UMSL Faculty Split On SEIU’s Union Efforts

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, whichever 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 Spillings 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
**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 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 partnership opportunities 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.
“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 we do on 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 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 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 E. 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 simply 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.
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 reduce…We have three full-time 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 French. And 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 Zaruchchi all attend La Table Française.

Besides sharing a language, the group members passed around a crinkling package of chocolate cookies, which is often used in fondue. They have also held chocolate tastings and spent one semester on a quest for the best croissants in St. Louis.

The group formed in 2003. “We were looking for ways to bring francophiles 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 have varying proficiency levels in French. While attendance waxes and wanes from year to year, we consistently have a group of faithful who come back week to week to talk about everything and nothing with their budding French skills.”

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UMSL Men’s Golf Team Places In Sixth At Golfweek

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.

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 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 game 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 Conference Preseason Coaches’ Poll, released by the league office in late October.

Another noticeable name on the list is Markus Lindberg, 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 Golf-week 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.

Jose Acevedo at Golfweek DII Fall Invitational

COURTESY OF UMSL ATHLETICS

LANCE JORDAN
SPORTS EDITOR

The University of Missouri-St. Louis Tritons’ Men’s Basketball Tips Off Against SIU Carbondale

November 7, 2016

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 match 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.

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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 Mendes, viola; Kurt Baldwin, cello; and Alla Voskoboynikova, 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 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 “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 Voskoboynikova, director of keyboard studies, who regularly performed recitals with the quartet. The quartet was joined by Alla Voskoboynikova, director of keyboard studies, who regularly performed recitals with the quartet.

The Arianna String Quartet’s program featured works from three of Russia’s most beloved composers, each with their own distinct style and approach to chamber music. Prokofiev’s String Quartet No. 2 in F Major is known for its themes that draw upon the folk music of the Northern Caucasus region, while Medtner’s Piano Quintet in C Major is praised for its technical virtuosity and emotional depth. Tchaikovsky’s String Quartet in D Major is celebrated for its lyrical beauty and expressive power. The quartet’s performance of these works was a true celebration of Russian chamber music, showcasing the group’s versatility and technical skill.

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.
Our Guide To The Five: Constitutional Amendments

KAT RIDDLE
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 shape how the state governs itself. 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 smokerscreen 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 Constitutional 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 prevent 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: even need it? Contrary to negative arguments that DST is an attempt to make life more enjoyable for us and even cite confusion. They refuse 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 DST. The simple fact that DST has stayed around for so long because it is beaming outside and just open to be 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 light than before, which is beaming outside and just open my curtains. To be honest, 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 light than before, which is beaming outside and just open my curtains. To be honest.
UMSL Faculty Split Over SEIU Union Options

KAT RIDDLE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Military Times released the 2017 Best for Vets colleges list, and the University of Missouri-St. Louis has once again made the cut. 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, serves for 25 years as a soldier, a cadet, and as an officer in the U.S. Army. Craig explained, “Military-connect ed 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 vet erans and military-connected students self-identify.”

To be considered for inclusion on the Military Times’ list, colleges and universities had to fill out the exhaustive, 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 made the list 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

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