefits for summer semesters. But work remains for the department to spell out how the implementation of the

program will proceed. The guidance it issues will clarify to colleges and universities when those benefits can be paid out and which students would qualify.

DeVos told senators Tuesday that the department is on track to issue guidance for the program by July 1. But there appeared to be some confusion after the hearing about whether additional aid would actually be available to students this summer. A department spokeswoman said it was unclear "pending further guidance from the department" whether that aid would be released to students this summer.

Title IX Religious Exemptions

In an exchange with Senator James Lankford, an Oklahoma Republican, DeVos also indicated she was open to ending the publication of a list of institutions that seek exemptions from Title IX's requirements for religious reasons. In response to pressure from advocates for gay and transgender students, the department began releasing a list of those colleges and universities in the final year of the Obama administration. A 2015 report from the Human Rights Campaign said the department doesn't have much discretion in the granting of those exemptions but argued that public knowledge of the requests is important to protect LGBT students. Without transparency, those students could find themselves enrolled at institutions legally granted the ability to discriminate against them, the group argued.

Lankford told DeVos federal law allows institutions to seek those exemptions and that proactively releasing a list -- as opposed to a response to a Freedom of Information Act request -- is a form of shaming religious entities.

DeVos said it sounded like a public list is not necessary.

"Religious liberty is a very key and important issue to be discussed in the context of all educational settings," she told Lankford.

Asked whether DeVos's comments signaled a change in the policies of the department, a spokeswoman said no decision has been made regarding the religious exemptions list.