



MU News Bureau

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UM outlook brightens under Choi

OUR OPINION

The University of Missouri System will not achieve its full potential in the future without understanding where it went wrong in the past.

And yet, the future really does beckon without any pause in the arc of history. Squarely in front of it, the state's higher education system is faced with new financial realities, challenging perceptions about climate on its flagship campus, and ever-present high expectations for what it should provide to the state's citizens.

Balancing past issues with present priorities is now the responsibility of Dr. Mun Choi, a native of South Korea who took over as president of the four-campus system in March. Choi previously was provost and executive vice president of the University of Connecticut.

It's too much to declare Choi as the answer to all of the system's problems and challenges. But there also is scant reason to give Choi anything other than high marks for his performance over the first five months and the groundwork he has laid for the future.

Choi, 53, recently told the Columbia Tribune he hopes "when people look back ... that they say he brought in a clear, strategic approach of operating and supporting a university; he helped to bring the pride back that was rightfully placed in this institution."

This is the vision Choi has begun to implement, and the early signs are promising.

Facing both a difficult state budget environment and declines in enrollment, he pledged early on to assess system operations and find more than \$100 million in cost savings. Just three months on the job, he announced staff layoffs, a reduction in non-tenured faculty and the elimination of open positions totaling almost 500 jobs.

But he assures this is not retrenchment. He pledged that major education and research construction projects will move ahead. He also says it is a priority to hire more researchers and

additional tenured faculty, in part to bolster the standing of the flagship Columbia campus in the ranks of the nation's outstanding universities.

And in line with outstate interests, he paints a vision of UM system campuses working together much more than in the past. He foresees faculty on separate campuses collaborating on research and students enrolling in courses from multiple campuses.

He pledges a continued focus on addressing concerns about racial inequality, especially on the Columbia campus.

And he is previewing an evolving strategic vision that each campus in the system will house centers of excellence – whether that is agricultural sciences, engineering or health care, as three examples.

On a visit to Northwest Missouri, Choi voiced strong support for partnerships not just with area four-year colleges, but also with community colleges.

“We have to fight for education as a group ... We have to be in it together,” Choi said.

This is but one of several well-articulated positions Choi has taken, and acted on, in five months on the job. He is off to a promising start.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

[At MU, efficiency is the new normal because of budget cuts](#)

On the surface, much will be the same when University of Missouri students begin classes at the Columbia campus next week. Meanwhile, many returning faculty and staff will be adjusting to new roles and responsibilities in light of recent staffing and budget reductions.

In May, MU released a budget proposal that called for the elimination of more than 300 jobs and roughly \$60 million in budget cuts for fiscal year 2018. Low enrollment, slashed state funding, cost increases and strategic investments led to the budget shortfall and widespread reductions. The majority of the changes went into effect this summer. Administrators say the duties of those lost positions were either eliminated or reallocated to remaining staff.

MU administrators, however, are determined to provide quality research and education using the resources it has, spokesman Christian Basi said, even as those resources have decreased.

“There are some things that are no longer being done or will be done differently in the future, but the main mission of the university — the education of our students, the support of our research and the dissemination of that information — continues without problems,” Basi said.

The College of Arts and Science took the biggest hit, with \$9.6 million cut and 68.4 jobs lost. The School of Journalism, the College of Engineering, the College of Education and the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources also lost more than 20 positions each. So did Campus Operations, which experienced the second-largest reduction at almost \$8.5 million. MU Extension lost the second-most positions at 32 and had almost \$4 million cut.

MU plans to consolidate numerous programs, duties and staff positions, so many that the word “consolidation” appears in the university’s budget proposal 116 times. This is one way the university hopes to limit expenditures and restructure academic programs and administration. The proposal also calls for the use of reserve funds in some divisions and the realignment of some programs to make them more cost-efficient.

In a document explaining the rationale behind MU’s budget decisions, each college or division provided a list of investment plans, proposed reductions and initiatives that are safe from budget cuts. Staff cuts do affect some of the initiatives that have not lost money. The College of Arts and Science had to reduce some course offerings because of fewer faculty, associate dean Cooper Drury said in an email.

“In some cases, program implementation is slowed, but our staff has taken on more responsibilities and work to ensure our education and research can continue,” Drury said.

The college eliminated three chairman and director positions, leaving a few academic program directors who report to the lone department chair. The rationale document stated that Arts and Science proposed cutting emphasis areas in some degree programs. Drury said the college is reviewing multiple programs and has not made these changes yet.

The College of Education eliminated an associate dean and four post-doctoral fellow positions, restructured its human resources and finance departments and did not rehire an executive assistant position after a retirement. It also got rid of graduate student research assistants to save more than \$500,000, and current staff members will fill some of those positions, dean Kathryn Chval said in an email.

Staff cuts have not affected some of the College of Education’s investment initiatives because they do not receive state funding, Chval said. Initiatives in Campus Operations and MU Extension are also safe. Basi said MU Extension had set aside funds for its online learning improvement initiative, Nexus@Mizzou. Operations Communications Manager Karlan Seville said staff cuts will not impede the division’s efforts to recruit more diverse officers in the MU Police Department.

MU created a list of initiatives for hiring diverse faculty and staff in November 2015. In the rationale document, many divisions said they wanted to continue to invest in these potential hires. Basi said in an email the initiatives are still planned despite staff reductions.

Operations has deferred some water line and parking structure maintenance projects because of budget cuts, and Seville said it is unclear how long they will be deferred.

“We will re-evaluate need and determine when it is necessary for the university to make this investment in infrastructure to maintain the campus at the current level,” Seville said. “We try to be proactive in maintaining the campus when the budget allows.”

MU Libraries, the College of Veterinary Medicine and the Office of Research each lost fewer than 10 positions but experienced more than \$2 million each in cuts. The libraries have a new revenue source, the student services enhancement fee of \$2.91 per credit hour, which students voted to adopt in the spring. The money benefits the libraries in areas such as machine maintenance and virtual student services.

The research office and the veterinary school are tapping into more than \$1 million of reserves apiece. The School of Health Professions, the School of Law and the chancellor’s office are a few of the other divisions using reserves.

In July, the Division of Student Affairs announced it would save \$750,000 by moving 165 maintenance, custodial and design staff positions to Campus Operations. The move prompted MU to create a Dean of Students position to supervise a variety of student programs that multiple administrators previously oversaw. Basi said former assistant vice chancellor Jeff Zeilenga accepted the position and will be in charge of the Office of Student Conduct, the Student Recreation Complex, Greek Life, Residential Life and other organizations serving students.

The budget proposal states that most of the 2018 savings will become annual or otherwise recurring. It also outlines plans for an additional \$21 million in long-term cuts, though the actual savings will differ from the speculative target amounts.

Basi said every division will undergo a review in the coming months to determine if more changes are necessary. Potential changes can include additions and not just more reductions, he said, because the goal is to ensure the best use of MU’s resources.

“We’ve always prided ourselves on being good fiscal stewards,” he said.



University of Missouri Launches Camp Trulaske

<http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=9909b55b-be00-4fde-a9ed-03e306230851>



[Annual NSBE leadership conference held at MU](#)

WATCH the story: <http://www.komu.com/news/annual-nsbe-leadership-conference-held-at-mu>

By: [Stephanie Lorenc](#), KOMU 8 Reporter

COLUMBIA - The National Society of Black Engineers region five annual leadership conference is taking place at the University of Missouri this weekend.

NSBE members from all across the region are coming together for a weekend full of learning and training to prepare members for their new positions for the upcoming year.

NSBE is a nation organization that is broken up into six different regions, which is then broken up into smaller zones. Region five, the conference being held at MU, encompasses nine different states: Missouri, Louisiana, Arkansas, Kansas, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Iowa.

Alexis Cushshon, NSBE region five's public relations coordinator, said NSBE's goal is to increase the number of black engineers among society and provide them with professional and leadership experience.

"Our mission is to increase the number of culturally-responsible black engineers who excel academically, succeeded professionally, and positively impact the community," Cushshon said.

Cushshon also said NSBE is broken down into four different levels that can begin as early as elementary school.

"We start off at NSBE Junior, then you move up to the chapter level - the collegiate level - and from there we go off to the regional level and national level," said Cushshon. "So this organization focuses on the members helping them to exceed and excel professionally."

Cushshon said this weekend's agenda is packed with different meetings, events, workshops, and trainings to not only groom each and every person to excel individually, but to learn how to interact and work together as a team.

Cushshon also said although the organizations focus is on black engineers, it is till open to engineers of all backgrounds.

The NSBE region five leadership conference ends on Sunday.

For more information about the organization, visit their website [here](#).

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

[Solar eclipse elicits plenty of crackpot claims](#)

By **Rudi Keller**

The Aug. 21 total solar eclipse will cause stock market disruptions, national security calamities and power failures, some have predicted.

Others claim it will usher in a new era in human perception. Or wipe out humanity, when a planet no observatory has seen crashes into the earth 33 days after the eclipse.

All of those predictions are absurd, baseless and deserve other, earthier terms denoting how thoroughly wrong a notion is, University of Missouri director of astronomy Angela Speck said.

“I got in a big argument on Facebook because someone told me it is such a coincidence the moon is exactly the right size to block out the sun,” Speck said. “Well, most of the time it is not big enough. People like to see the hand of God in this. If you want to see the hand of God in it, that is fine. But we don’t need to invoke God to understand it.”

Eclipses are a regular part of the celestial revolutions and the exact time and location of ancient and future eclipses can be plotted for as long a period as anyone cares to do the calculations. The dates of ancient eclipses have been used to precisely date events as wars or dynasties.

Before mathematical precision brought predictability to eclipses — and for a long time afterward in many instances — they were believed to be omens of doom or displeasure of the gods.

Joseph Wright, operations manager of the Warkoczewski Public Observatory at University of Missouri-Kansas City, said he is alarmed by “the crap that radio stations have on at night” that discuss doomsday predictions related to the Aug. 21 eclipse.

“We have shows like that that are feeding this frenzy of non-science, when it is so easy to go to an observatory and look through some really nice instruments and see what is out there,” Wright said.

The most widely circulated prediction that is wrong is that a planet variously called Nibiru or Planet X will crash into the earth 33 days after the eclipse. The catastrophe has been predicted before — most recently in 2012 in association with the supposed relation of the Mayan calendar to the end of time — but this time an author named David Meade claims he’s found biblical clues that this is, indeed, the correct time.

NASA responded to the notion in an article called [“Beyond 2012: Why the World didn’t end.”](#)

“If Nibiru or Planet X were real and headed for an encounter with the Earth in 2012, astronomers would have been tracking it for at least the past decade, and it would be visible by now to the naked eye,” NASA reported. “Obviously, it does not exist.”

A planet-sized body close enough to hit earth in 33 days would be close to crossing the orbit of Mars if it was moving as fast as earth revolves around the sun, about 1.6 million miles a day. It would appear as a large star and grow noticeably larger each night.

Smaller objects, which can potentially do a lot of damage but not a global catastrophe, are harder to track, Speck said.

“Things smaller than a car, those are hard to see, that is where we get a meteor like the one in Russia,” she said. “Anything larger than, say, a bus, we will see it.”

Once a large object is located, determining its orbital path around the sun is determined by long-set mathematical rules.

“Because of the way gravity works, it is really not hard,” Speck said. “If it is moving fast, very quickly we would know its trajectory.”

Less dire predictions include a discussion on coast to coast AM radio about [stock market disruptions](#) and blackouts. On Ground Zero, an article foretold [a change in the world](#).

“The world is not ending, but the eclipse may once again signify that the times of the universe are about to go through significant changes; many of these changes will be subtle while some may affect a lot of people as the fore structuring process of a New Aeon or philosophy of mind will most definitely change the way we perceive time.”

Speck laughed when she heard that read.

“I love things like that because it is vague enough that you can claim that it is true — how we perceive time is very personal,” Speck said. “I have no doubt it will have an impact on people on a personal level. It is very emotional experience.”

Some government agencies have made fun of the doom-and-gloom and some have been made fun of because of the serious nature of their preparedness warnings.

The Massac County, Ill., Emergency Management Agency was one of the latter. It had to clarify [what it meant](#) after issuing a preparedness alert calling on people to fill their cars with gas and buy food by Friday, check on the elderly to make sure they are supplied, check medications and have a backup communication plan.

“There was no intent to paint a picture of ‘gloom and doom’, for lack of a better phrase, by its posting,” the agency wrote on Facebook.

Oconee County, Ga., Sheriff Scott Berry announced Aug. 3 that an eclipse would occur “as [celestial forces no one understands](#) will blot out the sun. It is very likely this is the end of life on this planet as we know it. As your Sheriff I expect each of you to begin panicking today.”

Berry jokingly encouraged people to rush to grocery stores and pregnant women to smoke cigarettes and drink liquor to “prevent radioactive waves from making your ankles swell and being grouchy most of the time.”

Missouri’s emergency management center will be activated during the eclipse but mainly because the extremely heavy volumes of traffic expected into and out of the path of totality, said Mike O’Connell, spokesman for the Department of Public Safety.

“If you review our page, our page is very measured compared to other information that is being put out,” O’Connell said.

In a [recent article](#) published by Space.com, Speck tried to explain the eclipse as a social phenomenon.

“There are so many ways in which eclipse day is going to resemble a zombie apocalypse,” Speck told the space news website.

So far, Speck said, the internet echo chamber hasn’t morphed that comment into a claim that the eclipse will cause a zombie apocalypse. “I don’t think so, but you never know,” she said.

MISSOURIAN

FAQ: What you need to know about the eclipse in Columbia

By ELIZABETH CASSIDY

What is a total solar eclipse?

A total solar eclipse is when the moon passes and completely covers the sun during a new moon. It darkens the sky and shows a beautiful corona that surrounds the sun. Stars come out, the horizon glows with sunset and day briefly becomes night.

What makes this eclipse special?

This is the first total solar eclipse in the contiguous United States in almost four decades. The last one was in 1979. There have only been 15 total solar eclipse paths that have crossed this path since 1503, according to NASA.

When will it happen?

The eclipse will be visible in Columbia between 1:12 p.m. and 1:15 p.m. on Aug. 21, according to greatamericaneclipse.com.

How long will it last?

The eclipse will last for approximately 2 minutes and 41 seconds, the longest time to view in the eclipse anywhere in the totality path.

Where can I see it?

The total eclipse can be seen anywhere within its path. There's no need to go anywhere special. You can see it from your front lawn in Columbia.

Do I need anything to view it?

You'll need special eclipse glasses to keep your eyes safe when the moon is not completely covering the sun.

Any other device?

If you'd rather try something else, you could make a pinhole projector with cardboard and aluminum foil.

Won't it get cold?

The temperature will drop, although it's hard to know just how much. According to space.com, the temperature will go from feeling like midday to just after the sun sets.

Will city lights turn on during the eclipse?

Yes, but don't worry. MU astronomy professor Angela Speck said it shouldn't be a big deal because the horizon will still be "early twilight colors."

Will it scare my pets?

People with experience say cats and dogs will not like it. It's best to leave them at home.

Can I take pictures of the eclipse?

You'll need a special solar filter to protect a camera or telescope. The heat of the sun can melt lenses. Check with camera or electronics shops to see where you can purchase a solar filter.

What about using my cellphone for pictures?

Experts warn that it could do serious damage to the phone's camera. It is much the same as using a magnifying glass to burn a hole in paper with the sun.

Is it safe to photograph it at any time during the eclipse?

You can only safely photograph the eclipse when the sun is 100 percent covered.

What is the path of totality anyway?

This time, there is a strip of land about 70 miles wide from central Oregon through South Carolina. It passes through 14 states, but in most states, it includes just a small segment of land. In Missouri, it stretches across the middle of the state.

Will the rest of the country see it?

Everyone in the continental U.S. will at least see a partial eclipse. In fact, if you have clear skies, the moon will cover at least 48 percent of the sun's surface.

How often do eclipses happen?

One happens almost every year somewhere on Earth. You must be located on a narrow strip of land — called the "path of totality" — if you want to see the total eclipse.

When was the last one in the United States?

The only total eclipses in the last 40 years in the U.S. were in 1979, in the northwest region of the country only, and 1991, only Hawaii. Partial eclipses take place more often. One happened over Christmas in 2000.

Why are some eclipses longer than others?

Earth is not always the same distance from the sun, and the moon is not always the same distance from Earth. The distance from the sun varies by 3 percent, and the distance from the moon varies by 12 percent. The result is that the moon's apparent diameter can range from 7 percent larger to 10 percent smaller than the sun.

How can scientists predict eclipses in advance?

Astronomers do the math. They have the equations that model the motions of the Earth and moon, and computers have made predictions that are simple and accurate. In fact, eclipses can be predicted thousands of years from now.

When is the next eclipse?

There isn't another one on land until 2019, and it will only be visible in Chile and Argentina. After that, the next one in the United States is in 2024.

Sources: NASA, American Astronomical Society, National Science Foundation.



Construction Could Hamper Traffic/Crowds in Columbia on Day of Eclipse

WATCH STORY: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=9651a06e-d8dd-4e8f-9065-4b27b59a1589>

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Messenger: Ferguson, Charlottesville show America's true colors

By Tony Messenger St. Louis Post-Dispatch

This is not St. Louis, I said.

It was August 2014, and I was driving to work. For a few days, images of militarized lines of police backed by armored vehicles staring down black protesters on the streets of Ferguson had been burned into the national psyche.

Gov. Jay Nixon was slow to respond. Peaceful, black protesters faced cops with semi-automatic weapons and dogs. It was the 1960s, and yet it was today, in the post-racial America envisioned by the nation's first black president.

I turned on my audio recorder on my phone as I made my daily drive from West County to downtown. I was angry and self-righteous.

This is not St. Louis, I said, imagining we were better than that. This is not America, I pleaded. The words would later be paired with the Pulitzer Prize-winning photos of the Post-Dispatch staff for a video editorial that I thought imagined a better St. Louis. A better America.

Three years later, I realize I got it wrong.

It started with a tweet. As Nazi-wearing white supremacists took to the streets of Charlottesville, Va., armed to the hilt like the full-bore terrorists they are, I sought once again to condemn such actions from my comfortable position of white privilege.

“The ugly racism and hate being displayed by white supremacists in #Charlottesville is pure evil,” I wrote on the social media platform Twitter. “This cannot be the new normal in America.”

Almost immediately I felt some backlash from my black followers, many of whom I came to know — either personally or through social media — through reporting and writing on Ferguson and the changed racial landscape in St. Louis since then.

“This is not the new normal,” wrote one person. “This is the U.S. Don’t try to change the historical narrative.”

“New normal?” wrote another. “Ain’t nothing new here!”

It was Washington University associate professor Jason Purnell who really opened my eyes.

“America isn’t better than this,” Purnell wrote. “America is this. America CAN be better than this if we finally face that fact.”

I met Purnell several months before Ferguson. He was unveiling to the world his groundbreaking [“For the Sake of All”](#) project that presaged much of what I have learned about race and America in the past few years. The project identifies an America divided by race and ZIP code. Through health outcomes, it paints a picture of an America where if you are poor and black and live in north St. Louis or Ferguson or Dellwood or Cool Valley you will die younger than if you happened to be born just a few miles away, in Clayton, in Ladue, in Wildwood, where I live and rear my children.

It’s science but it’s more than that. It’s the clearest picture I’ve ever seen of what the phrase “lived experience” means. It means that for people of color in America, the hoods of the KKK never left, they just manifested themselves in different ways. It means that when I’m offended by Nazis openly marching with militarized weapons on an American street, when white men chanting racist garbage while carrying torches through an American college campus make me sick, when I see those things as something new, then I haven’t been looking hard enough.

When the president of the United States, Donald Trump, can’t even bring himself to condemn such God-awful displays of racism and outright treason on American soil, this is not something that can be written off to “extremists” or a broken political system. This is America. It’s an America that allowed Republicans to gut voting rights protections so that black voters would have a more difficult time voting on election day. It’s an America in which a black lawyer in Jefferson City is not allowed to testify against a bill that makes it easier to discriminate in Missouri against people of color because a white Republican doesn’t want to be bothered by talk of the long-past “Jim Crow” era. It is an America in which white elected officials in both parties, and their donors and alumni, brought the University of Missouri to heel after black students and faculty stood up for their rights, and demanded change.

Those who sought to minimize the experience and voices of black student leaders might as well have marched through the campus with torches.

America and all of its halls of power, right now, from the White House to Mizzou’s Jesse Hall, is the very definition of systematic oppression that former University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe struggled to define before the protests of the Concerned Student 1950 group forced his resignation.

For three years, I’ve written columns and editorials intending to raise awareness of racial divisions in St. Louis and America, and yet it took Charlottesville for me to understand that I was often getting the key underlying issue completely wrong.

Charlottesville is America. For far too many Americans, we are not better than this, and we never have been. The arc of American history has much more bending to do before justice even enters the frame.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

EDITORIAL:

NAACP warning is unfair

Not long ago, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People issued a travel advisory for the State of Missouri, **with particular mention of the University of Missouri. The NAACP suggested people might be in danger visiting among us.**

It was an unfounded warning. My first inclination was to discount the missive as a shot in the dark, but some of my perceptive friends said it could hurt. After being surprised at the effects of last season's protests at MU, I have to admit even ill-conceived criticism might do more harm than it should.

Mun Choi, President of the University of Missouri System, sent word to the NAACP expressing concern over the warning and outlined for its state president the many moves under way to bring change. Choi said his counterpart at the NAACP was receptive.

Choi's admonition is well taken, but even before his arrival the flagship campus obviously was a safe place. The student protests and university reactions were violence-free. The students had made their voices heard and gotten surprisingly quick results. Interim leadership had reacted with a good mix of amelioration and control. It was the most awkward situation of its kind in the nation because it was the first, a stroke of bad luck with a silver lining.

Under Choi's new leadership, UM is beginning a process of reorganization and change that would not have been possible without the crisis.

It all will blow over and we will emerge stronger for the experience, but meanwhile overblown allegations of troubles in Missouri and our state university don't help. Pray the NAACP will use its influence to inform its supporters of the larger picture at UM. Issues of race and sexual harassment are particularly difficult on college campuses. Of all places in society, President Mun Choi's organization will be among the most diligent doing what it can to make progress. Help from the NAACP will be welcome.

HJW III

MISSOURIAN

Lewis Hall back in operation and free of mold after flooding in July

By LORETTA LEE

COLUMBIA — University Archives and part of the MU School of Health Professions have returned to Lewis Hall after flooding took over the building in early July.

After two mold assessments in July and August, no visible mold growth was reported, said Zach Lawhorn, senior marketing and communications manager at the School of Health Professions.

Two mold assessments were made after the flooding [took place on July 8](#) on the top floor of Lewis Hall from a burst pipe. Nova Consulting Group, Inc. from Kansas City conducted an air quality and mold assessment on all floors of Lewis Hall and some areas in adjoining Clark Hall, Lawhorn said. The MU Environmental Health and Safety department also conducted an assessment on July 10. Reports showed that flooding did not affect the indoor air quality in either building, Lawhorn said.

University Archives reopened to the public July 24 with services available to researchers, said technical services archivist Anselm Huelsbergen. Some of the services may be temporarily affected by moving furniture and relocating equipments and stored records to accommodate the continued renovation in Lewis Hall, he said.

After the flooding, all faculty and staff members of the School of Health Professions were displaced and worked remotely off-site, Lawhorn said. Two weeks later, all faculty and staff were allowed to return to their work spaces on the second floor and higher in Lewis Hall, Lawhorn said.

Lawhorn said the classrooms on the basement level were heavily affected, and carpets and furniture were removed from the building. The classrooms and some other areas of Lewis Hall will be utilized for the upcoming fall semester, while work will continue on projectors, televisions and computers in the classrooms that were damaged or destroyed in the flood.

"Due to the extensive nature of the damage, we are still working on compiling an estimate," spokesman Christian Basi said in an email. "Repairs are being made, but some may not be complete until January — some repairs cannot be made while school is in session. Finally, most

faculty and staff are back in the building, and we anticipate the building will be open for the start of the semester."

The School of Health Professions takes up a large part of Lewis Hall. Departments within the school occupy the basement and seven floors of the building, including Tiger OT Adult Services, the department of communication science and disorders and diagnostic medical ultrasound. Lawhorn said more than 100 faculty and staff members, graduate students and student employees work in Lewis Hall.

More than 50,000 gallons of water flowed into the building on July 8, according to a video from the School of Health Professions. [Lewis Hall also flooded in 2015](#) when a pipe burst on the top floor.



Freedom Of The Press Is A Fundamental Human Need

By JOHN J. MARTIN

The United Nations adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, which were designed to “end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.” These goals are intended to promote basic human needs and include: zero hunger, quality education, and clean water. While the SDGs are seemingly comprehensive and straightforward, the goals neglect to include one of the most important, and most undervalued, prerequisites for a healthy society — freedom of the press.

Considering a free press to be as vital as water might seem absurd or melodramatic, as well as counterintuitive to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. However, corruption is often the driving force behind ongoing environmental and socioeconomic issues, such as water crises, that pose major risks to public welfare. Consequently, unless such corruption is confronted and resolved, people will continue to die at the hand of government abuse and neglect. Corruption needs public exposure before confrontation can occur, which is not possible without an uncensored media. Human lives are relying on the existence of a free press for survival in these instances.

Food, water, and shelter do not exist in a vacuum. Governments have the capacity to influence the production of and access to these essential resources, especially in more authoritarian states. For instance, the looting of resources this year *by* South Sudanese politicians has resulted in a

famine with a death toll currently in the thousands and rising. The lack of transparency on behalf of the South Sudanese government was the primary reason these politicians were able to get away with committing such abuses. These situations highlight how accountability over the control of essential resources can be just as significant to the preservation of life as the existence of such resources in the first place. A free press is the key to achieving this accountability.

This dynamic is already observable in many developed countries. When Donald Trump Jr. released emails in early July indicating that he had planned a meeting with a Kremlin-connected attorney about “incriminating” information regarding Hillary Clinton, he was not doing so out of some unwavering commitment to transparency. He did it because the New York Times had reached out prior to inform him that it was going to be running a story on said emails. Secret meetings may not be as devastating as famines, but the general idea holds true that leaders have a harder time hiding their corruption when the press is able to function independent of government oversight.

This is not a groundbreaking concept, nor is the idea that accountability leads to better governance. Nevertheless, these considerations suggest that freedom of the press should not simply be regarded as a human right, but as a human necessity. **Research conducted at the University of Missouri suggests that a freer press leads to higher quality of life and a healthier environment. Additionally, countries experience greater economic growth and productivity when they are less corrupt.**

These facts might make freedom of the press simply seem like a great benefit to society rather than a necessity, but consider what happens in its absence. The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimates that approximately \$2.6 trillion is lost annually to corruption. That is foreign aid, foreign direct investment, and government revenue all being diverted away from public goods into the pockets of fraudulent politicians and bureaucrats, inevitably hurting the common people. Look again at South Sudan, where thousands of children are at risk of starvation due to misuse of resources. When this kind of corruption remains unreported, or when media coverage of it gets stifled by the government, the issues go unresolved and more lives continue to be lost. These people’s lives rely on having such information disclosed, which is where freedom of the press becomes as necessary as the water they drink and the food they eat. The lack of transparency is causing loss of human life.

Fortunately, the rise of internet access in countries like South Sudan has made it possible for the press to circumnavigate legal limitations. This is not a solution in itself, since various websites dedicated to exposing corruption are targeted by government efforts. For example, Tanzania’s Jamii forums have not been immune from state suppression. The internet is instead an accessory for transparency activists to use while international organizations and NGOs attack the problem at the source by fighting for a freer press. An important part of this battle will be for organizations like the United Nations to view freedom of the press as being on par with other basic necessities. Humans need clean water to survive, but they also need to know what their leaders are doing with that clean water in order to truly preserve the wellbeing of society.

John J. Martin is the Global Transparency Fellow at Young Professionals in Foreign Policy (YPFP). John earned his BA in International Relations from New York University.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Spending by University Research Libraries, 2015-16

Salaries and wages of professional staff members represented from 15 percent to 37 percent of total library spending for the institutions that provided data to the Association of Research Libraries for 2015-16. Library materials consumed from 28 percent to 66 percent of total spending that year. The association's Library Investment Index measures the relative size of university libraries. See full chart [here](#).

Editor's note: With \$18.4 million in total library expenditures, the University of Missouri ranked 96th among university research libraries.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleges With the Most Graduate Assistants, Fall 2015

Twenty-five public and three private nonprofit universities employed more than 3,000 graduate assistants each in 2015. The University of California at San Francisco, and the California and Massachusetts Institutes of Technology had the highest ratios of graduate assistants to students. At the two institutes of technology, the majority of such assistants worked in research. While just over half of all graduate assistants at public institutions in 2015 had teaching roles, at private nonprofit institutions, graduate assistants were somewhat more likely to be doing research than teaching. See full chart [here](#).

Editor's note: With 2,610 graduate assistants, the University of Missouri ranked 33rd among public, four-year institutions.