At 10 a.m. Tuesday, tornado alarms and flashing light beacons were supposed to go off across MU's campus as part of a drill to prepare for tornado season. That didn't happen.

Warnings from the National Weather Service that were meant to trigger MU’s alarm system never did, university spokesman Christian Basi said.

"Our computers are set up so that when we receive an incoming message from the National Weather Service, they're triggered," Basi said. "For one reason or another, and we're still trying to track this down, we did not receive an incoming message from the Weather Service."

This, combined with an operator error that kept alarms from sounding and flashing in buildings across campus, were the main problems for the university following the drill. The issue with this alarm system has since been addressed, Basi said.

Still, issues that arose during the test allowed MU to practice its backup procedures. Approximately 31,000 texts, 21,000 emails and 8,000 desktop alerts were dispersed, as well as messages on Facebook and Twitter from the MU Alert and official university accounts. The system was triggered manually rather than by a message from the National Weather Service.

"This is exactly why we have the test," Basi said. "We want to make sure that we are reviewing our protocols. So we're testing the human operation as well as the technical side of the house."
Jon Carney, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service based in St. Louis, said he was only aware of one problem statewide: In Mexico, Missouri, a radio station wasn't able to transmit audio on-air after receiving a warning from the National Weather Service.

"As far as I know, everything worked well," Carney said. "We didn't have any other complaints."

Carney had a theory regarding the flawed interaction between MU's system and the National Weather Service's, though.

"The warning that we sent — there's a code on it, and one character in there, in this long string of code, denotes it as a test warning," Carney said. "That one little character in the string denotes this as a test, not a real life-threatening situation. That could have messed up the University of Missouri system. The computer made that decision for them."

In a real warning, part of the code would read "/O.new.klsx." The "O" stands for "operational." Carney's speculation was that this code — which reads "/T.new.klsx" for test warnings — caused MU's system to recognize the "T" for test and duly ignore it.

In a Facebook post about the tornado drill from MU's account, the university urged "students, faculty, staff and visitors to think about what they would do during a tornado. This includes seeking shelter in the lowest level of a building and staying away from windows … If you are outside, try to get to a building. If you cannot find a place to go inside, crouch for protection next to a strong structure or lie flat in a low-lying area. Cover your head and neck with your arms or a jacket."

Tuesday's tornado drill is one of several aspects of the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency and the National Weather Service's Severe Weather Awareness Week, also promoting safety measures for severe floods and thunderstorms.
MSA candidates drop out after discovery of discriminatory tweets

BY ELENA K. CRUZ

The campaign for Missouri Students Association president was temporarily suspended Tuesday and two presidential candidates dropped out after offensive tweets by three candidates were widely distributed.

On Tuesday evening, Blaine Thomas and Claire Jacobs, whose tweets were publicized, both separately announced they were quitting the race, leaving their running mates, Chad Johnson and Thomas Cater, respectively, to continue seeking the presidency alone.

The tweets that led to the suspension of campaigning included racist, homophobic and sexist language. They were collected and distributed by MU junior Brett Stover, an editor and anchor at campus radio station KCOU, along with help from other members of the staff.

Stover shared on his personal Twitter account a history of comments by the candidates posted between 2012 and 2016.

The discriminatory tweets were written by two candidates for MSA president, Thomas and Jacobs, and one vice-presidential candidate, Caius Gillen.

The Board of Elections Commissioners, which oversees MSA elections, suspended the presidential campaign between 1 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Tuesday while they investigated.

The campaign was reinstated after members of the board decided they could not punish the candidates for comments posted before the election period.
Board Chair Joseph Sell said the campaign was suspended to allow time to look over the MSA bylaws, handbook and other regulating documents. However, he said the candidates didn’t actually break any rules.

“None of these tweets were made during the election period, so they fall outside of my statute of limitation,” Sell said. “As the BEC, I can only make decisions regarding the election.”

The matter “created issues and concerns about the legitimacy of them running, especially following the incidents from two years ago with Concerned Student 1950 and marginalized communities around campus,” Sell said.

Stover said he sifted through several years of tweets by all six candidates running for MSA office as a part of his election coverage. It is a process he said he has repeated since arriving at MU as a journalism student in 2015.

“I never hope that I’ll find these kinds of things because, I mean, it’s disappointing,” Stover said. “It shows you how far the university has not come since the time I’ve been here.”

On Tuesday, Gillen released a statement of apology on Twitter, saying, “It’s come to my attention that some of my old tweets have resurfaced. I deeply apologize for my offensive comments. These do not reflect my views.”

Two tweets were also posted at 11 a.m. on Jacobs’ campaign Twitter account to apologize, but they were abruptly removed. A screenshot taken by the Missourian of the first tweet said, “It has come to my attention that some of my old tweets have become a topic of discussion. The views expressed to not reflect my views or those of the Jacobs/Cater campaign. I sincerely apologize to all those affected by offensive comments.”

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the information has been forwarded to the Office for Civil Rights and Title IX.
“You never expect something like this to happen, especially during an election,” Sell said. “That’s really all I have to say about this, you know. It’s just, no one expected this to happen.”

Offensive tweets cast shadow over MU student body president election

By KRSITEN HARRIS


COLUMBIA - A story that would typically be about a student election has served as an example of an even bigger lesson. Monday night, KCOU’s Brett Stover, found offensive old tweets from current Missouri Students Association presidential candidates and slates. This lead one candidate to drop out of the race.

Stover re-posted tweets from Blaine Thomas from the BlaineandChad slate, Claire Jacobs from the JacobsandCarter slate and Caius Gillen from the JuliaandCauis slate that all exhibited offensive language.

On Tuesday night both Thomas and Jacobs withdrew their candidacies for MSA President.

The tweets used terms like a slur referring to a gay person, the n-word and other offensive terminology.

Former MSA President Sean Earl said, "It is truly disappointing to see potential leaders of our student body have a history of insensitive and racist comments. There has been an immense amount of progress over the last several years to make MU a more diverse and inclusive campus, and this work must not be undone by ignorant tweets made by candidates. I trust students and MSA leadership will hold candidates accountable and continue to push our university forward."

MSA Board of Elections Commissioner Chair Joseph Sell said, “As of right now the election is continuing as it is. These comments fall out of the statute of limitation, so it’s not really much course of action that can be taken because these were so long before the election started.”
Sell said he temporarily suspended the campaign today so he could "look into the tweets, look at all of the governing documents, the election handbook and university rules and regulations to make sure we took the right course of action regarding the comments made by the candidates."

The campaign will resume Wednesday.

Amy Simons, associate professor at Missouri School of Journalism and social media expert, said people underestimate the power and life span of a tweet.

“It’s really important to remember that when you’re putting something out on social media, if it’s Twitter if it’s Facebook, you’re publishing it to the internet. You may not necessarily think so, but when you do that you’re creating an online archive that’s going to live forever,” Simons said. “The internet has a very long memory.”

Simons said old tweets have the potential to harm someone's credibility. She referenced Cam Newton and Jourdan Rodrigue as another example of older tweets resurfacing and doing damage. Newton was accused of making a sexist comment to reporter Rodrigue. She had a lot of people on her side supporting her after the incident, but then some of her older racist tweets resurfaced and damaged the momentum she'd built up.

Sell said no punishment will come out of this incident.

Simons advised the students to, “Own it. You did it. You said it. Explain where you were coming from at the time. If you’re looking to represent people or for the support of people for whatever that might be, you need to be authentic,” Simons said.

Earl provided his advice as well.

"I would advise the candidates to apologize to the Mizzou community and make things right. If they feel they can not dutifully represent the vast student population at Mizzou, then it might be best to step aside and let others lead," Earl said.

UPDATE: Two drop from MSA race, election still on after inappropriate tweets resurface
By ELIZABETH DUSENBERG


COLUMBIA, Mo. - UPDATE, 9:45 p.m.: The Missouri Student Association Board of Election Commissioners lifted the suspension on the presidential election and campaigning for the position.

Joe Sell, director of the BEC, told ABC 17 News that the group would not sanction or remove any of the candidates from the ballot for inappropriate tweets that some made years ago.

"I can only serve infractions based on things said during the campaign, period," Sell said.

Two presidential candidates, Claire Jacobs and Blaine Thomas, said on their campaign Twitter pages that they would drop out of the race. Both said a statement would be released tomorrow.

Cassie Florido and Brett Stover, reporters at the student radio station KCOU, compiled the questionable tweets on Monday. Stover began releasing screenshots of the tweets on Monday night. Some are more than five years old while others are as recent as 2016.

The tweets from presidential candidates Jacobs and Thomas, as well as vice presidential hopeful Caius Gillen, contain slurs used for African-Americans, women and members of the LGBT community. ABC 17 News has blurred out the slurs.

Several tweets from Jacobs feature use of the word "n****".

Both MSA president and vice president earn a salary for 12 months of service. The president made $6,600 and the vice president made $4,500, according to the FY 2018 MSA budget.

The MSA Executive Cabinet said it was disappointed in the remarks.

"At the University of Missouri, we expect every student leader to embody Respect and those seeking the highest of offices should be held to the highest of standards," the statement said.

Jordyn Denne, an MU freshman, said she felt the candidates should be taken off the ballot. As a student of color, she said the tweets made her feel unsafe with people vying for student leadership. Denne said she also combs her social media activity at the end of every day to make sure she hadn't said anything hurtful or embarrassing.

"You have to watch the things that you say," Denne said. "If you wouldn't say those things directly or to that person's face, you shouldn't just say it on social media."

The MSA elections will take place from March 19 to 21.
The election for the Missouri Students Association has been suspended after inappropriate tweets.

A spokesperson for the association said on Monday night, tweets were made by members of the 2018 slates for MSA president and vice president and were brought to the attention of the student body.

The spokesperson continued to say that the association is disappointed by the remarks and expects every student leader to embody respect.

The election will be suspended for Tuesday and the MSA will be reviewing the next steps and the candidacy of the slates.

**BECA suspends MSA campaigning due to controversial tweets**

_Candidates Caius Gillen, Claire Jacobs and Blaine Thomas have tweeted racist, sexist and homophobic terms in the past._

_by Skyler Rossi_

_Controversial tweets came to surface Monday night regarding racist, sexist and homophobic terms used in past tweets by Caius Gillen, vice presidential candidate of the More to Roar campaign, Claire Jacobs, presidential candidate of the It’s About Time campaign, and Blaine Thomas, presidential candidate of the Fight Forward campaign._

Due to content in the tweets by candidates from each MSA presidential platform, BEC chairman Joseph Sell suspended campaigning March 6.

Gillen tweeted sexist comments in his tweets from 2016, calling women “thots” and claiming they are “trying to get put on.” He tweeted racist comments in 2016 as well.

“About to watch a black man swim for the first time,” Gillen tweeted in January 2016. “College is truly the best place for new experiences.”

Jacobs tweeted racial slurs and racist comments more than once in her tweets from 2012 and 2013.

“whenever I go to the rta i put my money in yet no ticket comes out, causing me to hop the fence and get yelled at by incompetent black men,” Jacobs tweeted in November 2014.

Thomas tweeted derogatory, homophobic comments in 2012 and 2013, repeatedly using the word “fag” and “gay” at a tagged user. He also tweeted several racist comments in 2013.
“Japanese pitchers shouldn’t be allowed they are on that’s weird ass oriental herbal shit” Thomas tweeted in 2013.

There was also a photo revealed of Thomas sitting in front of a confederate flag.

Jacobs and Thomas did not respond to comment requests. Jacobs has deleted her personal twitter account, and Thomas has made his personal account private.

Gillen released an initial apology statement on his personal Twitter account immediately following the attention of his previous tweets.

“I deeply apologize for my offensive comments,” he wrote in the statement. “These do not reflect my views or the views of More to Roar. I hope to re-gain your trust and prove I'm committed to creating an inclusive environment on campus.”

On Tuesday morning, Gillen released a full apology statement. He further explained that his tweets do not reflect the attitudes of More to Roar.

“My statements about women from two years ago were inexcusable,” Gillen wrote in the statement. “...My statements about a black male swimming from two years ago are also inexcusable.”

The apology statement also included a quote from Jonathan “Jay” Abraham, the student his tweet referred to. His comment stated that Gillen had offered to teach him how to swim.

“I include this statement not to make excuses for my remarks, as there is no suitable excuse for perpetuating negative racial stereotypes, but to provide greater context to the tweet,” the statement said.

These statements were brought to attention by Brett Stover, KCOU news and sports online content editor, Monday night.

UPDATE: MU Interfraternity Council halts all new member activities in response to hazing allegations

BY OLIVIA GARRETT AND CLAIRE MITZEL
The MU Interfraternity Council announced on Twitter on Tuesday it is pausing all new-member activities until March 19 in response to hazing allegations.

IFC Vice President of Public Relations Matthew Oxendale wrote in an email that no specific fraternities will be named because of an active investigation. The investigation is a collaborative effort between national fraternity headquarters and MU’s Office of Student Accountability and Support, Oxendale wrote.

During the investigation, the council will work with the local chapters and national headquarters to review new member programs to “ensure activities are positive, educational and comply with all policies,” according to the statement.

All 29 MU fraternity chapter presidents and council board members unanimously decided to pause new member activities. Oxendale said in the email that each fraternity’s new member processes vary. He said only activities specifically for new members are suspended; chapter activities will continue as normal.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said that the university appreciated IFC’s commitment to student safety.

“We really appreciate them taking a step back, stopping any activities that they have any kind of concerns about and putting student safety first,” Basi said. “We appreciate them doing it very quickly.”

In late October, consulting firm Dyad Strategies released a report critical of MU Greek life that recommended freshmen no longer live in fraternity houses. The report also suggested that fraternities register all social events and the university should work with the Interfraternity Council to provide security and inspect chapter houses during registered events.

From April 2015 to October 2016, at least 14 fraternities were placed on probation. Three fraternities were suspended.
IFC announces two-week pause in new member process after hazing allegations

By MARIE BOWMAN

COLUMBIA, Mo. - In a statement made via Twitter, Mizzou's Interfraternity Council (IFC) announced a two-week pause in the new member process.

The pause comes after several hazing allegations against the "fraternity community," and mentions an investigation by the university.

Lawsuit claims medical negligence in Mizzou Biojoint surgeries

BY ANDREW DOUGLAS

An orthopedic surgeon and a veterinarian were notified Monday two patients have filed lawsuits alleging medical negligence in their knee surgeries. The lawsuits also contend the doctors failed to disclose the surgeries were experimental.

James Stannard, medical director for the Mizzou Biojoint Center, and James Cook, director of operations and scientific director of the center, developed an alternative to artificial joint replacements. The surgical procedure uses natural tissue grafts from donors in knee, hip and other joint replacements.
The lawsuit alleges the doctors performed Mizzou Biojoint knee surgeries on the two plaintiffs, Amanda Reinsch and Daniel Draper, without telling them the surgery was experimental.

According to the lawsuit filed Friday in the 13th Judicial Circuit of Missouri, neither doctor told either patient that Cook, who performed parts of the surgery, was not a medical doctor nor a licensed physician at the time of the surgeries.

The suit alleges that Stannard failed to tell the patients they were not proper candidates for the surgery. According to the case file, Draper’s and Reinsch’s body mass indexes were both above 35, and Reinsch was not nicotine free.

According to the Mizzou Biojoint Center website, the ideal candidate is younger than 55 and nicotine free, with a BMI of less than 35.

Draper was an active-duty member of the U.S. Army stationed at Fort Leonard Wood in June 2014 when he complained to a physician about back pain. Having a history of knee problems, Draper was referred to Stannard, who recommended Mizzou Biojoint surgery.

Stannard and Cook performed the surgery the following April. The lawsuit states that Stannard recommended a second Mizzou Biojoint surgery, reportedly because that surgery was not successful.

According to the lawsuit, the second surgery was also unsuccessful, and Draper eventually underwent a total knee replacement at Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital.

The lawsuit claims Draper has lost the ability to continue his career in the military and no longer can live independently.

Reinsch is a mother of six and a former professional boxer. The lawsuit states that Reinsch, who had received knee injections and had a history of knee problems, met with Stannard in January 2016 for follow-up care. Stannard recommended the Mizzou Biojoint surgery, according to the case file.
Stannard and Cook performed the surgery the following May. After reporting pain and undergoing two follow-up surgeries, the lawsuit asserts, Reinsch sought a second opinion.

The physician recommended and performed a total knee replacement. The lawsuit maintains tissue taken from that surgery indicated that Reinsch’s knee was infected with staph bacteria. The lawsuit also states Reinsch has suffered irreversible and permanent damage to her left knee.

When contacted for comment, a representative for MU Health Care said both Stannard and Cook were unable to comment on pending litigation.
procedure, and Amanda Reinsch, a former professional boxer and mother of six, alongside her husband Matthew Reinsch.

The BioJoint procedure takes bone tissue and cartilage from a deceased organ donor to treat osteoarthritis in the knee. The surgeon, in this case Stannard and Cook, removes damaged tissue and replaces it with the donated tissue, rather than metal or plastic devices.

The risk with the surgery centers around the preservation of the tissue.

The lawsuit states "once cartilage tissue is harvested from the donor, cartilage cells in that tissue begin to die." As the tissue dies, the lawsuit alleges, it releases bacteria which could contaminate the tissue and increase the likelihood of an infection occurring and graft failure.

Draper’s first and second BioJoint surgery failed, the lawsuit states. As a result of the unsuccessful operation, the lawsuit states, Draper’s "lost the ability to continue or otherwise pursue his career in the United States military,""forever lost the "ability to live independently," and "lost the ability to enjoy life.

He eventually underwent a full knee replacement from Thomas Alleto at Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital.

Reinsch allegedly reported that after the procedure she experienced "10/10 pain to her left knee" and was eventually told by Stannard that she would have to undergo another BioJoint surgery to replace the tissue.

Reinsch then went to another orthopedic surgeon, who found that her knee was infected before suggesting she receive a total knee replacement.

The lawsuit alleges that Reinsch now has "permanent, irreversible damage to her left knee," and like Draper, "forever lost the "ability to live independently," and "lost the ability to enjoy life.

Kip Johnson, Reinsch and Draper's attorney, declined to provide a statement.

"I can't comment on the case beyond what was contained in the legal filing," he said.

Both lawsuits allege that Stannard acted negligently in failing to provide "sufficient information about Mizzou BioJoint Surgery so that they could make a reasoned and fully informed consent."

David Tyson Smith is a attorney who specializes in cases involving medical malpractice and negligence. He said, "If a doctor isn't disclosing risks, especially if they're known risks, that's going to be a problem for the doctor and the hospital."

Stannard is also accused of "negligently and carelessly making misrepresentations" about BioJoint to obtain consent and "failing to advise plaintiff[s] that [they were] part of a research study and/or clinical trial for an experimental procedure"
Cook, who while a licensed veterinarian, is not a licensed physician or surgeon, is accused of "negligently and carelessly acting as a surgeon in the Mizzou BioJoint Surgery without proper medical direction or supervision."

Smith said that Cook's involvement in the actual surgery, regardless of the extent, opens the doctor up to liability.

"If someone is performing a surgery but is not trained to do that surgery, that's a big problem," Smith said. "Now if there's someone in the room and they're just giving advice, that's also a problem."

The Curators of the University of Missouri, alongside the two doctors, are also accused of violating merchandising laws. The filing stated "advertisement, promotion and representations regarding Mizzou BioJoint Surgery have been deceptive and misleading to the general public."

KOMU 8 News reached out to the public relations office of MU Health and has not heard back.

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Report: Millennials Aren’t Saving For Retirement

Generated from News Bureau press release: Millennials are not adequately saving for retirement, MU study finds

By: Mary Childs

Add it to the list of ways in which millennials are doomed: they are not saving for retirement.
Using data from the survey of consumer finances in 2013, researchers at the University of Missouri found that just 37% of working millennials even have retirement accounts. Among the self-employed, 17.6% had any kind of retirement account.

“While it could be assumed that millennials have plenty of time to save for retirement, they have to shoulder more responsibility than their parents and grandparents to do so,” Rui Yao, associate professor of personal financial planning, says in a release. “Compared to older generations, millennials are less likely to have employer-provided pension or defined benefit retirement plans. Additionally, there is increased uncertainty about Social Security, and millennials are likely to live longer.”

That 37% figure is bad, but it isn't so far out of whack with the rest of the U.S. About 51% of all Americans are not actively contributing to an employer-sponsored 401(k) account, according to a study from Edward Jones published last month.

The University of Missouri researchers say their study controlled for wealth and debt. The picture is worse when broken down by ethnicity: retirement account balances were 53% lower for black respondents than white respondents. Yao will research why that might be and what types of accounts millennial savers are using.

Millennials largely entered the work force in or after the financial crisis, and on average that effect is still reverberating: A 2016 study by New York City Comptroller Scott Stringer showed that millennials in the city were earning 20% less than the generation before them.

They're slower to get married and buy a house, too, so it follows that retirement savings would also be delayed.

Furthermore, millennials will likely face a changed landscape when they reach retirement age: defined benefit plans are falling to the wayside, in favor of defined contribution plans. Corporate pensions for companies in the Fortune 1000 are about 83% funded, according to an analysis this year by consultancy Willis Towers Watson, and they're a dire picture at the state and local government level. Blackstone's (BX) executive vice chairman Tony James and labor economist Teresa Ghilarducci published a book in 2016 on what they call a retirement crisis on the horizon, suggesting urgent new plans.

"Millennials need to know much more about investing for retirement than their parents or grandparents did," University of Missouri's Yao says.
Awfully few millennials have retirement accounts

Generated from News Bureau press release: Millennials are not adequately saving for retirement, MU study finds

Only 37.2 percent of working millennials have retirement accounts, according to new research.

“While it could be assumed that millennials have plenty of time to save for retirement, they have to shoulder more responsibility than their parents and grandparents to do so,” says Rui Yao, associate professor of personal financial planning at the University of Missouri.

“Compared to older generations, millennials are less likely to have employer-provided pension or defined benefit retirement plans. Additionally, there is increased uncertainty about Social Security, and millennials are likely to live longer.”

Yao and Guopeng Chen, a doctoral candidate in personal financial planning, used the most recent 2013 survey of consumer finances, a survey sponsored by the Federal Reserve System, to determine the saving behaviors of millennials. The research team was interested in the saving behaviors of millennials with at least one year of employment, making them eligible to contribute to a defined-contribution plan.

Yao and Chen identified the following trends in retirement saving behaviors among millennials:

- Only 37.2 percent of respondents had a retirement account.
- Comparing respondents with same income and wealth, retirement account balances were 52.9 percent lower for black respondents than white respondents.
- Advanced degree holders were more likely to have a retirement account compared to those with a high school diploma or below; however, the advanced degree holders saved a smaller amount.
- Among self-employed individuals, only 17.6 percent had a retirement account of any kind.
- The researchers controlled for wealth and debt while analyzing saving behaviors. Yao’s future research will attempt to determine why some millennials, for example black respondents, had less in their retirement accounts than their peers and what types of accounts their wealth is saved in.

“The results suggest that financial education about saving for retirement is absolutely necessary,” Yao says.
“With the decline of defined benefit plans, millennials need to know much more about investing for retirement than their parents or grandparents did. Proper retirement preparation requires strategic and disciplined savings. Given that retirement accounts require the amount to compound, opening a retirement account early in one's career is the best first step for effectively saving for retirement.”

The researchers report their findings in the *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*.

Support for the work came from the United States Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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**KSDK-TV (NBC) – St. Louis, Mo.**

**Mizzou team pinpoints genetic targets for autism spectrum disorder in young children**

The University of Missouri was awarded $1 million in two grants by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 2014 to install a supercomputer enabling data-heavy research in both bioinformatics and engineering applications.

Author: Joel Hulsey

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COLUMBIA, Mo. — A team of researchers at the University of Missouri have created a new method that has connected several target genes to autism, a move which could help doctors better determine the diagnosis of the disorder in young children.

The University of Missouri was awarded $1 million in two grants by the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 2014 to install a supercomputer enabling data-heavy research in both bioinformatics and engineering applications, the university's News Bureau reported last month.
“In this study, we started with more than 2,591 families who had only one child with autism and neither the parents nor the siblings had been diagnosed with autism,” said Chi-Ren Shyu, a professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science in the College of Engineering, to the MU News Bureau. "This created a genetically diverse group composed of an estimated 10 million genetic variants. We narrowed it down to the 30,000 most promising variants, then used preset algorithms and the big data capabilities of our high-performance computing equipment at MU to ‘mine’ those genetic variables.”

According to the study, the genetic samples mentioned by Professor Shyu were obtained from the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SPARK). Each of the samples were taken from children with diagnosed cases of autism, including their parents and siblings who were unaffected by the disorder.

In total, over 11,500 individuals were tested for the study using advanced computational techniques. Shyu and his team successfully identified 286 genes which were then collected into 12 subgroups which exhibited characteristics typically seen in children on the autism spectrum. Of these, the News Bureau reported, 193 potentially new genes previously not identified were discovered, as well.

“Autism is heterogeneous, meaning that the genetic causes are varied and complex,” said Judith Miles, a professor in the MU Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders, to the News Bureau. "The methods developed by Dr. Shyu and the results our team identified are giving geneticists a wealth of targets we’d not considered before—by narrowing down the genetic markers, we may be able to develop clinical programs and methods that can help diagnose and treat the disease. These results are a quantum leap forward in the study of the genetic causes of autism.”

The framework created by Shyu's team has been authorized for wider-scale research, and genetic samples plan to be collected through SPARK, the nation's largest autism study. SPARK is partnering with scientists who aim to collect DNA and information on genetic analysis from 50,000 individuals with autism. To learn more or participate in the study, visit them online, or contact Amanda Shocklee at (573) 884-6092 or email her at shockleea@missouri.edu.
The decision on whether or not to close more than a dozen graduate programs at MU now has a more substantial timeline.

At a special general faculty meeting on Monday, hundreds of MU faculty members packed Jesse Wrench Auditorium at Memorial Union to engage in a discussion centered around the Academic Programs Task Force report that recommended the closure, review or consolidation of several graduate programs.

“The question is: how are the cuts being performed, how will the process be determined and who’s going to have roles and input?” Stephen Karian, associate professor of English, said during a news conference after the meeting. “I think, clearly, there was a strong consensus today that faculty members want to have a voice in that process.”

The faculty meeting was called after Karian submitted a petition to Chancellor Alexander Cartwright. The petition, signed by 83 faculty members, asked for a time for faculty members to voice their displeasure with some aspects of the Academic Programs Task Force’s final report and the possible closure of programs.

Academic Analytics

After introductions from Cartwright and Task Force Co-Chair Cooper Drury, Arts & Science associate dean, who reiterated how the Task Force made its recommendations, Karian took the
stage and denounced the task force’s use of Academic Analytics, a controversial company that provides data on faculty and school productivity.

Karian identified eight problems with the company’s data that he hopes MU leaders will keep in mind before making final decisions:

“Confusing Quantity and Quality.” Karian said Academic Analytics does not collect data in terms of quality and deals only in a “more is always better” approach.

“Lack of transparency.” He said most MU faculty members have profiles with Academic Analytics, but very few have been able to view their profile despite deans and administrative leaders having access to this information.

“Exclusions and Distortions.” He said Academic Analytics’ “one size fits all” measurement strategies are problematic for “departments with diverse research and creative profiles.”

“Pervasive Omissions.” Karian said Academic Analytics tends to give too much weight to some of the data collected.

“False equivalencies.” He said the company also gives inadequate comparisons between data that should not be compared, such as comparing a small travel grant to the MacArthur Fellowship.

“Book Inflation.” Academic Analytics counts the number of International Standard Book Numbers, or ISBNs, instead of counting the actual number of books produced by a school which leads to the counting of new editions as new books.

“Implausible and volatile Rankings.” Karian cited the dramatic shifts witnessed in the English department in terms of rankings. He said around one-third of the English programs shifted more than 20 positions up or down and one department’s ranking fell 93 positions.

“Cost.” The campus needs to know how much it costs to subscribe to Academic Analytics, he said.
Cartwright and Drury clarified that although Academic Analytics data was used by the task force, it was just one source of information collected to make recommendations.

“No program is in that report because of Academic Analytics,” Drury said. “We found that each program was unique. There was no piece of information that was more important than others.”

Transparency timeline

When Cartwright opened the floor up for faculty members to voice their opinions on the task force’s report, English professor Andrew Hoberek stepped forward with a prepared motion for MU administrators to:

- Allow ample opportunity to correct inaccurate and misleading data.
- Provide a budgetary justification for each closure or merger being considered.
- Provide a set of procedures and a timeline for moving forward that are transparent and include meaningful faculty input.

The statement, which was approved at the meeting by a majority hand vote, was prepared by Hoberek and a small group of faculty members to focus the discussion and to receive more transparency about the process of closing programs.

“The goal was to boil down what faculty wanted in terms of asking for more information and more input as the process went forward,” Hoberek said.

Before faculty members voted on the motion, Cartwright gave a brief warning. He said MU could potentially face a $60 million budget issue this year, with about $21 million due to state budget cuts and $30 million due to low enrollment.

“We have a lot of tough decisions ahead,” Cartwright said before the vote was cast. “This vote that you take today will have an impact on how we make these decisions. Across the board cuts will not move this institution forward. I could easily see us continue to struggle. I’ve said I wanted to make decisions (on the closure of programs) by the end of the semester.”

Hoberek said he thinks Cartwright was trying to warn faculty that some people in the state might perceive the vote as faculty trying to stall and trying to prevent substantive change.
“I’m not sure that’s necessarily the intention,” Hoberek said. “I think for the most part, people understand that there are things that must be done moving forward, but that this process did not give adequate room for commenting on what, in some cases, was a problematic process.”

After the meeting, Cartwright said he understood the motion as the faculty looking for a public commitment that decisions would not be made until the end of the semester.

“We want to make some of our budget decisions within the next month or two and (decisions on closing graduate programs) towards the end of the semester, around May,” he said. “We’re going to have to work through them and we have to have some scenarios on how we’re going to do it.”

When the report was first released, Chancellor Cartwright said it was part of a larger process and final decisions will be made throughout the spring semester.

Last April, UM System President Mun Choi called for an 8 to 12 percent budget cut and a review of all MU programs. Since the task force’s creation in August, Cooper Drury and Matthew Martens, professor and provost faculty fellow, held multi-hour review sessions twice a week before the recommendations were made.

The task force reviewed data provided from multiple sources including the student census, Missouri Department of Higher Education and the National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity. The process also involved 39 meetings with campus faculty, staff, administration and students.

After the report was released, the MU chapter of the American Association of University Professors, or AAUP, said the task force used inaccurate conclusions and careless wording that threaten the reputation of MU.

The specific concerns in the statement from AAUP, which was released Jan. 28, addressed the Academic Programs Task Force’s partial reliance on Academic Analytics. The statement was signed by six MU faculty members including MU AAUP Chapter President and Associate Professor of Sociology Victoria Johnson.
“Growing evidence suggests that much of the information produced by (Academic Analytics) is incomplete and inaccurate,” the statement said.

The MU chapter of AAUP said the task force’s report failed to include important differences in programs such as faculty to graduate and undergraduate student ratios. The chapter said faculty members should be provided full access to the task force’s data and enough time to review the information before the administration makes final decisions.

“Research and scholarship that contributes to the state, society and the world are not assembly line products,” the statement said.

After AAUP released their statement, MU spokesman Christian Basi clarified that the task force’s process included multiple sources of data and information, not just information from Academic Analytics.

“We’ve made it very clear that there are many other data points that were part of the process,” he said. “We won’t be making decisions based on one or two data points. We’re using other data points as well as the feedback that we are receiving from deans and faculty.”

**Mizzou Alumni Association honors 39 undergraduates, 18 graduate and professional students**

*Story generated by News bureau direct pitch.*

By Stephi Smith

*The Mizzou Alumni Association honored 39 graduating seniors as recipients of the Mizzou ‘39 Award on Feb. 27. The award is given each year to a group of students who display “academic achievement, leadership and service to Mizzou and the community,” according to the association’s website.*
The recipients are chosen after applying and entering two separate rounds of interviews. Julia Davis, program assistant at the Reynolds Alumni Center, said that there were over 150 applicants.

Throughout the application process there were as many as 15 judges who were chosen as campus representatives who have “a lot of wisdom as far as talent and diversity and service to the university,” Davis said.

“The judges made it a point to tell me how awesome it was to hear from every single interviewee they encountered,” Davis said. “But I would imagine that’s probably true of other classes, as well.”

Davis said that being chosen as a Mizzou ‘39 recipient is considered an honor and a way for seniors to be recognized before they graduate.

Another major component of the award is the students all choose a mentor, some faculty or staff member that has helped and shaped them during their years in college.

Davis said the mentors are chosen as a way for the recipients to appreciate their professors’ help.

“We could recognize so many students for doing amazing things because we have mentors who work behind the scenes on a daily basis and advise these students and stay late for these students,” Davis said. “And this kind of gives them a way to say, ‘Thank you. Now I’m ready to move on to the next chapter of my life.’”

Psychology and sociology major Lindsay Smith was chosen as one of the Mizzou ‘39 recipients. Smith chose Dr. Laura Scherer as her mentor and has worked in her psychology lab for two years.

Smith said she was shocked because she had not expected to be considered one of the most distinguished students in her class.

“I didn’t think that it was real,” Smith said.

She said that being part of Mizzou ‘39 will allow her to better connect and network in years to come. She also said that it’s more than just something to add to a resume.

“I didn’t just throw all this stuff on my resume because it was fun for me; I did it because I wanted to impact people on campus, hopefully in a positive way, and I think that the committees recognized that,” she said.

In addition to the 39 undergraduate students, the Mizzou Alumni Association also chose to honor 18 graduate and professional students as part of a new program called Mizzou 18.

Davis said these applicants went through a similar process and were chosen for exemplifying “world-class research, collaborating with faculty and staff and demonstrating leadership to undergraduate students.”
“[The Mizzou Alumni Association is] excited to see how continuing to have Mizzou 18, along with Mizzou ‘39, can play out in the future,” Davis said. “We like the idea of them being very tied to one another, but we also like them being recognized separately because they both deserve such recognition. It will be interesting to see where that goes in the future.”

The Mizzou 18 recipients were revealed the day before the Mizzou ‘39.

Etiquette can go a long way in building career
By: Debra D. Bass

Some might scoff at the notion of etiquette training in 2018, but they won’t laugh at the results, according to a Gen X entrepreneur.

Naretha Hopson of Ever-Appropriate Etiquette Institute started her business working with middle schoolers, but her message resonated with corporate leaders and job-training agencies developing millennials and Gen Z talent.

Among the young, there’s often a perception that “traditional” means “out-of-date” or “stodgy,” but Hopson, who is also launching online courses at ever-appropriate.com, said that young professionals ignore her advice at their own peril.

There’s a widespread perception that millennials and Gen Z professionals are entering the workforce more immature than previous generations. Hopson said it’s a sign of a difference in etiquette training.

“A lot of people don’t know what they don’t know,” Hopson said. She noted that too often a candidate can be discounted for a simple social mistake because it’s a cue that they won’t be a good representative of a company that’s looking to appear savvy, confident and competent.

“It’s a game and it’s not fair — it’s not fair — but if you know the rules, you can increase your chance of success,” Hopson explained.

“Increase,” she said, not ensure.
She’s heard the refrain that someone did everything right and someone else seemed to do everything wrong, but they achieved X, Y or Z.

Her explanation is not comforting: That’s life.

She also said that’s no reason to handicap yourself further. Just because you think someone isn’t following the rules and benefits from the lucky gene pool club, doesn’t mean that they haven’t mastered some secret code.

You can fight the rules, decide that being true to yourself means that you’re above the rules, or insist that the rules are discriminatory and don’t apply to you, but that means you are likely compromising your next job, raise or promotion opportunity.

Jennifer M. Davis, assistant director of Business Career Services at the University of Missouri-Columbia Trulaske College of Business, said that they don’t necessarily use the word “etiquette” to define corporate soft skills but it’s one of the most important business skills students acquire.

Etiquette, not just good grades or a resume, make the difference between getting an internship or a job and ending up in the “thank you for applying, but …” category.

“We’re in a tech-savvy world, but the ability to write and craft a good email is sometimes lacking,” Davis said. A casual, overly familiar tone can be detrimental.

“I can see students saying that the ‘Dear Mr. or Ms. whoever’ letter is old-fashioned, but you might be walking into a generation of ‘yes, sir’ and ‘yes, ma’am.’”

She coaches students to be aware of the generation, culture and expectations of the hiring agent.

Rules vary, but it’s almost never a bad idea to err on the side of formality.

Hopson added that no one is going to tell you that you don’t meet the unspoken criteria of what they consider executive behavior or bearing. You’ll just find yourself pigeonholed and confused by a lack of mobility.

Everyone needs to know the rules and everyone has to learn the rules, it’s not necessarily an innate cultural communication, Hopson said. But depending on your exposure to elite social circles, you might be at a disadvantage. She said she helps level the playing field.

A personal brand

Hopson, 39, is the oldest of her siblings. She graduated from McCluer North High School, a public school populated by working-class families in the Ferguson-Florissant School District outside of St. Louis. She worked the retail counter at the family business during high school and learned to interact with adults on a professional level early.
Thanks to the family’s success, her two brothers who are six to seven years younger graduated from Mary Institute and St. Louis Country Day School and Westminster Christian Academy, both elite private schools in cities known for being economically advantaged.

She said her whole journey as an etiquette specialist and cultural rules decoder started when she noticed the differences in their school experiences. Her brothers went on ski trips, attended parties at exclusive country clubs and were surrounded by classmates moving on to high-ranking universities.

She had a more typical high school experience, but said having an entrepreneurial family gave her skills and confidence that opened doors she saw many of her peers stumble on.

“I really wouldn’t trade it, I loved working with my family,” Hopson said. “I’ve got entrepreneurship in my blood.”

She launched her business in 2010.

At the Mosaic Ceiling 2017 Women of Color & Culture Power Summit, Hopson gave a presentation on executive presence, including modern etiquette considerations, to some of the 150 attendees. Speaking from a sixth-floor conference room at the Four Seasons St. Louis she asked the group assembled: How many have a personal brand? A few hands went up.

She asked again with a little more emphasis on the words “personal brand.” A few more hands went up.

Then she asked again making it clear that she wasn’t going to stop until everyone lifted a palm skyward.

She quoted Amazon founder Jeff Bezos who stated that a personal brand is what people say about you when you leave the room.

Davis of University of Missouri-Columbia said years of schooling and stellar grades can go for naught if a job candidate sends an ill-conceived text message to a recruiter instead of a well-thought-out email or better yet a handwritten note.

“Many people entering the business executive world think, ‘I have a degree therefore I’m good to go,’ but there’s a lot more to succeeding,” said Roach.

**Exceeding expectations**

Having a degree, skills and expertise are important factors to advancement, but Roach said so is the way you are perceived. She told the story of an executive who was taken aback when a vice president at her corporation corrected her pronunciation.

“She corrected the way she verbalized a word,” and the executive took it as an attempt to belittle her or question her position and authority, Roach said.

There’s an etiquette to dealing with this situation as well.
“It’s a very sensitive space, because who’s to say what executive presence is anyway,” Roach said. “But at the same time, we know.”

And she said that for some that means exceeding expectations not just meeting them.

“You don’t have to agree with the established rules, but if you enter the workforce you are already playing by those rules, and you need to know them before you can break them,” Hopson said. You’re competing with people who know the rules — from a proper handshake and polished shoes to name tag placement and how to navigate a conversation about European travel. It all counts.

“My point and mission is not to make someone assimilate but instead to present their very best self to the world,” Hopson said.

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**Flood of legislative candidates points to enthusiasm in both parties**

BY REID WILSON

Political excitement among both Republicans and Democrats has led to an explosion of candidates running for office across the country, giving voters a choice between the two parties even in areas where one side has virtually conceded recent elections.

An analysis of the 12 states where filing deadlines have come and gone shows an unprecedented number of candidates seeking public office this year — and a relative lack of uncontested races, where a general election features only one candidate on the ballot.

While that means both Democrats and Republicans are running in many races they almost certainly will not win, the goal, party strategists and political scientists say, is to field candidates in as many races as possible to take maximum advantage of a favorable political climate.
“Even in districts that are very difficult for us to have a chance of winning, it’s important for us to engage in the philosophical discussion of what is the appropriate policy position to take, what is the appropriate direction for the state,” said Phil Berger, the Republican president of the North Carolina state Senate. “If we didn’t have anybody, obviously you can’t win if you don’t field a candidate.”

In 2010, North Carolina Republicans fielded candidates in far more districts than did Democrats, helping the GOP capitalize on a wave that gave them the majority for the first time in more than a century.

This year, fielding candidates everywhere is especially crucial for Democrats, who hope to win back some of the hundreds of legislative seats they have lost in recent years. The party hopes for a blue wave this year, and they know a rising tide only lifts boats that are in the water.

At the federal level, more than 500 Democrats had formally filed their candidacies for Congress by the end of last year, according to data compiled by Michael Malbin, a political scientist at the Brookings Institution. Of those candidates, 190 had raised at least $100,000 by the end of 2017, Malbin’s research found.

Democrats are fielding more candidates at the state level, as well.

Historically, between 35 and 40 percent of state legislative races are uncontested across the country, said Adam Myers, a political scientist at Providence College who studies legislative campaigns. That percentage is usually higher in Southern states, where Democrats don’t bother to field candidates in conservative rural areas and Republicans skip races in heavily minority urban areas.

This year, though, both sides are putting more candidates in the field.

In North Carolina, Democrats have recruited candidates in all 120 state House districts and all 50 state Senate districts, while Republicans are fielding candidates in all but one state House district. In 2016, by comparison, a third of North Carolina state House races and more than a quarter of Senate races were uncontested in the general election.

“For Democrats, I think it’s clear that they’re trying to put enough candidates on the field to take advantage of a wave that may be coming their way,” said Jonathan Kappler, a political expert who heads the center-right North Carolina FreeEnterprise Foundation. “The Republicans were happy to be able to rebut that, to a certain extent, by demonstrating they also have a full slate.”

In Texas, where primary elections were held Tuesday, both Republicans and Democrats fielded candidates in 14 of the 15 state Senate districts on the ballot this year. Republicans found a candidate in all 17 West Virginia state Senate seats up for election, while Democrats missed out on one. In Ohio, Democrats have a candidate running for all 17 state Senate districts, while Republicans have no candidate for just three seats.
Only a handful of state House districts in West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Maryland and Oregon will be uncontested, according to filings made with state election officials. The same is true for state Senate districts in Kentucky, Indiana and Arkansas.

“It is unusual for the level of contested state legislative seats to increase dramatically from one election to the next, unless redistricting is involved,” said Peverill Squire, a political scientist at the University of Missouri. “The fact that Democrats are finding candidates to run in virtually every race in a number of states this year suggests an increased effort to regain lost legislative seats on the part of party leaders and an expectation that the political tide is running in their favor on the part of candidates.”

Democrats took lessons from Virginia, where the party dramatically increased the number of seats they hold in the state House of Delegates in 2017. The party won five of the 15 Republican-held seats in districts that were uncontested in the 2015 elections.

“You gotta play to win the game — period, point, exclamation point,” said Craig Varoga, who headed the party’s House of Delegates campaigns. “If you don’t show up, you lose.”

In some states, senior Democrats have gotten involved in the recruiting process. In North Carolina, Gov. Roy Cooper (D) called candidates to encourage them to run. In Wisconsin, Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D) sent staffers door to door for a state Senate candidate who won a historically Republican-held district.

Jessica Post, who heads the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, said the party has reconsidered its focus. Candidates running even in rural areas where they might not win still benefit top-of-the-ticket races, even if only at the margins.

“The focus was on resourcing federal races. The focus was on resourcing the presidential campaign,” Post said of the old Democratic strategy. “And now the competing theory is, if we run great candidates in all these states in rural areas that we have to win, we’ll build the Democratic Party from the ground up.”

Republicans have benefited from running so many candidates in recent years. As GOP wave elections crested in 2010 and 2014, the party picked up almost 1,000 legislative seats once held by Democrats, including some in formerly Democratic territory.

Matt Walter, who heads the Republican State Leadership Committee, said it isn’t enough to simply run a warm body.

“Many of those candidates ran in challenging districts, with lines drawn mostly by Democrats, demonstrating that the right candidates running on the right policies achieve victory, not just meeting a filing deadline,” Walter said.
MU professor: Tariffs could mean higher prices for Missourians

By MARK SLAVIT


COLUMBIA — An MU professor said Tuesday President Trump’s tariff proposals on steel and aluminum could mean higher prices for Missourians.

MU Economics Professor Saku Aura said Missourians would see higher prices for things such as cars, beer and soft drinks.

“This might affect the competitiveness of American car makers,” Aura said. ”So, we might have affects on employment that are negative, too, from these tariffs.”

The president argued his tariff plan protected American industries. Trump tweeted, “We have large trade deficits with Mexico and Canada. NAFTA, which is under negotiation right now, has been a bad deal for U.S.A. Tariffs on steel and aluminum will only come off, if a new and fair NAFTA agreement is signed.”

“There has only been an announcement,” Aura said. ”The policy is not in effect. There is some hope that maybe cooler heads will prevail.”

The president plans to impose a 25 percent tariff on steel and a 10 percent tariff on aluminum.

Aura said the president’s proposed tariffs raised the possibility of a trade war with China and other key trading partners. Trump said imports are coming into America and putting our steel and aluminum companies out of business.

Trump said the tariffs are a campaign promise he intends to keep.
Commentary: Missouri is leading the charge to feed the world

By: Eric Bohl

Eric Bohl, of Columbia, Mo., is director of public affairs for Missouri Farm Bureau, the state’s largest farm organization.

Missouri is the epicenter of agricultural innovation in the world today, often referred to as the Silicon Valley of agriculture.

Humans will need to produce more food in the next 40 years than in the previous 10,000 combined. Agricultural researchers love to wow audiences with this mind-blowing fact.

Some of this is due to population growth, as we will likely add about another two billion people before leveling off around 2050. But the majority of the growing demand will come from higher standards of living caused by reduced poverty.

Increased free trade and the free enterprise system have literally lifted billions of people out of poverty in our lifetimes. Since only the year 2000, over 100 million children’s lives have been saved through advances in infectious disease control.

Given the previous alternatives, finding new ways to feed this added population is a welcome problem to have.

If we are going to meet this challenge, the solutions will very likely begin in Missouri.

This is not an overstatement.

Missouri is the epicenter of agricultural innovation in the world today, often referred to as the Silicon Valley of agriculture.

Massive public and private investment in state-of-the-art facilities has helped make Missouri the go-to place for the best and brightest.

Over one billion dollars of private, locally-sourced venture capital investment has gone into the St. Louis agriculture tech sector since 2000.
That investment is paying off. The St. Louis region now has the highest concentration of plant science Ph.D.'s in the world, with over 750 calling it home.

Over the past few decades these scientists have made many of the world’s leading discoveries in animal and plant sciences.

Many of the foremost experts in their fields conduct research at the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center, Washington University in St. Louis, the Bond Life Sciences Center at the University of Missouri in Columbia, Monsanto, Novus, Nestle Purina and other partners in the region.

Forward-looking leaders in Missouri are working to play off these strengths and grow the sector even further.

The St. Louis Economic Development Partnership has created the 39 North “AgTech Innovation District” to attract biotechnology startups and venture capital.

The district already contains the world-class research facilities at the Danforth Center, the Helix Center business incubator, the Bio Research & Development Growth Park (BRDG) and Monsanto’s Creve Coeur campus. With continued investment, 39 North plans to attract new facilities and create an even larger talent pool to fuel the entrepreneurship already taking place.

Missourians should take pride in our leading role in solving one of humanity’s largest problems.

Our friends and neighbors are helping to create a world where food is plentiful enough for all. That is something for which we should all celebrate and give thanks.

Republican Cavanaugh launches second bid for Boone County Commission

By Rudi Keller

The race for Boone County presiding commissioner drew a new contender this week when Matt Cavanaugh, a Republican who ran in the 2016 primary for Southern District commissioner, filed for the GOP nomination for the post currently held by Democratic incumbent Dan Atwill.

Atwill already faced the first primary challenge since taking office in 2011 with the filing of David Seamon, a Marine Corp veteran who in November announced his race for the Democratic nomination.
The only general election contest for Atwill came in 2014, when he defeated James Pounds, a Republican who received 44.6 percent of the vote.

In 2016, Cavanaugh was defeated by publisher Fred Parry, who won the Southern District seat that November.

“I learned a lot the first go-around,” Cavanaugh said. “I thought I had a good showing for the money I spent. The issues haven’t changed and I think I have a good chance of being more successful.”

If Cavanaugh wins, the commission would have a Republican majority for the first time since the early 1980s.

The presiding commissioner chairs the three-member Boone County Commission, which approves the annual budget and supervises county departments not assigned to other elected officials. Big issues facing the commission this year and during the upcoming presiding commissioner term include the Boone Hospital Center lease and the future of the Central Missouri Events Center, also known as the Boone County Fairgrounds.

Cavanaugh is a businessman who has worked as a developer of resort properties and in other fields. During the 2016 campaign, he opposed leasing Boone Hospital to the University of Missouri but said Tuesday that he’s now willing to accept that outcome. Boone and the university broke off negotiations in January but the hospital trustees must decide by the end of the year whether to continue the current deal with BJC or seek some other management arrangement.

“It is going to take the path it is going to take,” he said. “More than anything I feel that today Boone County deserves good leadership.”

That’s his general complaint with Atwill, he said. In the 2016 election, he said, the fairgrounds was a top issue but no resolution has been decided.

Cavanaugh said he opposes the idea of persuading the city to divert parks tax money to the project by moving a $3.7 million investment to the fairgrounds from A. Perry Philips Park. The Columbia City Council will hold a public hearing on a resolution approving about $3.9 million for Philips Park at its next meeting.

“It is a bait and switch,” Cavanaugh said. “I don’t believe the public voted for that tax with the intent of funding the fairgrounds.”

The candidates all start out essentially even, in terms of fundraising. Cavanaugh has yet to form his committee, but Atwill only had $8,149 in his campaign account on Dec. 31 and Seamon had $332 in the bank.

When he filed for another term last week, Atwill said he wants to finish some major projects in a new term.
As the commission’s liaison on the hospital, Atwill said he wants to finish the process of determining who will operate it after the current lease expires in 2020. And he would like to set the future direction of the fairgrounds, which has been a money-losing proposition for the county since it purchased the 134-acre property for $2.6 million in 1999.

The Boone County Fair has not been held there since 2015. The property is currently under lease to Veterans United for $30,000 and a pledge to maintain the buildings.

“I would like to finish my time here feeling that a final decision had been reached on that property for the benefit of the citizens,” Atwill said.

Seamon and Cavanaugh are united in their opposition to diverting city parks money to the fairgrounds.

“I would like to see the fairgrounds under some type of lease, a long-term lease, perhaps for two decades, and become an entertainment center and a sports park,” Seamon said. “Other than that it is a drain on resources and the longer it sits there and continues to degrade over time, it is ridiculous.”

Like Cavanaugh, Seamon said his campaign will try to convince voters new leadership is needed in county government. While the commission lacks authority over other elected officials, he said, providing funds to implement new ideas can be persuasive.

One idea he would like to implement is an annual survey of county residents and a separate survey of county employees to inform commission decisions.

“I have definitely kind of zeroed in on a few issues that I think can get accomplished,” Seamon said.

**THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Purdue Gets Final Approval to Buy For-Profit Kaplan**

**NO MU MENTION**

By Emma Kerr

Purdue University’s accrediting agency has approved its acquisition of the for-profit institution Kaplan University, allowing plans to move forward for the launch of the controversial Purdue Global in April.

The Higher Learning Commission notified Mitch Daniels, president of Purdue, of its decision on Monday, according to Purdue. Purdue University and Kaplan University will combine to form “Indiana’s newest public institution of higher education,” Daniels said in the university’s statement.
“It opens a new era for our institution, with the opportunity to expand our land-grant mission to millions of adult students around the country,” he said. “That opportunity brings with it the responsibility to provide the highest quality online education, not only to our new adult learners, but to all residential and online Boilermaker students. Starting today, Purdue University hopes to take a leading role in online learning nationally.”

In April 2017 the university announced that after five months of private negotiations, it had agreed to buy Kaplan University from Graham Holdings for a dollar and convert it into a nonprofit organization. Daniels argued the deal was an opportunity for Purdue to expand its mission as a land-grant university, but Purdue faculty members protested, saying they had not been consulted and raising concerns about how the new entity would be managed. While Purdue Global will offer in-state discounted tuition, it will not accept state funding and it will be exempt from public-records laws.

Rancor between Daniels and some faculty members didn’t diminish with time. In February, Daniels said that any faculty members who had signed a letter opposing the deal had “been misled,” and that he would have given the letter an F.

Daniels will be president of Purdue Global, with the current Kaplan president, Betty Vandenbosch, becoming Purdue Global’s chancellor. In a written statement Vandenbosch called the commission’s decision “fast and unequivocal.”