



MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Curators approve new time off, benefit changes for University of Missouri employees

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch 43 min ago (0)

BELLERIVE • An extra week off work after the holidays and a change in the investment time required for cheaper tuition for dependents is all coming to the University of Missouri.

Employees across the state will get the week between Christmas Day and New Years Day as paid time off starting this year.

Well, most employees. Staff at the university's health system in Columbia aren't included.

That was among the benefits changes the Board of Curators unanimously approved Thursday afternoon during its annual meeting on the St. Louis campus.

Campus leaders have leeway to say which operations and employees are too critical to take that week off, too. Any of those employees tapped to work during the holiday week can take that week off another time during the year.

It piggybacks on a move that some campuses have capitalized on the past few years. UMSL has shut down the campus in between the holidays multiple times, though employees have had to use vacation or personal days for that time. Mizzou did the same during 2016, except they were paid days off.

Across the four campuses, the move is projected to save between \$116,000 and \$126,000 since the campuses won't be fully operational.

The curators also approved a change to the tuition benefit structure for dependents of employees.

Previously, employees had to invest five years of full-time employment within the university in order for their spouse and dependents to receive a 50 percent reduction in tuition costs. Starting immediately, it will only take a year of employment.

But there are additional changes to the tuition benefit that extends the amount of time students can take classes at a reduced rate if they're a dependent of an employee who dies or retires.

Previously, a dependent would have one semester to continue to take classes at the reduced cost. Now, the dependent can continue to take classes at that rate for up to 140 credit hours, which is more than necessary to complete a bachelor's degree.

University leaders say this program will help with recruitment.

The board also approved a pool of sorts for staff and some administrators to donate their unused vacation time to so that other employees who have a greater need for those days can use them.

It's a program that staff have asked for dating back to 2004.

Employees can tap into that pool of vacation days if they have exhausted all other paid leave options, aren't approved for long-term disability benefits from the university and have experienced something "catastrophic."

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

University of Missouri pension plan needs more money

By RUDI KELLER

ST. LOUIS – **The University of Missouri pension plan will need an extra \$17.9 million annually to maintain its financial health, even with a prediction that employee pay hikes will be smaller in the future, according to a report presented Thursday to the Board of Curators.**

The report is based on an analysis done a year earlier than scheduled because of ongoing UM System financial difficulties. The board voted to lower the expected rate of return on investments in September and on Thursday accepted a recommendation that it lower expectations for future wage inflation.

As a result of those and other changes, the unfunded liability — the amount needed to pay all current and promised future benefits — increased by \$244.3 million, to \$703.6 million.

The changes were approved a day before the board is scheduled to discuss a consultant's recommendations for up to \$70 million in administrative savings over the next three years, including a reduction of up to \$30.4 million in the cost of employee benefits.

The cost savings aren't intended to offset the need to spend more on pensions, UM System Chief Financial Officer Ryan Rapp said. The increase in pension costs will be included in the budget for the coming fiscal year, he said, while the benefit savings will only be determined after a process to determine which items are most important to employees.

The first place to look for savings in benefits is the way plans are operated, he said.

“There are some things we can do in how we administer our plans that may still allow us to offer the same level of benefits we have today,” Rapp said.

In 2012, the curators changed the pension system so new employees receive only 1 percent of pay per year of service, compared to 2.2 percent per year for those hired earlier. Early this year, the board cut support for retiree health insurance for many employees who are on the payroll after Jan. 1.

Any further changes in benefits must be considered very carefully, Rapp said.

“If you approach this ham-handedly, and you just go cut benefits, you may get the financial savings you need but you create another problem in that you are no longer competitive in recruitment and retention,” Rapp said.

The board also approved a new benefit Thursday that could produce cost savings. The university will cut back on operations during the week between Christmas and New Year’s and employees who must work during that period will receive an equal amount of leave to use at other times in the year. The new policy does not apply to employees of MU Health Care.

“Our faculty and staff are our most valuable assets, and I am pleased that we can offer these expanded benefits,” MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright wrote in an email to employees sent after the board vote. The new policy will be in effect for this year’s holiday period.

The board also voted to create a shared leave program so employees can donate unused time to fellow workers who experience catastrophic events and expanded the availability of tuition discounts for employees, spouses and dependents. Instead of requiring employees to have five years of experience at the university, the benefit will be available after one year of full-time work and will continue for spouses or dependents after the retirement or death of the employee.

In other action Thursday, the board discussed whether to name a residence hall after Lucile Bluford, a woman denied admittance to the Journalism School’s graduate program 11 times because she was black. After the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1941 that the school must admit her because no other equal program existed in the state, the graduate program was shut down. Bluford became editor and publisher of the Kansas City Call and was awarded an honorary degree in 1989.

Bluford died in 2003. Curator Darryl Chatman, who reported to the board on discussions of the naming issue, said there is no opposition to Bluford.

“Lucile Bluford is what the majority of people wanted,” Chatman said.

The board spent most of Thursday morning talking about itself and its role leading the system. President Mun Choi has been working to streamline operations and centralize some functions, a project that will receive a fuller discussion when the board hears the consultant's report Friday.

The system's role and the role of each campus is "something I am struggling with," Choi said.

There is a lack of coordination in student information and human resources that is hurting operations, he said. Each campus acts as an independent member of a confederation rather than a piece of a system, he said.

"We have a system where it is easier to transfer credits from Columbia College to UMSL than it is to transfer credits from UMSL to" Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Choi said.

MISSOURIAN

Curators vote to tighten grip on UM System campus projects

By: Edward McKinley

ST. LOUIS — All campus building projects over \$5 million will be subject to a vote by the UM System Board of Curators after a Thursday [rule change](#).

This is part of a move toward increased curator oversight over the four campuses, as Curator David Steelman [described at a November forum](#).

"The board is going to have to step in, and it'll be very controversial," Steelman said.

"There's people who aren't going to like these decisions being made, but I don't see how the University of Missouri goes on to greatness until it starts becoming the University of Missouri with four campuses and not a University of Missouri System that is a back-office operation with four independent contractors."

The decision was made at a Thursday curator meeting at the University of Missouri-St. Louis as part of a two-day session — the board's last of 2017.

During the Friday meeting, the results of an administrative review to seek further areas for budget cuts will be revealed.

Employee benefit changes

The board voted to make three significant rule changes for employee benefits:

- Campuses will be closed between Christmas and New Year's Day.
- Employees will have the option to donate extra vacation time to a shared pool.
- The children or spouses of full-time employees will now get reduced tuition when the employee has worked for at least one year, rather than five.

Lucile Bluford Hall

MU's New Hall is expected to be named for Lucile Bluford, a celebrated black journalist who fought Jim Crow laws in an attempt to attend the Missouri School of Journalism.

The official vote to change the name will take place at the next Columbia curators meeting.

Promoting research

Mark McIntosh, vice president of research and economic development, presented an "Entrepreneurial Ecosystem" program to encourage business startups at the campuses. The proposed program would provide training to students and faculty and would connect them with businesses and corporations.

During McIntosh's presentation, he emphasized the increasingly competitive landscape for research funding.

"There are very few research dollars available now relative to 2010," McIntosh said. "Bottom line, there are less dollars available on the federal level."

One way that MU needs to improve, McIntosh said, is seeking out larger individual grants.

“Many of our peer institutions are going for much bigger types of awards,” he said. “We don’t have a strong history of getting those types of awards.”

“This has to be one of our most urgent needs right now,” interjected Maurice Graham, chairman of the curators.

One way MU intends to accomplish this is through the Translational Precision Medicine Complex, McIntosh said, which was [approved in November](#) as the highest capital project across all four system campuses.

The funding provided by the federal government is increasingly earmarked for specific kinds of research, McIntosh said, and precision medicine is one of the biggest priorities right now.

“The TPMC is really a central, foundational piece to us being able to increase our research output,” he said.

Curators also discussed the need to increase research by recruiting and retaining more qualified faculty. One way to do so, McIntosh said, is by attracting donations for specific research opportunities or endowed chair positions.

“We, frankly, need to step up our game in that area,” Steelman said.

Memorial Stadium

The project design of the \$98 million Memorial Stadium expansion was scheduled to be presented at the meeting, but instead the curators elected to read about the design in the [meeting documents](#).

New majors

MU will offer two new majors: a Bachelor of Science, biomedical engineering, and a Masters of Science, care management.



[UM Board of curators meets to discuss how to save more money](#)

By ALLY WALLENTA

Watch video at: <http://www.komu.com/news/um-board-of-curators-meets-to-discuss-how-to-save-more-money>

COLUMBIA – University of Missouri administrative leaders, faculty and staff are gathering Friday morning for a curators meeting.

One of the meeting's most important agenda items is to announce an administrative review report that UM system officials and firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers have created over the past few months.

During this time, the two groups have been looking to become more operationally effective, specifically by finding ways to save money.

“This is another step in a long, long series of steps that we have been taking since last year to review very carefully, all the operations of the university and to determine what should we be doing, what can we doing and what areas do we need to slim down or change,” said MU spokesperson Christian Basi.

Last year, nearly \$100 million were cut from MU's budget. Basi said the firm was hired to look at MU's operations and to see where they could be improving.

Part of Friday's review will be discussing these improvements, which could mean more budget and program cuts.

Basi said “there are some programs on campus that are no longer viable or in demand so therefore we need to change what we are doing, and in some cases eliminate those programs.”

The cuts come after the UM system officials teamed up with PricewaterhouseCoopers this summer to review and assess opportunities for the system to become more operationally effective.

According to an email by President Mun Choi, the boards main concern is the Columbia campus given the decrease in enrollment that the campus has seen over the past two years.

Choi took over as MU’s president in March. Since then, close to \$60 million has been removed from the school’s budget and numerous job positions have been eliminated.

The curators meeting began on Thursday, where a new board was elected. Board members usually serve for one year.

At Thursday’s meeting, the board also approved changes to the UM Collected Rules and Regulations. The changes, like a new winter break reduced operations, will provide new benefits for some faculty and staff members

A shared leave program was also approved which will give employees the option to donate unused vacation time to a shared pool. The pool will offer other employees paid leave if they need it for emergencies, illness, etc.

“It was something the board wanted to do to recognize the hard work of the employees at all four campuses,” Basi said.

Other things discussed at Thursday’s board meeting include”

- A change in the education assistance program that reduces eligibility requirements for employees to receive tuition reductions for spouses from five to one years. The assistance decreases tuition by more than 50% for employees and dependents.
- A new name for a MU hall. A majority of the people at the meeting want to name it the Lucile Bluford hall, after a black journalist who was denied admission to MU 11 times.
- An update of the Memorial Stadium South Expansion which is projected to be completed in the summer of 2019.
- Approval of School of Computing and Engineering- Education and Research center at University of Missouri-Kansas City.
- Approval of a lower investment return assumption for a retirement plan from 7.75 percent to 7.2 percent.
- A new Bachelor of Arts in International Relations at University of Missouri-St. Louis, Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering and Masters of Science in Care Management at MU.

The meeting is taking place at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.



UM Board of Curators approve new rules for benefits

By ALYSSA TOOMEY

Watch video at: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/um-board-of-curators-approve-new-rules-for-benefits/669212182>

St. LOUIS, Mo. - **Employees across the University of Missouri system will be getting extra time off over winter break.**

The UM Board of Curators approved changes to the UM Collected Rules and Regulations with regards to vacation and tuition assistance at their meeting in St. Louis Friday.

UM System President Mun Choi expressed appreciation to the Board of Curators for making the changes. The changes will affect employees systemwide who are eligible to receive vacation and tuition assistance.

Under the new rules, all four campuses will have reduced operations over winter break. Employees will get paid-time off from Christmas to New Year's Day. Employees who are required to work during the reduced operations period will get equivalent time off that must be used by Nov. 30 of the following year. Across all four campuses, the move is expected to save more than \$116,000.

Additionally, a new shared leave program will give employees the option to donate accrued vacation to a shared pool. In turn, the pool will provide paid leave for employees who are experiencing catastrophic events causing prolonged absence.

Finally, a change to the education assistance program will reduce the eligibility requirement for employees to receive tuition reductions for spouses and dependents from five years to one year of continuous, full-time service with the University.

The dependent would be allowed to receive tuition benefits for 3.5 years. The assistance would decrease the price of tuition by 75% for employees and 50% off for dependents.

Curators view designs for south end zone renovation

By RUDI KELLER

ST. LOUIS -- The University of Missouri Board of Curators on Thursday got a look at the latest designs for renovating the south end zone seating at Memorial Stadium and they seem to be well pleased.

There wasn't much discussion of the \$98 million project, approved by the board in August. UM System chief financial officer Ryan Rapp told the board that demolition of the existing seating will begin in March and the project will be completed in time for the 2019 football season.

"I just hope it turns out as good as it looks on paper," said curator Phil Snowden, quarterback of the Tiger's 1960 Orange Bowl team.

The first step of the project will be demolition of the 10,800 general admission seats at the south end zone, constructed in 1977. Those seats will be replaced by 16 suites providing approximately 1,500 premium seats and 1,300 outdoor general admission seats.

The latest renderings of the project do not show a video board shown in earlier designs but Nick Joos, a spokesman for the MU Athletics Department, said there will be video displays above the seating area.

Related content

[Project design](#)

The project is underway following a season with the worst attendance figures in more than a decade at Memorial Stadium. Of the more than 70,000 seats available, the best attended game was the Sept. 9 loss to South Carolina, with 55,023 in attendance, and the worst was the homecoming win against Idaho, viewed by 47,648 fans.

The Idaho victory began a six-game winning streak that put the Tigers into the Dec. 27 Texas Bowl against the University of Texas. Snowden said the project, which also includes a new team locker room, football training facility and weight room, is vital to supporting the team.

“It is going to be essentially a home run for football at the University,” Snowden said. “And if you don’t take care of football, which really supports all the other sports – you’ve got 20 other sports – football accounts for about 90 percent of the overall budget for university athletics and this is a way to insure that you get the facility you need and you get the fans into the stadium so that you pay for all the other sports.”

The team’s turnaround will bring fans back, Snowden said.

“It was dramatic,” he said. “I had a lot of confidence in Barry Odom and still do. I think he is a great young man with a lot of talent and energy and the kids love him. He’s a good recruiter.”

Many observers thought Odom’s job was on the line when the team was 1-5. As the team won, other schools fired their coaches instead. Snowden said he expects Odom to stay indefinitely.

“I think he is going to be here a long time, that’s my opinion,” he said.

Snowden was the Tigers’ starting quarterback from 1957 to 1959 and led the team to a 6-5 and an Orange Bowl bid in his final season.

After looking over the latest renderings of the south end zone, Snowden said he’s almost ready to suit up again.

“I’d love to play,” he said. “It was just a couple of years ago that I was throwing a ball out there on that field. It is just a great experience.”

MISSOURIAN

MU researchers use video game motion sensors for physical therapy

By: Cameron R. Flatt

Generated from News Bureau press release

Video game motion sensors can also be useful in physical therapy, new research from MU has found.

The research, conducted by a team from the MU School of Health Professions, the MU College of Engineering, MU Health Care, the Mizzou Motion Analysis Center and the Missouri

Orthopaedic Institute shows that the Xbox Kinect 2.0 motion sensor can be used as a suitable replacement for medical motion labs that often cost over \$100,000, according to a news release.

Physical therapists, clinicians and athletic trainers use the motion-based technology to analyze patient movement. Aaron Gray, a sports medicine physician with MU Health Care, said motion sensors can be a big help for physicians because most have to do this analysis with their eyes in real time.

They can use the data from the sensor to track rehabilitation and assess risk of future injury.

“Assessment of movement is essential to evaluating injury risk, rehabilitative outcomes and sport performance,” Gray said in a news release. “Our research team is working to bring motion analysis testing — which is expensive and time consuming — into orthopedics offices, physical therapy clinics and athletic facilities using inexpensive and portable technology.

Gray first found inspiration when he used an Xbox Kinect back in 2011. He was finishing up a fellowship at the University of California, Los Angeles, and he was surprised at how well the sensor tracked his motions.

When the study first began at MU in 2012, Gray joined forces with electrical engineering and computer science professor Marjorie Skubic, he said in a Thursday interview. Skubic and her students developed the motion sensor’s software for the project.

Gray said this study mostly focused on knee angles during a landing and jumping movement. He hopes that others will be able to take his group’s findings and study even more movement.

Multiple publications have published the current findings, including the Journal of Applied Biomechanics and Sports Health. His team has even more unpublished research, Gray said.

They are currently looking over tests conducted on 180 local middle and high school students, during which they found that each exam using the Kinect was completed in under three minutes.

Gray also said his team will need to consider other sensors on the market, as Microsoft recently announced that they are discontinuing the Kinect.

Trent Guess, an associate professor of physical therapy and orthopedic surgery, thinks VR technology shows a lot of potential.

“For virtual reality games, the system needs to know what the user is doing and depth sensors can provide this information,” Guess said in an email. “This new generation of virtual reality depth sensors may have advantages over the Kinect and we hope to be among the first users to properly validate and use these new technologies for healthcare.”



Video Game Technology Now Helping Healthcare

Watch the story:

<http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=06366d88-54ef-4d96-9475-29d612a2b419>

MISSOURIAN

Fulton Family Health to become MU Health Care affiliate

By: Erin Achenbach

Fulton Family Health Associates has joined MU Health Care.

The decision was announced in a news release from MU Health Care on Thursday.
Accompanying the decision is also a name change: Fulton Family Health Associates will become Family Medicine – Fulton Family Health.

The intention for Fulton Family Health Associates to join MU Health Care was announced in August. The practice is made up of three board-certified family medicine physicians, one board-certified physician assistant and 13 other health professional and support staff, according to the release.

"Fulton Family Health Associates will help MU Health Care build on central Missouri's excellent reputation as a destination for primary care," said Jonathan Curtright, MU Health Care CEO, in the news release. "This collaboration creates new opportunities to improve and promote high quality care for patients in central Missouri."

MU Health Care's Family Medicine – Callaway Physicians has operated in Callaway County, where Fulton is located, for more than 40 years. Fulton Family Health Associates have provided primary care for 21 years. Both clinics will continue operating in their present locations.

Staff at Fulton Family Health Associates will be employed by MU Healthcare while the three physicians and one physician assistant will be employed by the MU School of Medicine.

Patients now have privileges at MU Health Care facilities, including University Hospital and the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center.



Fulton Family Health joins MU Health Care

By **ELIZABETH DUESENBERG**

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Fulton Family Health Associates announced Thursday that the practice has joined the University of Missouri Health Care.

The practice will also have a name change and be called Family Medicine-Fulton Family Health.

In August, the practice announced its intention to join MU Health Care. The practice is comprised of three board-certified family medicine physicians, one board-certified physician assistant, and 13 other health professionals and support staff.

"Fulton Family Health Associates will help MU Health Care build on central Missouri's excellent reputation as a destination for primary care," said Jonathan Curtright, MU Health Care chief executive officer. "This collaboration creates new opportunities to improve and promote high quality care for patients in central Missouri."

Fulton Family Health Associates has provided primary care in central Missouri for 21 years.

MU Health Care will employ the staff of Fulton Family Health Associates, and the three physicians and physician assistants will be employed by the MU School of Medicine.

Under the new arrangement, the patients of Fulton Family Health can choose the health provider or hospital where they would like to receive inpatient and outpatient care.



Missouri university will let applicants 'superscore' by combining their best ACT scores

BY KATY BERGEN
kbergen@kcstar.com

Ever wish you could have mixed and match your best college admission test scores from different exam dates?

A Missouri university says it will adopt the practice next year.

In an effort to boost the number of students eligible for academic scholarships, Missouri Western State University announced this week that it will allow incoming freshmen next year to “superscore” their ACT scores.

Typically, students who take the ACT — a standardized college admissions test with math, science, English and reading sections — receive a composite score, a compilation of the results from the individual sections for a single exam.

“Superscoring” allows students who have taken the ACT more than once to submit their best scores from each of the ACT’s four sections, even if the results weren’t achieved on the same testing date.

More than 200 schools nationwide allow students to superscore for the SAT, ACT or both, according to The Princeton Review.

“Missouri Western will determine the student’s composite score using the highest section scores, such as English and math from September and reading and science from February,” a press release stated this week.

The new model applies to freshmen starting undergraduate classes in the fall of 2018.

School administrators say they hope the new admissions model will allow more students to qualify for sliding-scale academic scholarships based on a student’s high school GPA and ACT results at a time when the cost of education is an issue that college students and higher education officials are grappling with.

“We’re always looking for a way to make Missouri Western affordable,” said Paul Orscheln, the associate vice president for enrollment management and student retention at Missouri Western. “By superscoring the ACT this could allow more students to regain full admission to the institution.”

The decision to use a “superscore” admissions method was made this fall, though college administrators had discussed the shift prior, Orscheln said.

School officials were motivated by data that showed that last year more students would have obtained the 21 ACT score needed to be eligible for admission, and at least 70 freshmen would have received a higher level scholarship if they could have submitted their strongest subscores from the ACT, he said.

Already, the university uses a student’s best ACT math and reading subscores to place college freshmen in classes.

“We want to recognize their achievement and recognize their potential for being successful here,” Orscheln said. “(The ACT) is a big stressor for high school students and

their parents. I firmly believe if they are going to take the test multiple times and spend the money to do so, they should get the full benefit.”

While some of the area’s largest universities such as the University of Missouri, the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University of Kansas do not accept superscores, the option has become more common.

Missouri schools such as Washington University in St. Louis and Northwest Missouri State University have opted to include the practice in their admissions process.

Education experts say there are benefits for universities, too — schools can use superscores methods to boost rankings for average ACT scores of admitted students.

Does it help universities become more competitive as more schools adopt the practice?

“I guess whether there is a market advantage remains to be seen,” Orscheln said. “But I do think you are going to see this become more and more popular. The bottom line is it helps students.”



Attorney for MU Hospital employees seeks to keep lawsuit on table

By LUCAS GEISLER

Watch video at: <http://www.abc17news.com/news/top-stories/attorney-for-mu-hospital-employees-seek-to-keep-lawsuit-on-table/669487284>

COLUMBIA, Mo. - Attorneys for one current and one former MU Health Care employee believe a lawsuit against the company should continue.

The motion, filed by Kansas City-based attorney Brendan Donelon, opposes UMHC's request to dismiss the lawsuit filed by respiratory therapists Richard Hunsley and Donna Reeves. The two sued in 2016 over the hospital's Kronos time-keeping system automatically deducting 30 minutes for meal breaks, even if the employees did not take that time.

A hearing is scheduled for Dec. 19 in Boone County over the two motions, as well as a request from Donelon to certify the lawsuit as a class-action. If certified as a class-action suit for similar therapists, the lawsuit could affect 2,601 employees.

The two sides are scheduled for a settlement conference on Dec. 13, according to public court filings.

Attorneys for UMHC asked for summary judgment last month, calling the lawsuit "ill-conceived." Kronos allows employees to correct hours through an "exception log," and the plaintiffs knew this needed to be done if they worked through their break. Hunsley used this twice between 2011 and 2016, while Reeves utilized the function 28 times. In each instance, both reported "that their time was corrected and recorded accurately," the motion said.

Donelon disputed how the attorneys were portraying the instruction given to employees on that issue. Hunsley and Reeves were told to use the exception log if they accrued 30 minutes of downtime throughout the shifts that lasted more than eight hours.

"These practices by UMHC violated its written policies that a thirty-minute meal break had to be uninterrupted in length for an employee to have thirty minutes of pay removed from their shift," Donelon wrote.

The hospitals ended the auto-deduction function of Kronos in August 2016, the motion said, after employees notified administration. According to one email, Donelon said, the head of UMHC's compensation Bertt Matthews thought they were a "huge risk for a [Department of Labor] review," the motion said.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

[Hundreds of homes planned on University of Missouri-owned land around Missouri Bluffs Golf Club](#)

By Jacob Barker St. Louis Post-Dispatch 1 hr ago (4)

The company behind New Town in St. Charles — known for its “new urbanist” design — is proposing another distinctive housing development, this one built into the Missouri River bluffs across from Chesterfield.

Greg Whittaker, of NT Home Builders, is asking St. Charles County to rezone nearly 400 acres just south of the Missouri Research Park for a 315-lot housing development built around the periphery of the Missouri Bluffs Golf Club.

The forested, hilly terrain, bounded on the south by the Katy Trail and Missouri River, would give the subdivision “more of a resort feel,” Whittaker told the Post-Dispatch. If it wins the necessary approvals, he aims to make it a “low-impact development,” preserving the elevation changes and trees rather than grading the ground flat before building.

“There is no site like this, unless you go to, like, Branson or Springfield,” he said, referring to the Ozark-like terrain. “I’m trying to think of a project in St. Louis that would be like it, but I can’t think of one.”

Mike Hurlbert, a planning director with St. Charles County, agreed the proposal is unique. The closest comparison would be Augusta Shores several miles to the southwest on Highway 94, but “this takes it to probably another level,” Hurlbert said.

Whittaker has the land under contract from the University of Missouri, which owns it as part of the Missouri Research Park that has developed along Highway 40 (Interstate 64) over the last 30 years.

The research park has become more than corporate labs and offices. For more than 20 years, the university has leased the roughly 200 acres where the Missouri Bluffs Golf Club is to a company affiliated with the Whittaker family’s business. The golf course was originally developed by Greg Whittaker’s father, Bob Whittaker, who died last year.

Greg Whittaker and NT Home Builders’ proposal would develop 315 single-family lots on roughly 200 acres, leaving the golf course unaffected. Whittaker said his company would build the houses, which are expected to be marketed for between \$500,000 and \$1 million or more.

In addition, plans call for about 120 attached housing units, likely villas or cluster homes near the clubhouse, Whittaker said.

Whittaker’s firm is best known for its New Town development on the northern edge of St. Charles, a development in the suburbs with the trappings of urban living, such as shopping and restaurants in walking distance.

While his family’s company has developed subdivisions around golf courses before, such as Whitmoor Country Club 30 years ago, Whittaker said this project, known as “The Bluffs,” will be “completely different.”

“It’s going to be more of a resort feel just because of how the bluffs are laid out with the elevation changes and the trees,” he said.

He’s been eyeing the university-owned property for a decade now. “We’ve looked at that for probably the last 10 years,” he said. “The timing works out with the economy getting better, and the building environment is a lot stronger.”

While mostly bounded by offices in the Missouri Research Park, the land also is bounded by the Busch Greenway and Katy Trail and is near the village of Weldon Spring Heights, which shares an access road, Research Park Drive, with the Missouri Research Park.

Village resident Greg Kelly said the west entrance to the research park off of Highway 94, which has no traffic signal, is already dangerous.

“I’ve personally seen a number of accidents and near misses there,” he said. “If the university wants to put a large residential development in the park, they really need to make improvements to that western entrance to accommodate the increased traffic and make it safer for everyone.”

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Flu cases trending higher than past season

By WAVERLY COLVILLE

The Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services department has reported 73 flu cases since Oct. 1 -- more than double the number at this time last year.

Statewide, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services has reported five times the number of cases compared with this time last year.

The Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services had reported 32 cases by this point last year and 20 cases at this point in 2015. Jason Wilcox, the senior planner for the local health department, said there’s no telling how severe this flu season will be until it ends in May.

“We won’t know until we get a chance to look at the data at the end of the season,” Wilcox said. “We’re not 100 percent sure why there are more cases.”

Wilcox said it could be because more people are getting tested this year or more people reporting their illnesses.

Statewide, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services reported 2,447 laboratory-confirmed cases of the flu as of Dec. 2. Last year at this time, there were 480 reported cases.

These increased numbers could also indicate that flu season is arriving early. The flu spreads every year with varying intensity and timing.

The virus itself changes from year to year as well, said Christelle Ilboudo, an infectious diseases physician with University of Missouri Health Care. She looks at the trends in Australia, where winter takes place while summer is happening here because of its location in the

Southern Hemisphere. This year, Ilboudo is looking at the H3N2 virus that has been present in Australia, which she said has the potential to make people sicker than other flu viruses.

However, Ilboudo said this year's vaccine is effective against this virus strain.

Fewer people have sought flu vaccinations through MU Health Care than in years past.

"People haven't been thinking of the flu season quite yet because it's been so warm," Ilboudo said. "Maybe in their mind it's not cold enough yet to be thinking about it."

By watching out for symptoms early, such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue, one can treat the flu earlier.

A flu vaccination takes about two weeks to take full effect. The local health department began offering vaccines in September. Those without health insurance can pay \$25 for a vaccination. The department also vaccinated a record 9,671 children in Boone County public schools this year. The department began its school vaccination program in 2009.



Views of the News: MU Honors College Students Take Over

By: Amy Simons

Five students from the [University of Missouri's Honors College](#) participated in a 16-week tutorial under the direction of Missouri School of Journalism professor Amy Simons on media criticism during the Fall 2017 term.

For their final project, the students produced and hosted their own special edition of KBIA-FM's program, "Views of the News."

Watch the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6iVezpfIc8&feature=youtu.be>

MISSOURIAN

FACT CHECK: Blunt is partially accurate in Senate sexual harassment issues

By: Emily McCarter

The U.S. Senate needs to clean up its own house when it comes to sexual harassment charges, regardless of whether Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore wins his Dec. 12 election, Missouri Sen. Roy Blunt has argued.

Some Senate Republicans, including Blunt have not endorsed Moore, who is accused of sexual misconduct with a 14-year-old girl and several other teenagers, saying it's up to Alabama voters whether to choose him or Democrat Doug Jones. Others, including President Donald Trump, are backing Moore.

The election comes amid fallout of sexual misconduct claims against Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., who announced his resignation on Dec. 7, and Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., who stepped down on Dec. 5.

Blunt said he and a few colleagues are trying to address sexual harassment procedures for charges against members of Congress because “we need to be sure that we’ve got an environment where people want to come and be a part of that.”

“In the current law, if you report harassment, you’re the one that has to go into 20 hours of counseling before you can decide whether you were really harassed or not,” Blunt said on [Meet the Press](#) on Nov. 19, 2017. “That’s just totally inappropriate.”

That seemed like an uncommon rule, so we wanted to dig into Blunt’s claim.

Reporting harassment in Congress

The standards for investigating employees and members of Congress is a lot different from ones laid out for the public in other states, and the process has come under scrutiny as allegations in Hollywood, politics and journalism have piled up.

Congress' rules for handling sexual harassment allegations are under the spotlight after [reporting by The Washington Post](#) and others found lawmakers essentially write their own rules for handling claims. Some lawmakers are working to fix their own workplace culture.

[The Post reported](#) the story of a 19-year-old intern who said she was the victim of sexual misconduct but did not report it for fear of losing her job.

The Post also shed light on [another unique rule](#) for reporting sexual harassment on Capitol Hill: The confidential payouts in settlements come from a special U.S. Treasury fund supported by tax dollars.

Any member or employee of Congress who reports a violation of the [Congressional Accountability Act](#) (including sexual harassment) must go through mandatory steps to file a claim. This is known as the [Dispute Resolution Process](#).

Blunt's statement addresses the first step: counseling. The person reporting sexual harassment must request counseling with the Office of Compliance within 180 days of the alleged harassment.

According to the posted procedures, the counseling period normally lasts 30 days. But it may be reduced at the request of the employee.

In Blunt's statement, he said the counseling process takes 20 hours. We were unable to confirm the number of counseling hours each person receives during the 30-day period.

When we asked Blunt's office, spokesperson Katie Boyd pointed us to the Office of Compliance.

Laura Cech, the outreach and publications coordinator for the Office of Compliance, did not specify whether Blunt was correct in saying 20 hours. She responded with a [Q&A the office developed](#) Nov. 13 outlining what they see as “the most common misconceptions” from the media about the process. The first question is about the required “counseling” — but it does not include how the 30-day process translates into hours.

A counselor will “discuss with an employee the information that gave rise to their concerns, and inform them of their rights under the law,” the document says. It also notes the counseling can be completed over the phone or through a designated representative, such as an attorney.

Remaining steps continue after counseling if the employee still believes he or she has been sexually harassed.

The steps include a 30-day mediation where both parties are allowed the opportunity to resolve the dispute, administrative hearing or civil action, and the appeals process where the employee can request the final decision be reviewed by the OOC Board of Directors.

Sandy Davidson, a professor at the University of Missouri who teaches law in the journalism school, said, “The rules are bizarre and totally unfriendly to women.”

Davidson also noted the confidentiality aspect of the laws. The rules say all statements, communications and documents during the mediation process are confidential.

In Missouri, you can [file a complaint](#) with the Missouri Commission on Human Rights, which investigates complaints in public accommodations about race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, disability, age and familial status.

There is no requirement for counseling. Once the complaint is filed, the commission investigates by interviewing both sides. If the investigator finds discrimination, the commission attempts to settle the case. If the case is not settled, a hearing process gives a final decision and determines whether remedies such as back pay, reinstatement or promotion are ordered.

Our ruling

Blunt said, “In the current law, if you report harassment, you’re the one that has to go into 20 hours of counseling before you can decide whether you were really harassed.”

According to the Office of Compliance, any employee or member of Congress must go through counseling for a 30-day period before they can continue with further steps of reporting the harassment.

However, we were unable to find evidence detailing how many hours the 30-day period includes.

Blunt’s statement is on the right track but needs further clarification with the “hours” claim.

We rate it **Half True**.