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11-7-2016

Current, November 07, 2016

University of Missouri-St. Louis

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Recommended Citation

University of Missouri-St. Louis, "Current, November 07, 2016" (2016). *Current (2010s)*. 245.
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The Current

1966

Celebrating 50 Years as

2016

UMSL'S INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWS

VOL. 50

ISSUE 1515

NOVEMBER 7, 2016

UMSL Faculty Split On SEIU's Union Efforts



UMSL EXCELLENCE

Front page of the UMSL Excellence website

COURTESY OF UMSL EXCELLENCE

BRIAN SHERRILL
STAFF WRITER

Some of the University of Missouri-St. Louis' faculty members are attempting to unionize for the ability to collectively bargain with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) for better salaries, working conditions, faculty governance, and legal protections. However, the faculty is split on the topic campus-wide. Earlier in October the pro-union Organizing Committee (OC) held "office hours" in the Nosh and invited all faculty to meet with an SEIU representative.

Also in October, a website called UMSL Excellence (umslexcellence.org) was created by a group of about 30 faculty members who oppose the SEIU. As the landing page on the website states, "On the narrow question of whether the faculty of the University of Missouri-St. Louis should be represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) at this time, we have decided that we are opposed."

The website claims that unionization with SEIU would weaken UMSL's research funds, lessen not-tenure track (NTT) faculty benefits, and hurt UMSL's budget. The site also claims that a union at UMSL would be seen as

unproductive in the eyes of state legislators and the UM System.

Participants at the UMSL United rally on September 27 claim that unionization at UMSL could provide faculty greater consistency in salaries across all disciplines, better job security, legal advice/protection, and more bargaining power. They also said that a union could protect pensions and benefits.

Dr. Keith Miller, an Orthwein Endowed Professor for Lifelong Learning in the Sciences, said, "Justice is inhibited by gross mismatches in power. Unions address the power mismatch between administration, and faculty and staff."

If unionization comes to a vote among the faculty, those in favor may benefit from the fact that adjunct professors make up a majority of UMSL's faculty. Adjunct instructors are more likely to gravitate towards organizing because they are part-time, have median salaries between \$18,000 and \$25,000 a year, less job security, no benefits, and no vote in senate committees.

The UMSL Excellence website includes a list of concerns pertaining to the SEIU. At the top of the list is, "SEIU is proposing taking 2.5% of your pay if you join the union, and

up to 2.13% of your pay even if you choose not to join the union."

Dr. Sarah Lacy, assistant professor of anthropology and archeology and organizing-committee (OC) member, said, "We are a state university in an open-shop state. We cannot take a fee from faculty who do not join a union. This is different for closed-shop states or at private institutions, but here, this cannot happen."

Stacy Manuel, the SEIU representative for this campaign, said, "After an election, whenever that may be, faculty members will choose a bargaining team and begin negotiating with administration. Once faculty members have a contract they are happy with, they will vote on that contract. Once there is a majority vote to approve it, raises go into effect, and that is when those who elect to join the union begin to pay dues - not a dime is paid before a contract is approved by the membership."

Drucilla Wall, associate teaching professor of English, said, "I can't afford that [2.5%]. And in order for that to be worth it, for me or anybody like me, lower paid full-time faculty members, the union would have to deliver more than that amount every year. I don't think [the university] has the resources to do that even if our state legislature

and our university's system wanted to. I don't think they can afford to award everybody those raises. And if they do then where will the money come from?... And our state legislature is highly unlikely to raise taxes to give us more so where is the university going to get the money for those raises?"

Dr. Lea Kosnik, associate professor of economics, also commented, "Missouri has a Republican supermajority in the House that already undermines taxes for higher-education. The UM System also hates unions, so they might just choose to lower our funds even further and disperse those funds elsewhere. Where are those raises going to come from? They are likely to come immediately from other areas within our university."

Interim Vice Provost Chris Spilling said, "You only have to look at the recent history behavior of the legislature to problems on the Columbia campus. The legislature became punitive when the university failed to deal with those issues, and they cut money from the Missouri System budget. You've got a Republican supermajority that might well see this as an unproductive move. I cannot speak for the legislators but you

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NEWS BRIEFS

Choi Named UM System President-Designate

KAT RIDDLER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Pamela Quigg Henrickson, chair of the University of Missouri Board of Curators announced on November 2 in a system-wide email the new UM System President-designate: Mun Y. Choi.

Choi's selection was formally announced at a press conference held at 9:30 a.m. in Jefferson City on November 2. Live streaming of the press conference was available on all UM System websites via a link. Choi will begin his position on March 1, 2017. Until then, he will be visiting each campus to learn about the individual schools that make up the system. Choi will be the 24th president of the UM System.

Henrickson said in her email, "After our extensive, nine-month search process, I can say with confidence that Dr. Choi will be an exemplary



Dr. Mun Y. Choi, President-designate

COURTESY OF THE UM SYSTEM

leader in setting a shared vision for our future in collaboration with the board, chancellors, and university stakeholders."

Choi previously served at the University of Connecticut as the Provost and Executive Vice President for four years. While there, Choi notably worked in collaboration with the university's trustees and the

Connecticut state government to develop the framework and garner support for a \$1.5 billion "Next Generation Connecticut" program. The program's purpose was to increase research expenditures and create industry partnerships to grow high-paying jobs in the state. Since 2012, Choi has

overseen a budget of \$700 million while working with 1,500 full-time faculty, 31,000 students, and 2,000 staff members across 12 schools and colleges. In comparison, the UM System has a total enrollment of 77,733 students, 23,723 faculty and staff, and a total budget of \$3.1 billion for the 2016 fiscal year.

GAME CORNER

The UMSL MATH CLUB Presents: Problem of the Week



A standard deck of 52 cards consists of thirteen ranks (2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10, Jack, Queen, King, Ace) each from four suits (Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades). A five-card poker hand consists of five cards from a standard deck. How many five card hands contain a three of a kind? (A three-of-a-kind consists of three cards of the same rank, with the remaining two cards each of different ranks.)

Email solutions to covertdj@umsl.edu with an email titled "Puzzle of the Week".

Last week's winner was Giuseppe Vitellaro, who guessed the closest to a correct answer.

Captain's log: Star Date 5624.5 We've found a strange new life form in the galley. It appears to have a coat of oddly colored fur and releases a noxious gas when agitated. Attempts to understand its origins have proven futile....

YOU LEFT THE OPEN YOGURT IN THE BACK OF FRIDGE. YOU CLEAN IT UP!

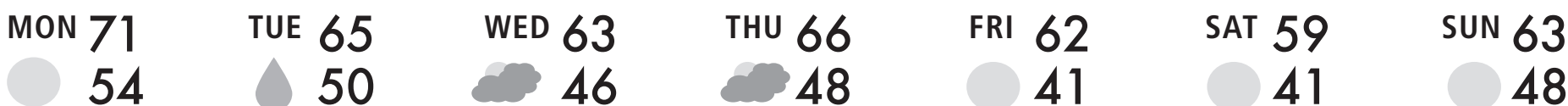
I THINK IT JUST BLINKED!

ON THE QUAD BY MIKE DILIBERTO

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 10 Touhill Performing Arts Center

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For more information visit umsl.edu/go/oslspeakerseries



Potato Chips Or Politics: On Which Do We Spend More?

KAT RIDDLE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“Do you think that we as the United States spend more on federal campaigns or potato chips?” Wally Siewert, director of the Center for Ethics in Public Life, asked participants at the What’s Current Wednesday discussion on November 2.

Siewert said, “We spend slightly more on political campaigns than potato chips. But that is only a recent occurrence. In 2012, campaigns overtook potato chips... The only reason that we overtook potato chips in 2012 is not because spending is going up so fast but because the spending on potato chips is going down.”

So which is more important: potato chips or politics? Siewert used a spending comparison to show that \$6 billion—what Americans may perceive as a large amount of money—is only a “pretty small percentage” of the money being spent nationally. He also pointed out that the American political process is important, and therefore that number is not nearly as shocking when comparing it to what Americans are spending on snacks.

The What’s Current Wednesday discussion topic was “Campaign Financing: A Brave New World.” The topic was more fully explored with



Director of the Center for Ethics in Public Life

COURTESY OF WALLY SIEWERT

discussion of campaign spending limits, and ranged from local to national political races. Siewert stated that there were usually three reasons to put campaign finance reform in place: corruption, unequal access to the political process, and political polarization. Besides talking about clear answers for reform, Siewert discussed with attendees why people would be against reform. The big concern is with freedom of speech and the interpretation that money is speech. The government must be very careful in reforming money transactions if money is seen as speech. Siewert said, “The Supreme Court, which has recognized money as a form of free speech, has been getting more and more careful

about it, stepping further and further back saying that money is a form of free speech and can only be regulated if there is a compelling state interest.” Corruption is the only “compelling state interest” that the Supreme Court looks at currently.

This becomes even trickier as the Supreme Court ruled that paying for access to a candidate is not corruption. A recent case of this ruling was with the case of former Virginia governor Robert F. McDonnell, who had several luxurious gifts given to him by a wealthy business owner while he was in office. While it may look like McDonnell was taking a bribe of sorts, it becomes difficult in a court of law to prove that accusation.

Besides the freedom of speech issue, the other problem with campaign

finance reform is that reforms do not usually work. If the money is blocked one way, money will be donated another way, and it might be even less transparent if it is donated the new way (so called dark money).

Missouri has previously attempted to enforce campaign donation limits. Senator Wayne Goode, whose statue is near the lakes outside of the Millennium Student Center, introduced campaign contribution limits in Missouri. The fight over that law went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. One problem pointed out was that instead of giving money to individuals, people would give money to committees. When looking at states that pass reforms and those that do not, according to Siewert, there did not seem to be a strong correlation between laws limiting contributions and the actual amount of money spent.

Hoping to continue the discussion, Siewert brought flyers for the 5th Annual Public Ethics Conference, which will be held March 24 at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. The topic of “Ethics, Money, and Politics” in relation to campaign spending will be discussed by two political analyst authors.

The next What’s Current Wednesday, hosted by *The Current* and *The New York Times* with support from the Community Outreach & Engagement will be held February 1 at 2 p.m. in Century Room C of the MSC.

CAMPUS CRIME REPORT

SARAH HAYES
A&E EDITOR



The following is a series of daily crime reports issued by the University of Missouri-St. Louis Police Department between October 26 and November 3.

October 26: At 8:55 a.m., UMSL PD responded to a student being harassed by another student in the Thomas Jefferson Library. At 11 a.m., a staff member in Woods Hall reported a harassing phone call. At 12 p.m., an employee reported the loss of their keys. At 3:44 p.m., UMSL PD responded to fire alarms sounding in Provincial House, Seton Hall, and Villa Hall. The cause was determined to be smoke from someone cooking food in Villa, and no damage was reported.

October 27: At 9 a.m., an UMSL PD officer reported damage to a fire extinguisher box in the South Campus Parking Garage. At 10:27 a.m., a student reported the theft of a laptop from their car in the West Drive Garage. The following day, the laptop was found, having been left in a classroom. At 11:30 a.m., a staff member at the J.C. Penney Conference Center contacted the UMSL PD regarding the welfare of a student. All was found to be in order. At 8:30 p.m., UMSL PD responded to assist a student stuck in a Lucas Hall

elevator.

October 28: At 12:21 a.m., UMSL PD responded to a report of a suspicious male figure hiding near a vehicle in Lot XX; the individual was not found. At 12:20 p.m., an officer found a cell phone in Lot A. At 3:02 p.m., UMSL PD assisted the Normandy PD at the UMSL South Metrolink Station with a domestic disturbance in the parking lot.

At 3:38 p.m., property damage to an upper-level window was reported at the Recreation & Wellness Center, possibly caused by a bird. At 6 p.m., a student who was intoxicated was transported to the hospital via ambulance from the Ward E. Barnes Building after falling. At 6:30 p.m., a student reported an incident with another student while at the Delmar Loop. At 11:50 p.m., a Metrolink passenger at Oak Hall was transported to the hospital after requesting an ambulance for experiencing chest pains.

October 29: The report for this day has not been made available by UMSL PD.

October 30: At 12:10 a.m., UMSL

Continued on thecurrent-online.com

UM Approves Process, Provisions For Union

BRIAN SHERRILL
STAFF WRITER

On October 31, the Curators of the UM System approved a process and provisions for a faculty union election; consequently, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) has reacted with a statement, released on November 2, claiming, “The entire process was designed to defeat any attempt by the University’s faculty to gain a voice at work.”

The process that was approved requires that all employees excluded from the previous petition, including the faculty in the Colleges of Business, Nursing, and Optometry, be given the ability to participate in the collective bargaining process.

SEIU will have to start their organizing efforts all over again. They again will need to authorize at least a 30 percent showing of interest among all current faculty members on campus and send a second petition to the Vice President of Human Resources (VPHR). In their statement, the SEIU said, “Unfortunately, the establishment of these rules is just another means for UMSL to ensure that issues of fairness and equity



UM System Logo

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to faculty are not addressed on campus.”

The process, issued by Chancellor Thomas George, states that the bargaining unit will include adjunct, non-tenure track, tenure track, and tenured faculty. To avoid conflicts of interest, the unit will exclude supervisory employees.

Upon receiving a new petition, the VPHR will engage an independent third-party in order to verify and validate the signatures. If the signatures are validated, then the VPHR will set a date for the election to take place to determine whether the majority of employees desire to be represented by the petitioning labor organization.

Rock The Wall: Bouldering Competition To Hit UMSL

LEAH JONES
FEATURES EDITOR

University of Missouri-St. Louis students and other members of the Recreation and Wellness Center (RWC) will soon have the chance to ascend to triumph and glory at UMSL's first bouldering competition, which will be held on November 15 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the rock climbing wall.

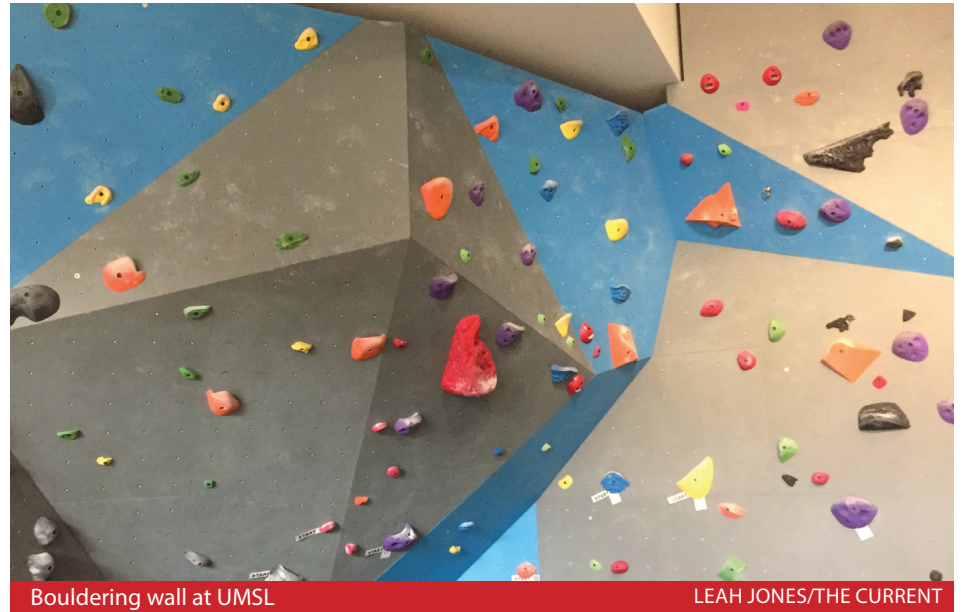
Bouldering is a form of indoor rock climbing in which climbers free climb, or climb without the use of a harness or ropes, color-coded routes to the top of a "boulder." Climbers do not need to use ropes or a harness because the boulder is only 12 to 15 feet high, and a thick mat cushions the bottom of the wall. Since climbers can fall while bouldering though, some people may find bouldering dangerous. "In my opinion, I feel that the bouldering competition will result in nothing but bodies hitting the mat," said Carmelita Wells, senior, photography, who works at the RWC.

Despite this, many UMSL students do boulder. These students can register for the free event at the RWC until 5:30

p.m. on November 15. Twenty five people will participate in the competition. They will be divided into two groups: the beginning and intermediate group, and the advanced group. The winners will receive free guest passes to Climb Soll, a popular rock climbing gym in downtown St. Louis, and coupons for free Jamba Juice.

"It was an event that we wanted to do last year but just never got around to it, so we made it happen this year," said Sherman Brawner, senior, criminology and criminal justice, and climbing wall attendant at the RWC.

Brawner hopes that the event will foster the emerging climbing community at UMSL. "I think this event is significant because we're trying to build a climbing community here at UMSL where people can have fun and be active while making friends who share their interests for adventure and trying new things. I've made a lot of friends from the climbing wall and want anyone who is interested in the community to feel like they can just come and check out any gear they need and come climb around! I want this event to foster that



Bouldering wall at UMSL

LEAH JONES/THE CURRENT

spirit at the wall," he said.

Though this event will be competitive, the climbers often praise each other, talk through climbing "problems," and offer suggestions about how to complete a route. This congenial attitude among climbers underlies one of the rules for the bouldering competition: climbers may not receive any instructions from other participants, staff, or observers.

Other rules stipulate that climbers will not be able to climb the routes prior to the start of the competition, and the order in which participants will climb each route will be chosen at

random. Climbers will select five routes to climb during the competition. However, only their top three scores will be counted toward their final score.

This will allow participants to strategically select routes that they know will work better for their bodies and their strengths. Brawner explained that different climbers have different strengths. "So the common thought for most inexperienced climbers is that the taller you are, the more advantaged you are for climbing. And while this may be true some of the time, it is not always true. Routes that require a lot of

Continued on thecurrent-online.com

UMSL Students Speak French at La Table Française

LEAH JONES
FEATURES EDITOR

Students and faculty sat in the Nosh and practiced speaking French with each other at the bi-weekly meeting of La Table Française in the Millennium Student Center at the University of Missouri-St. Louis on Thursday. Besides sharing the language, the group members passed around a crinkling package of chocolate-covered wafer cookies called "Le Petit Normandy." The cookies, which come in a variety of other flavors, can be purchased at several local St. Louis stores though they are made in France. In the past, the group has also shared raclette, a pungent, yet flavorful melting cheese that is often used in fondue. They have also held chocolate tastings and spent one semester on a quest for the best croissant in St. Louis.

The group formed in 2003. "We were looking for ways to bring franco-philis from all over campus together when a former colleague suggested starting a weekly conversation group," said Sandra Trapani, a French teaching professor at UMSL. "For the last 13 years, we've been gathering every week in the Nosh to bring together students, faculty, staff, and occasionally community members who all have varying proficiency levels in French. While attendance waxes and wanes from year to year, we consistently have a group of faithfuls who come back week to week to talk about everything and nothing with their budding French skills."

This year, the group decided to meet on the first and third Thursdays of the month. "It seems like Thursdays are more relaxed because we don't have class on Fridays," said Associate Teaching Professor of French, Anne-Sophie Blank. Blank and Trapani, as well as Assistant Teaching Professor, Violaine White, and Professor Jeanne Zarucchi all attend La Table Français.

Besides discussing food, travel, music, and movies, the group also discusses colloquialisms in both languages. The French will say "May you have a lot of sh*t in your theatre" to wish an actor good luck. Blank said that the phrase referred to the mud that a large audience would bring into a theatre. "It goes back to the 19th century when people, to wish good luck to actors would say, 'oh may you have a lot of mud in your theatre,' meaning you would have a good audience. It was a sign of success," she said.

The group benefits not only English speakers, but native French speakers as well. Justine Pieau, freshman, business, is an international student from École Supérieure des Sciences Commerciales d'Angers (ESSCA) in France who attends the conversations. She learned about the English phrase "break a leg." "I am from Lyon," she said. "I am just here for one semester, from August to December."

"Students have loved getting to know [Pieau] and hearing about her experience as an exchange student," Trapani said. "It has also given her the opportunity to connect with our

students and to feel more a part of the campus."

UMSL offers students a BA degree in Modern Languages with a concentration in a specific language. Students choose between Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Arabic, Latin, Greek, and Japanese. Blank said that there are five faculty members who teach French at UMSL. "With the budget, we had to reduce... We have three full-time [faculty] now... Plus we have a full-time professor who is doing half-time in artistry and half-time in French. And we have someone who is on a part-time basis who used be full-time with us," she said.

Despite these cuts, the ability to speak a second language is an invaluable skill, which according to UMSL's Language and Cultural Studies home page, helps students to "join a community of global citizens in an international setting." Trapani agreed and referred to language learning as an "invaluable skill."

Blank can attest to this ability to join an international and global community. Born in France, she is fluent in French, English, and German, having obtained her Master's Degree in German Linguistic Grammar from the University of Sorbonne-Paris IV, France, in 1984. Shortly after completing her degree, Blank came to the United States and took a job as a nanny in University City. "On my day off, I would practice my German at a German conversation table at Washington University," Blank said. "And then, in March, they had In-

ternational Foreign Language Week and I ended up in the French Department, and I spoke with a professor who told me that with my degree in German, I qualified to be a teaching assistant."

As a teaching assistant, Blank received tuition reimbursement and a small stipend, and she obtained a second Master's degree in French literature from Washington University in St. Louis, in 1987. "So, I never paid a dime for my Master's degree," she said.

"Then I met my husband... in 1987, and we got married three months later, and we've been married since then. My mother was really not happy with me though. She knew I was not going to come back," Blank laughed. Shortly thereafter, Blank joined UMSL's foreign language department in 1997. "C'est la vie. No regrets," she said.

La Table Française gives students the opportunity to learn languages from these knowledgeable and intelligent professors. Trapani said, "We hope to keep the Table Française going for many years to come. It is so important to give students the opportunity to use and develop their skills outside of class. Language learning is an invaluable skill in the world today and we are happy to do our part to bring French to life on campus."

La Table Française also shows French films. The next film will be shown on November 10 at 7 p.m. in Room 527 of Clark Hall.

To learn more about French at UMSL, visit umsl.edu/lang/Languages/french.html.

Tritons' Men's Basketball Tips Off Against SIU Carbondale

LANCE JORDAN
SPORTS EDITOR

The Southern Illinois University-Carbondale Salukis hit the final point of the game, giving SIU Carbondale a 72-67 victory over the visiting University of Missouri-St. Louis Tritons in an exhibition match in the SIU arena, the night of November 3.

Scoring the first point of the matchup was forward Dre Holmes, senior, business management, with a three pointer at the 19:43 mark of the first half. Unfortunately, UMSL did not stay in the lead to close the first half, despite tying the score multiple times with SIU. A foul by SIU allowed UMSL guard Steven Davis, junior, business management, to make both free throws to put the score at 33-36 at the end of the first half.

In the second half UMSL took the lead up until the 14:37 mark largely due to Joseph English, senior, communications, scoring a jumper at 19:32, a layup at 18:38, a three pointer at 17:21, and another layup at 15:31. With the score tied 44-44, the Tritons continued to battle the Salukis for control. UMSL's last point came from a bucket by Elijah Watson, junior, accounting, at the 2:49 mark for a 67-65 lead.

But unfortunately, it would be the SIU Salukis who scored the final seven points of the game to earn the victory, ending the Tritons' two-point lead with under three minutes to play. The game



UMSL Players #22 Steven Davis and #32 Drew Skaggs in Exhibition game against SIU

COURTESY OF UMSL ATHLETICS

consisted of 16 ties and 18 lead changes, and no lead greater than six points by either team.

English was the top scorer of the night for the Tritons with 13 points, 11 of which came in the second half of the game. English was closely followed by fellow senior Hunter Reine, senior, criminal justice, who scored 12 points. Reine also accumulated 12 rebounds during the game, greatly aiding UMSL's 36-31 rebounding advantage.

Leading up to this exhibition match, the men's basketball team was picked to finish fifth in the West Division of the Great Lakes Valley Confer-

ence Preseason Coaches' Poll, released by the league office in late October. Another noticeable name on the list is sixth spot Maryville University. Fans of last season will remember that the Tritons won their final regular season game at Maryville to get the bid to the league's postseason tournament for their sixth consecutive year.

Under direction of fourth-year head coach Bob Sundvold, the Tritons will look to improve on their 12-16 record from the 2015-2016 season. Coach Sundvold will once again have assistant coach Charles (Chico) Jones accompanying him, as Jones enters his 38th

season as assistant coach. New to their coaching staff this year are assistant coaches Scott Gautier and Jesse Shaw. Gautier comes to UMSL from Webster Groves High School, serving seven years as varsity assistant, while Shaw comes from Pratt Community College, serving his last five of eight seasons as head coach.

UMSL's 2016-17 season officially tips off November 11 as they host the Ferris State Bulldogs. Then on November 12 they will host the Grand Valley State Lakers. Both matches will be a part of the GLVC/GLIAC Challenge.

UMSL Men's Golf Team Places In Sixth At Golfweek



Jose Acevedo at Golfweek DII Fall Invitational

COURTESY OF UMSL ATHLETICS

LANCE JORDAN
SPORTS EDITOR

The University of Missouri-St. Louis men's golf team concluded the fall season at the Golfweek DII Fall Invitational. The team claimed sixth place in an 18 team field at the Horseshoe Bay Resort in Austin, Texas.

At the end of two rounds UMSL sat in fifth place on October 31. UMSL left the first round with a score of 298, and the second with a score of 299, totaling 597 for the day. West Florida led the 18-team field with a total score of 578, Dallas Baptist in second with 586, Lynn University in third with 590, and

Barry University took fourth with 593.

The top scorer for UMSL concluding day one was Markus Lindberg, junior, international business, with a total score of 148.

UMSL fell into sixth place on November 1 to close out the Invitational.

UMSL's final score for the day was 894. West Florida kept its lead with a final score of 876. Lynn University and Dallas Baptist traded second and third places. Lynn walked away with second place, scoring a total of 881 and Dallas Baptist concluded with a final score of 886.

UMSL's Jose Acevedo, senior, international business, was the team's top

finisher, with a total score of 219.

Prior to the Golfweek Invitational, the newest Division II Bushnell Golfweek Coaches Poll saw UMSL move up to sixth place. UMSL keeps moving up in the poll, having started the preseason ranked 16th, and then jumping to 10th place. This is largely due to the Tritons' three tournament victories this fall and their scoring average of 289.42. The first tournament victory was the Arch Cup on September 6 with a total score of 561 and the second was the Midwest Regional at Harborside International, which concluded on September 27 with a total score of 614. The third win came from the October 18 victory at the Lindenwood Invitational with a total score of 859.

Other tournaments include the October 4 DII National Preview where UMSL placed fourth with a total score

of 859, and the Midwest Regional at Fox Run on October 11 that saw the team walk away in second place, scoring a total of 580.

Star players of this fall season include Lindberg with a stroke average of 71.58. Lindberg also holds three individual wins, including victories at the Midwest Regional at Fox Run and the Lindenwood Invitational. Julien de Poyen, senior, international business, currently holds the team's best stroke average of 71.42. On top of this record, de Poyen has ranked in the top 10 in five tournaments and holds medalist honors from the DII Midwest Regional at Harborside.

UMSL's spring season will start February 20-21 in Kiawah Island, South Carolina for the Newberry Invitational.



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Ballet 'Romeo and Juliet' Is Hauntingly Beautiful

KAITLYN WALLER
STAFF WRITER

'Grand Rapids Ballet Romeo and Juliet' was presented by Dance St. Louis at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center on November 4 and 5. Told entirely through dance, Dance St. Louis retold Shakespeare's tragic play of Romeo and Juliet, lovers from the feuding families of the Montagues and the Capulets in Verona, Italy, and their untimely demise when their efforts to be together prove futile.

After a musical prelude, the story began with Juliet and a screen behind her displaying famous lines from the play that established the setting. Ballet, music, various screens, lighting, and a few props expressed the powerful emotions and layers present in Shakespeare's beloved piece.

The ladies' gowns were simple, airy, and of a variety of soft colors, blending into the mist curling onto the stage from the sides. The costumes of the men were simple vests, jackets, and pants. Screens behind the actors displayed roses, petals, and scenery undulating with fog to blend into the mist on the stage. Orange, purple, and red colors on the small screens served to coordinate with the emotions of the characters and the times of day. At other times, for brief moments during the performance, the screens showed more lines from "Romeo and Juliet" that reoriented the viewer with important plot points.

A small end table, a bed, knives, and mannequins were the only props. No lines were spoken. The viewer is forced to rely on the cadence and intensity of the beautiful music accompanied



Performers recreate the infamous Romeo and Juliet suicide on stage at the Touhill

COURTESY OF DANCE ST. LOUIS

with the dance to help describe the scenes and its emotions.

Interesting techniques were used on stage, such as strobe lights during several action sequences to create the illusion of chaos. Darkening the stage for seconds and re-lighting it with characters in different positions illustrated the restlessness of Romeo and Juliet. Spotlights and contrasts of still and moving actors were also used to set and focus scenes.

Although there was text on the screen at some instances, the viewer unfamiliar with "Romeo and Juliet" or had not read it in some time would find the ballet hard to follow. There is a synopsis in the program, but the characters and scenes were still hard to identify.

However, I find the focus to not be on a firm understanding of the plot but on the powerful emotions invoked through Shakespeare's verse. The anguish, love, and pain could be intensely felt in the performance.

The mannequins used as dance partners and as an interest to Juliet at the beginning of the play were hard to understand as the symbolism was not quite clear. But, accompanied with the ballet's silence, it enabled the viewer to interpret the performance's many layers in many interesting ways.

The choreography did begin slightly off, but as the play progressed, the ballet was smooth and visually entrancing. The main characters were defined while the other dancers served as a collective

group to narrate the background of ball scenes or other individual scenes. Certain movements in the dance were striking in their unusual and unexpected actions and kept viewers entranced. However, despite the beauty of the dance, certain scenes seemed to continue too long and were slightly repetitive, creating a restlessness and desire for the story to progress. The dancing could not quite portray the content of the original play's scenes.

However, the performance's closing scene of falling "snow" clinking onto the stage in the mist and Shakespeare's dramatic closing lines on the screen ended a performance that was haunting, powerful, and ethereal in its simplicity and its silence.

Arianna String Quartet Performs 'Russian Melodiya'

DANIEL STRAWHUN
OPINIONS EDITOR

The Arianna String Quartet, ensemble-in-residence at the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center, performed its second concert of the season on November 4 in the Touhill's E. Desmond and Mary Ann Lee Theater. The concert, appropriately titled "Russian Melodiya," featured the chamber music of three Russian composers: Sergei Prokofiev, Nikolay Medtner, and Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

The concert featured musicians John McGrosso, first violin; Julia Sakharova, second violin; Joanna Mendoza, viola; Kurt Baldwin, cello; and Alla Voskoboinikova, piano.

The evening began with Prokofiev's String Quartet No. 2 in F Major. Composed in 1941 while Prokofiev was living in the city of Nalchik in the Northern Caucasus region, the quartet draws its themes from the folk music

traditions of the area. The first movement introduces one such theme, a jubilant, gamboling tune whose plodding rhythm calls to mind an early morning trek through the mountains, lit by the golden rays of the F major key center. The piece then dissolves into the airy mist that comprises the second movement, punctuated by pizzicati (plucked notes) coming from both McGrosso and Sakharova. The third movement momentarily resumes the rhythmic plodding of the first, but is soon carried away into a jagged, triangular frenzy, a section which Prokofiev based off of the traditional folk dance "Getigezhev Ogurbi" of the Caucasus region. The highlight of this third movement was Baldwin's cello cadenza, played with a deft fluidity.

For Medtner's Piano Quintet in C Major, the quartet was joined by pianist Alla Voskoboinikova, director of keyboard studies, who regularly

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IN THEATERS NOVEMBER 11

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Our Guide To The Five: Constitutional Amendments

KAT RIDDLER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With incendiary language, negative advertising, and a constant barrage of breaking news revelations about the candidates fueling outrage in the 2016 Presidential election, it is easy to overlook the importance of five statewide Constitutional Amendments that will share that ballot. These five amendments however, will have major consequences for Missouri's millennials for years to come. To help our readers be better prepared to cast an informed vote on these issues, *The Current* has prepared this guide to the five ballot measures.

Amendment One: Conservation Tax

This one authorizes the continuance of an existing 1/10th of 1 per sales tax that goes to fund conservation, state parks, and historic sites in Missouri. In a state that woefully underfunds much that contributes to a better quality of life, this conservation tax has been one of the bright spots. By having its own dedicated revenue stream, the State Conservation Department has been able to preserve real streams, state parks, and historic sites. Scenic beauty and great recreational sites are a natural resource worth preserving for ourselves and



future generations.

VOTE: YES

Amendment Two: Campaign Contribution Limits

First steps are often the most important and the hardest to take. Missouri is notorious nationally for having very lax ethics laws for politicians. We also currently have no contribution limits on what special interests can donate to a candidate. This has resulted in a glut of money pouring into campaigns... money with strings attached. One state representative alone in Jefferson County has received \$175,000 this year from a millionaire on the other side of the state. Amendment Two would cap individual donations to campaigns in Missouri. It is not perfect, but it is a first step.

VOTE: YES

Amendment Three: Cigarette Tax Increase

Normally when you hear someone

wants to raise taxes on cigarettes to help fund early childhood education, it is a no brainer for non-smokers. But Amendment Three is a smokescreen by the big tobacco lobby aimed at hurting their competition and helping themselves. In a rare show of bipartisanship, the amendment is opposed by both the Democratic and Republican candidates for governor. It is also opposed by the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, and other groups that oppose smoking, but understand this law is really aimed at helping big tobacco. While it is important to fund pre-K and early education, there should be cleaner opportunities to do this in the future.

VOTE: NO.

Amendment Four: Prohibit New Sales/Use Taxes

You cannot make an informed decision on what you do not know. Yet that is what the proponents of Constitution-

al Amendment Four want the voters of Missouri to do. They want voters to say that no service or thing that did not exist in 2015 and was taxed by state or local governments can ever be taxed in the future. In other words, a new product or service that no one even knows possibly could exist say ten years from now, could not be taxed at that time. It makes far more sense to just wait and see what the future brings and decide at that time as we always have.

VOTE: NO

Amendment Five was removed from the ballot, which is why we skip to six.

Amendment Six: Voter ID Law

Amendment Six is the Missouri General Assembly's latest attempt at voter suppression. Political parties that fear voter participation by the young and minority populations are on the road to extinction. There simply have been few if any cases of the type of voter fraud these laws say they are trying to protect us from. But there is evidence that these laws keep thousands of students, seniors, and minorities away who cannot easily obtain the required photo ID from the state. Missouri does not need the embarrassment of passing apartheid style laws to benefit one political party over another.

VOTE: NO

Daylight Saving Time Is Actually A Great Thing

DANYEL POINDEXTER
STAFF WRITER

Daylight saving time, or DST, as some people like to pronounce it, is about to end with almost an entire country moving their clocks back an hour in the early morning of November 6. Apart from the fact that our world is about to become a darker place once again, there is one question that continuously surfaces every time DST does: Why do we even need it? Contrary to negative opinions that claim the whole concept is complete garbage that needs to be put to rest, DST is an attempt

for humans to force their lives to fit into the natural world—an aspect most like to ignore. If we really consider the idea surrounding DST and how it is embedded into our lives, we will realize that it is both a rebellion against time and an acceptance to it.

It is hard to prove that DST does more harm than good, yet critics often shift their focus to health problems and schedule disruption and even cite confusion. They refuse to consider the fact that DST is an eight-month experiment designed to make life more enjoyable for us rather than depleting. They refuse

to consider that perhaps DST has stayed around for so long because people actually enjoy the extra sunlight we force upon ourselves through this seasonal experiment.

Typically, we spend more time awake in the evenings than the mornings. While the morning is our starting point of the day, the evenings hold more benefits such as increased socialization, vitamin D or mental health improvements. It's simple: we get more done in the evenings especially when we have more sunlight than we do at any other time during the day. Without DST structured into our lives, there would be no prosperity from the sun during our days.

The average adult spends most evenings working a 9-5 job, meaning they have little time to enjoy whatever sunlight is left. When they leave work, they are tired and ready to hang it up at home. We do not need statistics to show us that most of us want to be more productive when there is actual sun out. Daylight gives us extra motivation, while the night or a cloudy sky makes us want to stay indoors and rest. So, during spring, summer, and early autumn, we adjust the time just a bit so that the evenings will not be so dim. In the winter, we abandon DST simply because there is not enough sunlight to make a difference.

A 2010 study by University of Minnesota researchers found the number of crashes during DST declined. They hypothesized that the visibility of drivers is improved during this time. A paper in Brookings Institute also found that there was a seven percent decrease in crime following the shift of DST for the simple fact that crime tends to happen much more often in darkness.

While, of course, critics can argue against this logic just like I can argue against theirs, is DST really doing any harm? We have more opportunities to do recreational activities with expanded daylight, we can enjoy great late sunsets, and we can conserve energy. I personally keep all my lights off when the sun is beaming outside and just open my curtains. To be frank, with the hour adjustment of time, my brain is fooled into believing I got more sleep than usual.

It is blatantly unnecessary to have some sort of disdain for the consequence of DST: a mere hour's difference in time. DST is an imperfectly perfect, weird idea that we have come up with to enjoy a little more sunshine. What is the harm in that? DST is already embedded into our lives and doesn't have a huge negative impact on the country. So why fix something that isn't broken?

UMSL VETERANS DAY

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11

7:45 AM

Flag Raising Ceremony outside of Woods Hall

8:00 AM

Open House with A la carte breakfast in the Veterans Center (211 Clark Hall)

8:15 AM - Speaker, Jeph Jones

UMSL student and Army combat veteran, Jeph Jones, will share his personal struggle with suicide and inspirational journey.



UMSL Faculty Split Over SEIU Union Options



SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, CTW, CLC

Continued from page 1

would have to look at recent actions of the legislature to make your own interpretations.”

In response to worries over actions that state legislatures might take, Manuel said, “First, administrators everywhere have kept their high salaries. Second, faculty members will set the priorities that they negotiate in their union contract. Administration is responsible for UMSL’s budget, and the priorities in the budget have not been focused on faculty compensation. SEIU has a strong membership, and the power to work for and win more funding from the legislature... The UM system has not funded UMSL at the same rate as the other UM schools. Again, this is a matter of priorities. By coming together and forming a union, UMSL faculty members will have the power to fight

for the raises and improvements they deserve.”

For much of 2016, SEIU had been only attempting to unionize faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Education. According to the UMSL Excellence website, “SEIU seeks to disenfranchise the College of Business Administration, the College of Optometry, and the College of Nursing”.

Wall said, “The thing I find most disturbing is that three of the major units of the university are now excluded from the whole thing. It appears to me and others that the union has cherry-picked or even gerrymandered who they want to include in the voting process.”

Spilling said, “They excluded those colleges for which there was little sympathy for unionization. The unions will

narrow until they get a foothold into the institution.”

In response to questions of money reallocation for union raises and its exclusion of the three colleges from the voting process, OC member, Lacy said, “We will negotiate contracts that cover everyone in the colleges, not just those in the union. So if we negotiate raises, even those who do not join the union will get the benefits. Raises wouldn’t just go to the union members... About the colleges not covered (Business, Optometry, and Nursing); they are also the highest paid faculty on campus, so I get why they are afraid to lose their six figure salaries, ignoring the fact that there are people with PhDs in the College of Arts and Science making \$40,000 a year. I do not honestly believe the university would cut anyone’s salary. They would likely find themselves in a lawsuit or a mutiny. But I could see those people not getting raises for a while to cover other raises... I would just point to the precedent on other campuses of not including those colleges? It is not unique to UMSL.”

From the administrative perspective, Spilling said, “What we want, is

for the faculty members to do their due diligence to look into the benefits for them in unionization. And then to make a rational and informed decision and I think what we’re trying to do is provide information as an administration that helps make that an informed decision. We ask them to be careful, ask the right questions, and expect answers. We encourage the faculty to go to the committee sessions, get informed, rationalize in their own mind, and vote their conscious. The senate has formed an ad hoc committee to study how the senate should promote dialogue in this situation. Neither for nor against, and only there to provide information and promote dialogue.”

The Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Information Sessions has been created and tasked with setting up meetings with all parties involved in the union debate. The committee has agreed to maintain strict neutrality on the issue while it sets up larger public forums to discuss the union issue that will involve representation from all sides. There will be public notices coming up about those meetings soon.

UMSL Remains Among Best Colleges For Vets

KAT RIDDLER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Military Times released the 2017 Best for Vets colleges list, and the University of Missouri-St. Louis ranked 40 out of 175 in the nation in the four-year institution category. This marks the third year in a row that UMSL has been recognized as one of the best institutions for veterans.

UMSL currently has over 350 student veterans and military-connected students. Jim Craig, chair of the department of military and veterans studies, served for 25 years as a soldier, a cadet, and as an officer in the U.S. Army. Craig explained, “Military-connected students are children and spouses of veterans who often are using some flavor of GI Bill benefits based on their connection to a veteran. Sometimes the number is imprecise because not all veterans and military-connected students self-identify.”

To be considered for inclusion on the Military Times’ list, colleges and universities had to fill out an exhaustively detailed, roughly 150-question survey. Institutions were evaluated in five categories: university culture, academic outcomes/quality, student support, academic policies, and cost and financial aid. “I am not surprised that we won the honor again,” Craig said. “UMSL is a campus that understands the adult-learner. It understands the needs of students who have families, jobs, and external lives. But it also has some of the best academic programs regionally (even nationally) and it is well



connect to the city it serves.”

On Veterans Day, November 11, UMSL student Jeph Jones will be speaking after the Flag Raising Ceremony and Open House at the Veterans Center. This is the first time a student will be speaking at the event. Craig stated there is a difference between Memorial Day and Veterans Day that some people often miss. This distinction between honoring those who died and those still living sparked the inspiration to bring in a student to speak. Craig said, “We should strive to recognize those who fought and survived. Often that task is actually harder because dealing with the living means you have to deal with the messiness of life: trials, successes, failures, and accomplishments. Veterans Day activities shouldn’t be sweeping and dramatic, they should be small scale and personalized.”

Craig highlighted the Veterans Center as a great service available on campus that has been around since 2012. He pointed out that the Department of Military and Veterans Studies has one foot in academia and the other in student services. Craig said, “The start

of veteran programming on campus actually started in 2012 in response to student veterans advocating on campus. These veterans fought their way onto Dean Yasbin’s undergraduate advisory council and worked hard to raise the Dean’s awareness in veteran’s issues on campus. In response, the Dean established the Student Veterans Center.”

Rebecca McMenamain is in charge of the Veterans Center. Craig said, “Rebecca not only runs the day-to-day activities of the Veterans Center, she also manages all G.I. Bill certification right there in the center instead of in the registrar’s office. This small change has made a huge difference for our student veterans.”

The Veterans Center is a resource for veterans, current service members, and their families as they transition into a college campus life, but the space is open to all students. McMenamain explained the significance of handling G.I. Bill eligibility, “In addition to the regular admissions process, military-connected students have the added complexity of figuring out how to use their GI Bill benefits, which on a campus this size, can be very difficult for new students to navigate on their own. Unless you are using VA benefits, you wouldn’t know that there are so many rules and stipulations.”

There are many resources on campus like veteran peer tutoring, academic and career workshops, and Military Culture Training called Green Zone training for faculty and staff to help create the necessary support group for veterans. There are even veteran-specific

new and transfer student orientations. McMenamain said, “It’s these connections that drive success when the stressors of academic life take over. As adult-learners, most of our students are balancing multiple priorities such as families, work, and school. That’s why a solid support system is so critical to staying in college.”

UMSL also provides two undergraduate minors in Military and Veterans Studies. The coursework is multidisciplinary and no military service is required for the minor. Craig said, “Military and Veterans Studies students will graduate with a nuanced understanding of the military and veteran experience, the role veterans play in our society, and the obligations our society might hold towards this subset of our population.”

Craig teaches a mandatory course for new and transfer student veterans at UMSL to help provide information on campus resources as the students transition to academic life. There is a five day academic boot camp offered in August to help veterans refresh math and writing skills. This boot camp also connects to St. Louis area veteran support organizations like The Mission Continues and Midwest Veterans Service Alliance. Craig hopes to expand UMSL classes in Defense and Security Studies to help provide “the knowledge and skills to address some of the most important challenges facing our society, today and in the future.”

The Veterans Center is located in 211 Clark Hall. They can be contacted **Continued on thecurrent-online.com**