



MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

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New federal policies may change University of Missouri rules for sexual misconduct investigations

By CAITLIN CAMPBELL

The University of Missouri recently overhauled its sexual misconduct investigation procedures — but new federal guidelines may change those rules again.

The Department of Education on Friday morning unveiled “interim guidance on campus sexual misconduct” as Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos works to rewrite rules for campus sexual assault guidance. DeVos rescinded previous Title IX guidance which directed university responses to and investigations of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Officials at MU were unable to comment on exactly how the new guidelines may affect their Title IX disciplinary and conduct review procedures. The university only became aware of the policy changes Friday morning, said Liz McCune, associate director of the MU News Bureau.

“We’re at the stage right now where we’re reviewing if any policies will need to be changed,” McCune said.

The last time MU amended any of its Title IX procedures was in March 2017, McCune said.

There is some indication a few MU policies may need to be reconsidered by officials. Some required amendments may make it less likely for victims to come forward and report an assault, according to advocates.

New regulations clarify what the DOE defines as an “equitable” Title IX investigation, and those guidelines seemingly conflict with existing MU policies regarding victim rights and remedies during a sexual misconduct complaint review. The DOE guidelines state that “any rights or opportunities that a school makes available to one party during the investigation should be made available to the other party on equal terms.”

Existing MU regulations do not grant both a victim and an alleged violator the same access to services or “rights” during the conduct process.

Rights MU lists for complainants which are not listed for the accused include the rights to:

- Be free from retaliation;
- Request alternative housing, living or other accommodations;
- Request a no-contact order between the parties; and
- Receive amnesty for minor student misconduct that is ancillary to the incident, at the discretion of the Equity Officer or Title IX Coordinator.

MU's listed accommodations available to the complainant but not explicitly granted to the accused include:

- Referrals and assistance accessing on- or off-campus counseling, medical services or mental health services;
- Referrals to academic support services;
- Transportation accommodations; and
- Assistance facilitating a report with law enforcement.

Depending on how MU addresses any inconsistencies in its policies, amendments may make victims less likely to file complaints, said Matthew Huffman, the prevention director for the Missouri Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence.

MU currently grants victims amnesty for minor misconduct associated with an incident they've reported. For example, if a student was sexually assaulted after drinking while underage, the university might waive the alcohol violation. Those policies allow victims to feel safer coming forward to report an assault.

If that protection is removed to make for more equitable investigations, victims may be less likely to report an assault for fear of the complaint negatively affecting their own academic career, said Huffman.

New DOE regulations further state that if more than one allegation of misconduct is made in a complaint, decisions should be reached separately for each allegation. That new guideline also may conflict with MU policy, which states a review committee may take into consideration any previous disciplinary history when sanctioning a student.

It is important when reviewing sexual assault or harassment cases for people to be able to examine patterns of behavior, said Huffman. Patterns are important evidence in situations where bad behavior escalates, which is often the case with domestic violence or sexual harassment situations, he said.

"Being able to show that pattern and consider those other allegations is incredibly important," Hutton said. "It is hard to prove stalking if you can't look at a pattern of behavior."

Another notable change offered by the DOE guidelines pertains to the burden of proof required in sexual misconduct cases, Huffman said. The guidelines clarify that the burden of proof may not be either the "preponderance of the evidence" standard or the "clear and convincing evidence" standard.

The “clear and convincing evidence” standard is more rigorous to meet than the “preponderance of the evidence” standard — which is what most universities use, Huffman said. Neither standard is as strict as “beyond a reasonable doubt,” which is required for a conviction in the criminal justice system. The lower burden of proof for universities to investigate violations of their campus policies make it more likely for victims to report a crime, Hutton said.

That clarification should not affect MU’s conduct policies unless officials decide to use a higher level of burden of persuasion. MU’s existing policies dictate that all conduct cases rely on the “preponderance of the evidence” standard, which is met if an allegation is more likely to be true than false.

The new guidelines also eliminate a requirement that investigations be completed within a specific time frame. Huffman said an uncertain time frame may make it more difficult for victims to come forward because they do not know how long an investigation may take.

“With there being a time limit on the campus process, it was more likely for students to know there would quickly be a result,” Huffman said. “The criminal justice system can take years.”

MISSOURIAN

MU evaluating new Title IX guidelines but no immediate changes expected

BY KYLE LAHUCIK

The University of Missouri System will evaluate new Title IX guidelines related to sexual assault on campus issued Friday by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, an MU spokeswoman said.

DeVos rescinded Obama-era policies in which campuses adhered to a “preponderance of evidence” standard of proof when students were accused of sexual assault. The new temporary guidelines allow for colleges and universities to adhere to a “clear and convincing standard of proof” for sexual assault investigations, according to The New York Times.

“The University of Missouri System and our four campuses comply with federal guidelines, and we will review this guidance carefully to see if any changes in policies and procedures are necessary,” MU spokeswoman Liz McCune said.

MU Associate Law Professor Ben Trachtenberg, who has studied Title IX, doesn’t think there will be any immediate changes to how the office investigates sexual assault.

Trachtenberg emphasized that the Title IX policy under Obama was mainly a guideline, not an actual rule.

“The guidance documents that the Obama Administration’s Department of Education had put out were just that — guidance,” Trachtenberg said. “I don’t think, so far, that the new guidance said that universities can’t take the advice that they’d taken before, so I’d be surprised if the UM System immediately changed its rule in response to this news.”

Steven Chaffin, executive director of The Associated Students of the University of Missouri, a student lobbying group, said in an email that the UM System will not immediately alter their policies.

“I have been given reassurances by the system-level Title IX officials that there will be no immediate changes to the UM System’s Title IX policies,” Chaffin wrote. “If policy changes are made, I expect students will be a part of that conversation, and ASUM will work to ensure that’s the case.”

McCune echoed Chaffin’s sentiments by saying students will be part of the conversation.

“We plan to engage our communities in discussion and feedback,” she said. “Initially, these are discussions that will be facilitated through the Office for Civil Rights & Title IX within each campus.”

About 3 in 10 female undergraduates reported being victims of nonconsensual sexual conduct involving physical force or incapacitation since they arrived at MU, according to a 2015 campus climate survey, which is the latest data publicly available.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the Title IX office received 189 reports from students of non-consensual sexual activity, according to the office's annual report.

Some respondents to the most recent campus climate survey released Monday expressed frustration with the Title IX reporting process, citing that "nothing was done" or that their report was "swept under a rug." Another common theme in the report was a fear of retribution.

"(Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center)/Title IX offices are a joke," one respondent wrote. "Someone who has been sexually assaulted shouldn't be ignored by the people who LITERALLY get paid to respond to these situations."

The student lobbying group is attempting to tackle the issue of sexual assault on the four system campuses, Chaffin said.

"This year, we've added sexual assault prevention to our portfolio," he wrote in an email. "Our approach is straightforward: First, we think that the resources allocated to Title IX offices needs to be reevaluated to ensure offices are adequately equipped to do their jobs. Second, we think educating people about sexual violence at the postsecondary level is too late."

The student lobbying group also supports the MU branch of It's On Us, Chaffin said.

It's On Us, a nationwide campus sexual assault prevention campaign, has been creating dialogue around the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses and has engaged with the MU community through various events, such as a Teal Out game last spring in conjunction with the university baseball team. The national campaign created a petition asking that the Department of Education reverse its decision.

The MU Division of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity released a statement on its Facebook page Friday stating that the UM System is going to address the federal guidelines.

“We continue to be dedicated to providing an environment free from discrimination, harassment, sexual violence and retaliation,” the statement reads in part. “We reaffirm our commitment to our students, faculty and staff who work every day to support our communities.”

Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill, a Democrat who voted against confirming DeVos as education secretary in February, released a statement Friday afternoon saying that DeVos is reversing progress the government has made in regards to sexual assault on campus.

“As students head back to school this fall, their Department of Education has just told them if they’re assaulted, it’ll now be harder to fight for justice and ensure their safety on campus,” McCaskill said in the statement. “I want Missouri’s students, parents, and administrators to know that I’ll keep fighting with everything I’ve got to make sure we never turn our back on survivors or on their school’s obligation to keep them safe.”

Missouri’s other senator, Roy Blunt, a Republican who voted to confirm DeVos, did not make any public statements about the new guidelines.

Before leaving MU this fall, Ellen Eardley, the former head of the Title IX office, expressed her recommendation for a semester-long course that discusses racism, sexual violence and the importance of bystander intervention.

The U.S. Department of Education released 12 questions and answers that it said should serve as an outline for a school’s compliance with Title IX.

In one of the answers, the department explains how to address sexual misconduct.

“In regulating the conduct of students and faculty to prevent or redress discrimination, schools must formulate, interpret, and apply their rules in a manner that respects the legal rights of

students and faculty, including those court precedents interpreting the concept of free speech,” part of the first answer reads.

In the meantime, the department will “solicit input from stakeholders and the public” to come up with new permanent rules, according to the question-and-answer document. Until then, Trachtenberg, the MU law professor, said he can’t predict what will happen.

“Until you know what somebody is actually proposing,” he said, “it is hard to predict what they will do.”

Those seeking services from the Office for Civil Rights & Title IX can contact the office at 573-882-3880 or civilrights-titleix@missouri.edu. The offices are in 202 Jesse Hall and 145 Heinkel Building.

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

Sen. McCaskill says DeVos’ action makes students less safe on campus

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

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SEPTEMBER 22, 2017 4:39 PM

By rescinding for now the current guidance on sexual assaults, the U.S. Secretary of Education is throwing into chaos the campaign against sexual violence on campuses, Sen. Claire McCaskill charged Friday.

The Missouri Democrat said that for students at school this fall, the action by Education Secretary Betsey DeVos means that “if they’re assaulted, it’ll now be harder to fight for justice and ensure their safety on campus.”

DeVos on Friday scrapped Obama-era guidance on investigating campus sexual assaults and replaced it [with temporary instructions](#) that let universities choose which standard of proof to use when reviewing complaints.

Currently, sexual assault complaints are investigated using a “preponderance of evidence” level of proof rather than “clear and convincing evidence,” which is harder to prove.

Devos said that for now schools can choose which level of proof to follow.

Kansas State University officials said K-State won’t change how it handles sexual violence cases.

“K-state will continue to address our students in a caring and responsive way and will not change our fairly well-established processes including requiring a preponderance of evidence,” Pat Bosco, vice president for student life, told The Star Friday afternoon.

K-State is one of six schools in the country with [five or more federal investigations pending against it](#) because of the way university officials handled claims of sexual violence or harassment.

DeVos has said the Obama rules were unfairly skewed against students accused of assault. She announced earlier this month she would begin a process for replacing that guidance.

On Friday she rescinded a [2011 Dear Colleague Letter](#), which launched a new way of enforcement under Title IX, the federal law prohibiting gender discrimination. She also rescinded additional guidance made in 2014.

“Secretary DeVos has taken the progress we’ve made protecting survivors and making our campuses safer and thrown that progress into chaos,” McCaskill said in a statement.

DeVos in her statement said her new rules do just the opposite.

“Schools must continue to confront these horrific crimes and behaviors head-on. There will be no more sweeping them under the rug,” she said. “This interim guidance will help schools as they work to combat sexual misconduct and will treat all students fairly.”

Other area colleges said they have yet to make any decisions on how to handle the DeVos changes.

University of Missouri System officials and University of Kansas officials said they will review the guidance carefully to see if any changes in policies and procedures are necessary.

“University of Missouri System and four campuses will comply with federal guidelines,” said Christian Basi, system spokesman.

“KU will not change the commitment to preventing and responding to sexual misconduct by any member of the KU community,” said Shane McCreery, KU’s Title IX Coordinator and director of the office of Institutional Access and Opportunity.

McCreery said KU’s current sexual misconduct policy would remain in place until final guidance comes from the U.S. Department of Education.

Missouri State University officials reviewed the DeVos actions. “The new guidance provides more choice for colleges and universities in how they respond to Title IX issues,” said Jill Patterson, Title IX

coordinator. She said MSU has a process that is equitable to both the accuser and the accused. But was not clear whether the school would use preponderance of evidence or clear and convincing evidence in the future.

“We will continue to treat parties to a Title IX issue fairly and will emphasize due process and objectivity within the process,” Patterson said.

In 2014 McCaskill traveled the state talking to college and university leaders, students and staff about doing a better job of reporting and investigating sexual violence and prosecuting offenders.

She said Friday she will fight “to make sure we never turn our back on survivors or on their school’s obligation to keep them safe.”

MISSOURIAN

GUEST COMMENTARY: Hiring Edelman PR was the wrong move for the UM System

MICHAEL UGARTE

Michael Ugarte is a professor emeritus of romance languages at MU.

If your public image is on the downswing, call Edelman. If you want to clean up your reputation after you lied about the harmful effects of smoking, call Edelman. If you’ve got a known pervert coaching your football team, get in touch with Edelman to let people know that you had no idea, or that the pervert’s alleged activity is inconsistent with all that you stand for.

If you’re lucky, you can come out with a perfect whitewash and a bill of a little less than half a million bucks. A pittance.

[As reported in the Missourian on Sept. 22](#), years ago the Edelman public relations firm was hired by the righteous organizations of tobacco conglomerates and Penn State University to sell a narrative opposing the bad publicity in the media.

I am a retired professor at MU with 35 years of teaching experience. I was shocked, yet not surprised, to learn that the University of Missouri administration hired a public relations firm to repair its damaged image after the events leading to the resignation of President Tim Wolfe in fall of 2015.

At some \$300,000 the university could have used those funds to repair a damage far more serious: the loss of many jobs and human beings at the university both in instruction and maintenance. Or it could have put those funds into a deteriorating library system, or the creation of a course on the politics (or corruption?) of lobbying.

And if you believe that somehow with the services of this PR firm the reparation of our image will eventually result in increased funding, you're naïve. Is there any accountability? Can you put a dollar amount on that? What if enrollment goes down again next year? Do we get our money back?

I find this situation pathetic, not only because of the cost, but because it insults the many people working at the university who, for many years, have been engaged in the discussion and solution of issues that came to the fore in the summer and fall of 2015. We could have and can still solve our own problem. Yes, it took a group of protesters, a brave hunger-striker and a football team to get us talking. But it was and remains up to us to keep talking and provide remedies, not a group of corporate shysters.

The picture drawn of the university leaders parroting key phrases and sound bites like "it was a perfect storm" dictated by Edelman is laughable, a perfect object of satire by someone like Stephen Colbert.

Why does our administration insist on seeking solutions to its problems in the business world? As many have said repeatedly: an institution of higher learning is not a corporation, even though its administrators often act as if it were.

How we should answer criticisms? What we can do to remedy undesirable situations? What courses should we offer? What can we do to instruct and enlighten incoming students? How

should we allocate resources to foster dialogue and understanding among diverse groups? All this is up to us, not a group of suits with corporate interests.

Do administrators really believe that Edelman and company have a genuine interest in fostering equality, understanding and critical thinking? If they do, I'd like them to get in touch with me. I have ocean-side property I'm trying to sell right here in Columbia, Missouri. The view is spectacular.



MU Responds to New Title IX Guidelines

WATCH STORY: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=0bc66e62-6e26-42b7-bf4c-c2118beb5278>



University of Missouri responds to Title IX changes

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The University of Missouri said it would carefully review the U.S. Department of Education's interim guidelines on how to investigate allegations of campus sexual misconduct under federal law on Friday.

The guidelines were introduced by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos who has said the previous rules from the Obama administration were unfairly skewed against the students accused of assault.

"Schools must continue to confront these horrific crimes and behaviors head-on," Devos said. "The process also must be fair and impartial, giving everyone more confidence in its outcomes."

"We continue to be dedicated to providing an environment free from discrimination, harassment, sexual violence and retaliation," the university said in a written statement. "We reaffirm our commitment to our students, faculty and staff who work every day to support our communities."

The university went on to say it will carefully review the guidance to see if any policy changes are needed.

"We plan to engage our communities in discussion and feedback," the statement read.

For more on the new guidelines, [click here](#).

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Sold out: Football fans fill dorms left empty at Mizzou after enrollment drop

BY ASHLEY JOST

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Die-hard fan Dave Merz sent an email in May to leaders at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

"With enrollment down and the closing of several dorms, could some of the closed dorms be used for housing parents during home football games?" he asked.

A month later, [Mizzou announced plans to do just that](#).

The dorm-turned-hotel planning was likely months into the making by the time Merz sent his email, but the loyal Tigers fan put his money where his mouth is.

With their arms full of bags, Merz and his wife, Holly, checked into Discovery Hall hours before kickoff Saturday — their third game this season where they opted for a dorm room over a hotel to sleep in after a day of tailgating and football.

For a two-room, four-bed and shared-bathroom suite, the cost is \$120 per night. It's an extra \$30 to park in a parking garage that's a jaunt away, but Mizzou students man golf carts that pick up guests from the garage and take them to the dorms.

When Mizzou administrators announced they would [rent out 94 suites per weekend](#) for the football season, the criticism rolled in from people who are still frustrated with the way the school handled protests in 2015. Renting out the dorms is another way of handling the fallout — with almost 2,000 fewer freshmen this fall than there were two years ago, there is no shortage of empty rooms.

It's scrappy, Merz argues. It shows leaders are “thinking outside of the box.”

It's not a Band-Aid for the [millions of dollars in lost tuition revenue](#), but Mizzou spokesman Christian Basi said the school pulled in more than \$20,000 per game so far on the dorm rental.

And they're booked for the season.

Andrew Sommer, a finance guru for the residential life office, said the waiting list for Homecoming weekend is 150 requests deep. He's getting at least 15 per day.

They didn't know what to expect in June when the chief operating officer announced the dorm rental to the governing board and the public, but it's been worth it according to Basi.

“We had a total loss of about \$5 million, so you're talking zero (dollars) if we do nothing versus \$60,000 (three games in) — of course it's worth it,” he said.

Not a 5-star hotel

People interested in staying in the guest housing have to [file a request form](#), and if other people cancel they get a notice from the campus that the reservation is theirs.

The university doesn't collect much trend data about the people who are staying, like whether or not they're alumni, but Basi said about 40 percent of all requests are coming from the St. Louis region.

Just more than a third of the guests come from out of state.

Staying in the dorm was an adventure for Auburn fans Susan Jernigan and Jeanette Mizerany this past weekend. They traveled to Memorial Stadium as part of their personal challenge to visit all of the Southeastern Conference stadiums and schools. Auburn won't come to Mizzou for at least another 12 years, so this was their shot.

“I heard on the radio in Birmingham (Alabama) that (Mizzou) was doing this, so I called the number and tried to get a reservation,” Jernigan said. The longtime friends go on an adventure at each school they visit — staying in the dorms was their Mizzou adventure.

Once they got their reservation, they canceled a hotel booked in Kingdom City that was \$900 for the weekend for two rooms — six times what they paid at Mizzou.

Jim Romanek, a Purdue fan from Chicago, said his family had a memorable experience when they followed their team to Columbia for [the matchup against Mizzou the previous weekend](#).

“If you’re looking for a five-star hotel, it’s not that,” he said. “But if you want to go back to college and stay in the dorms, it was great.”

Each room has a few sets of towels and some travel-size soaps, but that’s about it. Romanek was among a half dozen guests who said the simplicity worked considering fans from either team spend most of their day out at tailgates before the game, and really only come back to the room to sleep. Being out and about also makes it less bothersome that alcohol isn’t allowed in the guest housing.

With three home games left, the calls are still rolling in for remaining football games, basketball season, May 2018 graduation and next football season. While graduation might happen, there won’t be dorm rental options for [the much-anticipated basketball season](#).

Sommer said there are restrictions that come with the buildings, which were built on bonds, that limits the number of days that the space can be used for events that aren’t more directly related to the university, like a conference.

By next football season, there’s also a question about whether or not enrollment will be back up at Mizzou and the dorms will be filled with students, not guests.

Holly Merz, who traveled with her husband from south St. Louis County, joked that the couple are getting to relive their college days at the school where they met. She unpacked a black-and-gold blanket for her dorm bed before [the Auburn game](#). Her daughter is a freshman, living in a different dorm down the street.

“I shouldn’t say this but I hope the next three years that enrollment is down so I can stay in the dorms and come hang out with the kids,” she joked. They’ve stayed in hotels on and off for the last few seasons. “It’s been a lot of fun acting like we’re young again, and the price is right.”



MU partners with U.S. Tiger University Consortium

By **BRIANNA STUBLER**

Generated from News Bureau Press Release

COLUMBIA – MU, Auburn, Clemson and LSU are announcing their partnership in the U.S. Tiger University Consortium Saturday.

Clemson president James P. Clements is the founder of the consortium, which has the primary goal of supporting the Global Tiger Forum’s mission of doubling wild tiger populations by 2022.

This coalition is very new, so it’s still in the early stages of planning. The schools know what they want to achieve, but the details on how they will work towards their goal are yet to be determined. The provosts have been discussing their collaboration and what they will each do at their respective schools in order to contribute to the solution.

Although this consortium is just beginning, the idea is not new – one MU student group has paved the way for the coalition that was formally announced Saturday before the game.

The group is called Mizzou Tigers for Tigers, and is led by current president Shannon McKinley and Dr. Matt Gompper, a professor in the College of Natural Resources. He leads the group as the professor faculty advisor, drawing from his research experience.

Gompper has researched Tigers in India and Nepal to help understand how to better conserve wild tiger populations, including collecting data on tiger habitat use and getting specific field ecology information.

In Nepal, he has worked to better understand how tigers use different kinds of habitats, and in India, the likelihood of pathogens moving from domestic animals, like dogs, to carnivores like tigers.

Gompper's work shows the long history of MU tiger research, and the national effect it has had. In 1999, Mizzou Tigers for Tigers started as the first student group of its kind, inspiring other schools to start tiger student groups of their own. In 2007, they were recognized nationally by the World Wildlife Fund.

"The success of Mizzou Tigers for Tigers has resulted in Tigers for Tigers at other institutions," Gompper said. "There are about 17 programs now, with varying degrees of involvement. Clemson's is quite successful, so certainly the administration at Clemson is aware of their program's success, and that had a role in forming the consortium."

Student chapters occasionally meet and share goals but usually work independently. Though MU's student group primarily focuses on research, they inform the public and increase awareness when the opportunity is available. Dr. Gompper thinks this will continue.

He also thinks Mizzou Tigers for Tigers has and will continue to help MU internationally.

"The goals are twofold—to enhance international stature by becoming involved in research efforts in Asia, while it is simultaneously designed to give students an understanding of what it requires to run a small but globally focused organization," Gompper said.

The student group raises money and directs it towards field tiger conservation efforts, Gompper said, as well as indirectly facilitated research.

They have also facilitated interest in tigers, which Gompper said led to today's consortium.

Both have some overlap; they have similar goals and have both donated to the World Wildlife Fund. But they have their differences too. The school organizations are primarily concerned with research, while the consortium is focusing on advocacy and education. The schools involved in the consortium all have a similar goal – to train the next generation of researchers and leaders, Gompper said. Yet awareness of the threats to tigers was raised by the student groups, so the coalition today may not have happened without them.

It is still too early to predict what the consortium will look like, Gompper said. Right now, each school plans to take students, but their background and training will depend on the resources available at each of the institutions.

"At this stage, we're just meeting with provosts and planning," Gompper said. "Auburn is here to discuss programs, moving forward in positive direction, and what the future will look like, but it is very early. There's no dollar amount set yet because it's still early on in setting the agenda.

He is unconcerned with the dollar amount and prefers to focus on training students.

“Here at MU, our strength lies in research and education, so if we can tap into those strengths by tapping into our resources here on campus, we will be able to continue to make an impact,” Gompper said.

Because education is a strong point here, Gompper wants to see an exchange program between MU and countries conducting tiger research. He would like to have those students here pursuing graduate degrees involving tiger research, “while simultaneously enhancing the opportunity for MU students to go research in Asia. It would be wonderful to have them and to share the wealth of knowledge we have.”

For now, the schools comprising the “U.S. Tiger University Consortium” all share the same mascot in common, and are using this commonality to unite and raise awareness.

“The shared mascot is what unifies us,” Gompper said. He sees football as a great platform to use in their advocacy.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

[Greitens, UM system president traveling to Asia](#)

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sep 22, 2017 [\(2\)](#)

Gov. Eric Greitens leaves Saturday on his first international trade mission, with stops planned in China and South Korea.

Among those joining Greitens on the venture will be University of Missouri System President Mun Choi. Choi was born in South Korea before his family moved to Chicago.

Greitens, along with his wife, Sheena Greitens, will make stops in Beijing, Shanghai and Seoul, where they will meet with government officials, business executives and civic and educational partners.

“Our goal is to sell more Missouri products around the world, attract more investment in Missouri’s economy and create more quality jobs for Missouri families,” Greitens said in a statement.

Greitens, a Republican who took office in January, had planned a European trade mission in June, but [he canceled the trip](#) because the Missouri Legislature was in the midst of a second special session he called to address abortion-related laws.

This trip is being paid for by the Hawthorn Foundation, a nonprofit that financed similar trade missions taken by former governors. It receives its funding from large companies like Monsanto, Ameren and Express Scripts.

Choi said he is visiting multiple universities while overseas. He starts the trip Wednesday in Pohang University of Science and Technology, which he’s worked with for 15 years at prior jobs, with plans to set up a partnership with the University of Missouri System to bolster materials and biomedical engineering programs.

On Thursday, he goes to Seoul National University, which Choi described as “the Harvard of South Korea,” to sign an agreement for a new partnership between all four University of Missouri campuses and to meet with Mizzou students who are studying abroad.

That night, Greitens and Choi will meet with university alumni and sign a separate agreement that could benefit research with the Korea Foundation.

The following day, Choi said, he and the governor will meet with industry leaders and people from the U.S. Embassy. Then Choi will meet with Korea University, his final campus meeting before heading back Sunday.

Former Gov. Jay Nixon visited China in 2011. The Democratic chief executive went to Italy, Spain, Germany and Israel during his eight-year tenure.

The costs for the trips also were covered by the Hawthorn Foundation.

Other Midwestern governors have made numerous trips to China in recent years. Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts went in 2015 and 2016. Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds went in June.

Former Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad is serving as the trade ambassador to China.

The Asia trip isn't the only out-of-state venture the governor has on his schedule.

Greitens was scheduled to speak Friday night in Michigan at the Mackinac Republican Leadership Conference. He was to be a featured speaker at the dinner, along with Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and Republican National Committee Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel, [according to a schedule on the event's website](#).

On Oct. 8, Greitens is [scheduled to attend the Nebraska Steak Fry](#) in Shelton, Neb., hosted by Nebraska Republican Gov. Pete Ricketts. He will join three other visiting Republican governors at the event — Matt Bevin of Kentucky, Kim Reynolds of Iowa and Scott Walker of Wisconsin.

On Oct. 21, Greitens is scheduled to join Reynolds in Iowa for [her first-ever Harvest Festival](#) on the state fairgrounds in Des Moines.

Austin Chambers, a Greitens campaign adviser, said the Michigan Republican Party is paying for Greitens' travel to Michigan, and Ricketts' campaign is coordinating and picking up the tab for Greitens' trip to Nebraska. Chambers did not have any news on travel logistics for the Iowa trip.



UM System President Joins Governor on South Korean Trip

WATCH STORY: <http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=fd43fa71-c3b0-4ee1-b71e-92e64d8e13d3>

University of Missouri's Thompson Center expands to strengthen autism research

By LIBBY STANFORD

With two new conference rooms, more space for research and room to expand, leaders at the Thompson Center for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders see plenty of opportunities.

The Thompson Center, which is part of the University of Missouri, expanded to increase its footprint and accomplish more research, Executive Director Stephen Kanne said.

“We already have established ourselves very strongly in the area of clinical work,” Kanne said. “We have a long history now of engaging in some cutting edge research but we want that to grow.”

On the research side, The Thompson Center provides a place and tools for researchers to do their work.

“We do DNA work. We do mouse models. We also do stress stuff. We also do virtual reality stuff. We develop new measures,” Kanne said. “So there’s researchers from all across campus that work with us. What we do is put the home, if you will, for these people to work together.”

Before the opening of the new facility, the research, training and clinical care were done in the same building.

“Whenever we wanted to do a research project with a child or with multiple children coming in, they’d have to use up some of the clinic rooms,” said Thompson Center spokesman Nathan Hurst. “Those rooms were crossed off and we couldn’t be treating patients in them.”

Kanne believes that the new facility will help with recruiting researchers.

“It’s all convenient and it’s dedicated, that’s the key,” he said.

The new space includes two new conference rooms in addition to the one in the original building. This conference rooms, which feature video-conferencing technology, allow for more people to be trained at once.

“Now we can have, instead of 30 people over for a training, we can have 200 people over to be trained at a time,” Hurst said.

For Kanne, the larger conference rooms will help create a sense of community between the people being trained.

“There’s so much difference when you get everyone in the same room physically together, because then they start talking to each other and networking,” Kanne said. “So you get this whole different level of training and relationships that draws the entire state together in a way that you wouldn’t be able to do if you just did it separately.”

In January 2016, the state gave the Thompson Center \$5 million for expansion. Currently, the center only uses a portion of the first floor of the new building. The top floor and part of the first floor is rented by private businesses.

Owning the whole building “just means for the future, for the next 10 years, we have opportunities to grow,” Kanne said. “So on the research side, hiring more researchers at MU for autism means they can actually have a place to live, which is here, and do the work.”

The Thompson Center, established in 2005, is one of two research centers in the state, so the center’s research creates a draw for families of autistic children.

“I did want Elizabeth to participate in the research because I think it’s important,” said Veronica Carroll, whose 4-year-old daughter Elizabeth participates in research. “I think any time you can better our world for the next generation or the next child down the way that it’s our responsibility as parents to do so.”

For Kanne the new facility will increase the Thompson Center’s profile.

“For a while there, the Thompson Center was this unknown jewel for Columbia,” Kanne said. “We were better known nationally than we were locally and regionally. Now, the more and more things like this kind of happen, people in Columbia know that we’re here and I think have a better appreciation for the impact for we’re having across the country in what we do.”