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## Health literacy lower for the disabled

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COLUMBIA, Mo., Nov. 3 (UPI) -- Some 90 million Americans have low health literacy but those with limited English and disabilities

have even lower health literacy, U.S. researchers said.

**Diane Smith of the University of Missouri School of Health Professions** said low health literacy is a mismatch between patients' abilities to understand healthcare information and providers' abilities to communicate complex medical information in an understandable manner.

"There is already a problem with low health literacy within the general population," Smith said in a statement. "When looking at populations with disabilities or limited English proficiency, people need to be more conscious that these particular populations may have more difficulty understanding information, such as treatment options or medication

instructions, from their physicians."

In the two studies, researchers found patients with disabilities or limited English proficiency often perceived that their physicians did not listen to them, explain treatment options, treat them with respect, spend enough time with them or involve them in the treatment decisions.

In addition to health literacy issues, those with limited English proficiency had significantly reduced access to healthcare. Few doctors have multi-lingual backgrounds -- especially in rural areas -- and it can be difficult to find a provider who can accommodate limited English proficiency patients, the researchers said.

The findings were published in the Disability and Health Journal and are scheduled to be published in the Journal of Healthcare Disparities Research and Practice.

11.02.2009

### **President of Missouri State University to step down next year**

By: Kavita Kumar

Michael Nietzel, the president of Missouri State University, has announced that he will step down from his post by December 2010 - or earlier if his replacement is ready to start before then - for various personal and professional reasons.

Nietzel, 62, is on a plane this afternoon and so was unavailable for immediate comment. But in a new release, he said that it was a difficult decision for him to step away from a job he loves.

"But I decided in August that my time to resign is here," he said in the release. "At both the personal and professional levels, I want and need a change. The presidency of MSU is a very public, demanding, and complex job. I have concluded that I cannot continue to do that job at a level of achievement that I want from myself and that the university has every right to expect from its president."

Brian Hammons, the chairman of the MSU board, said Nietzel told the board of his decision to step down at a closed board meeting on Friday. He said the board was surprised by the decision and has been unanimously supportive of him. He added that the board renewed his contract earlier this year, which took effect in July, adding another four years to his contract.

"We had hoped to have him for another four years, but recognized there was a possibility he may want to step back before then," Hammons said.

In his four years as president of Missouri State, Nietzel has become a prominent voice for increased state funding of public higher education. He has also created cooperative relationships with other university leaders — including **University of Missouri President Gary Forsee** — creating more friendly relationship between the two schools than had been previously the case. Nietzel took over as president a couple months before the school's name was changed from Southwest Missouri State University.

On a more institutional level, Nietzel also had to oversee a series of budget cuts during lean times. He also spearheaded an effort to be more accountable for the public with a scorecard that is now on the university's Web site. Under his tenure, the school has also experienced record enrollments.

The Grade is the St. Louis region's premier blog on education and child welfare. To read other recent posts, go to [www.stitoday.com/thegrade](http://www.stitoday.com/thegrade).

## Missouri State president's plans to leave surprise board

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS  
The Kansas City Star

Missouri State University's president said Monday that he would leave his post at the end of next year.

Michael T. Nietzel, 62, who has led the university in Springfield since July 2005, said he was resigning for personal and professional reasons.

Nietzel said he needed a change and the presidency was such a demanding job that he didn't feel he could continue to perform at the level expected by him or the university.

"We were surprised," said Brian Hammons, chairman of the board of governors. "We did not expect it at all. The board has had tremendous confidence in Dr. Nietzel throughout his tenure. He has done a tremendous job."

Hammons said Nietzel helped move the university forward on several fronts.

**Nietzel helped develop two cooperative programs with the University of Missouri System:** the cooperative engineering program with the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, which started in fall 2008, and the doctor of pharmacy program with the University of Missouri-Kansas City, scheduled to start in fall 2011.

Under Nietzel, Missouri State began a program allowing freshmen to lock in the cost of tuition for two years or prepay for four years, and developed 12 scholarship programs to increase access.

He oversaw more than \$125 million in capital projects completed on campus, including the renovation and addition of the Roy Blunt Jordan Valley Innovation Center and planning for the university's new recreation center.

Nietzel, an Iowa native, said he does not have definite plans after Dec. 31, 2010.

# MISSOURIAN

## Missouri State University president to resign

Monday, November 2, 2009 | 4:40 p.m. CST

BY The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — The president of Missouri State University has announced that he plans to resign once his successor is picked.

Sixty-two-year-old Mike Nietzel cited a combination of personal and professional reasons in announcing his decision.

He submitted his letter of resignation to the Board of Governors on Friday, and it was made public Monday.

He said in a news release that he is willing to continue working as president through the end of 2010 to give the university the chance to conduct a thorough search.

Nietzel has led the Springfield school since July 2005, and described the job as "invigorating" and his colleagues as "superb."

But he says he needs a change, noting that the work is "public, demanding and complex."

## **UM Hospital gets hit by governor's budget cuts**

**Posted By Jason Rosenbaum**

The big news out of Jefferson City last week involved Gov. Jay Nixon's announcement of more budgetary cuts made in the face of declining state revenues.

As noted in a story for the CBT, the cuts included the elimination of hundreds of state government positions. But the restrictions totaling roughly \$204 million also included cuts to several entities related to the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The most notable one, at least according to state Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, was a more than \$3 million cut to the University of Missouri Hospital system. As the first-term lawmaker noted in my article for the St. Louis Beacon, the cut could have a big effect on rural Missourians.

"For rural health care, it is a significant problem," Kelly said. "And it's also a problem for the entire University of Missouri. When the University of Missouri cannot recover either fees or insurance payments or Medicaid or state dollars, the whole budget of the entire university suffers."

Additionally, the governor announced a freeze to refurbishing state buildings, lowered some Medicaid reimbursements and put the brakes on grants for the Life Sciences Research Board.

## **MU domestic partner benefits ‘on the radar’**

**Some say policy hurts recruiting.**

By Janese Heavin Monday, November 2, 2009

The lack of domestic partner benefits at the University of Missouri is costing the campus quality faculty members, some say.

But even though the MU Faculty Council supports expanding benefits to same-sex couples, current budget woes are preventing members from officially proposing the change this year.

“It’s been on our radar for a couple of years,” Chairwoman Leona Rubin said. “It’s not something that is going to come forward now with the budget situation ... but it was high on the agenda before the economic crisis hit. It’s just going to stay on the radar for us. We just want faculty to know we haven’t lost it.”

Domestic partner benefits allow gays and lesbians to add their partners to employee insurance packages. Last year, the Chancellor’s Status of Women Committee formally requested the system expand benefits on the MU campus to same-sex couples.

But with System President Gary Forsee and Vice President of Human Resources Betsy Rodriguez both being new last year, “it just wasn’t the right time to do it,” Rodriguez said.

Some faculty and staff members say not having the benefits is negatively affecting MU.

Jackie Litt, director of Women’s and Gender Studies, said she has had faculty candidates pull out of searches after they made the short list because MU doesn’t offer benefits to same-sex couples. J. Wilson Watt, an associate professor in MU’s School of Social Work, said he knows of at least two candidates who believed the lack of domestic partner benefits “was a major issue.” And Mary Bixby, a learning resource specialist at the Student Success Center, said she has watched employees leave MU because of it.

Some 300 universities offer domestic partner benefits, according to the American Association of University Professors. At Washington University in St. Louis, 237 of 11,600 employees have health insurance for domestic partners, said Ann Prenatt, vice chancellor for human resources. Prenatt said she’s not aware of any new hire accepting a position solely because of that benefit, but “certainly having benefits for domestic partners removes a recruitment obstacle.”

Rodriguez said she suspects fewer than 5 percent of faculty members at MU would take advantage of the benefits if they were offered. That low participation would mean minimal costs.

"Financially, I don't think it would be a lot of money, but it would send a message," Rubin said. "Faculty Council sees it as more of a way of expressing that we're open and would make us comparable to other universities offering it."

One question would be how to ensure employees are truly in domestic partnerships, Rodriguez said. Washington University requires employees to sign a domestic partner verification affidavit.

Locally, couples can sign up to be recognized as domestic partners through the Columbia/Boone County Department of Public Health and Human Services. Since that registry went online in April, 32 couples have signed up, most of whom are same-sex couples, said Steve Hollis, supervisor of social services.

Some question the political ramifications of offering benefits to gay and lesbian couples. In 2005, Intercampus Faculty Council members agreed that the UM System's Board of Curators at the time would not support domestic partner benefits, a "politically sensitive topic," according to the minutes from the October meeting of that year. Watt said offering the benefits would be risky for a state university in a "state with a large number of socially conservative legislators."

UM System administrators declined to speculate about any political backlash, but Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, said he doesn't think adoption of domestic partnership benefits would hurt MU's state support. Although some would disagree with the decision, Kelly said, "most people who matter know the difference between personal preferences and public policy."

# theman eater

## City to pick up MU recyclables

*Profits from recycled products will be split between Columbia and MU.*

**By Will Guldin**

Published Nov. 3, 2009

An amendment to a 25-year-old contract with the city of Columbia means MU is changing who will pick up its recyclables.

For more than two decades, Civic Recycling has provided recycling services to MU, but in an amendment authorized during Monday night's council meeting, the city will now be picking up both recycling and trash on campus.

"We've had a long-standing relationship with the university where we provide solid waste pickup," City Manager Bill Watkins said. "This contract amendment would expand it to handle recycling."

As part of the relationship, Columbia has picked up trash at MU since 1984, but the amendment to this contract states recycling pickup services will begin Jan. 1, 2010, and will continue until the end of 2014, with a five-year renewal option after this date.

According to the contract, MU and the city will be able to split profits from the sale of recycled products gathered at the university. A base amount the city must make off recycling rebates will exist, but above that level, all profits are split equally.

"We're sharing the profits 50-50," Public Works Director John Glascock said. "We view it as an incentive to recycle. It's also something that the university approached us about, so we think it's a good deal."

Gary Ward, assistant vice chancellor for Campus Facilities, said the way MU is paying for the pick-up service also encourages recycling. He said because the price of the solid waste pickups will be determined by weight, and not a flat fee, it will encourage the university to cut waste since smaller amounts of trash collected means a lower fee.

As part of the contract, the city also has a responsibility to encourage cost saving at MU. Although specifics are not included in the amendment, it does state broad objectives such as employing ideas, innovations and techniques.

MU Sustainability Coordinator Steve Burdic said those savings would come from many small but important changes, such as improving large recycling containers so they are easier for workers to move.

"It's both an infrastructure thing, which this contract represents, and it's also the human dimension of people understanding you know we have to take care of the planet," Burdic said.

He also said this amendment would allow the university to focus on recycling.

"What we can do now is concentrate on changing the trash collection containers into recycling containers," Burdic said. "Every time we can take away a trash container and replace it with a recycling

container not only have we saved the entire cost of the trash container, but we have the opportunity to make some money on it, to improve our services."

To pay for these recycling services, MU will make monthly payments to the city. City documents state the projected revenues for the city providing recycling and trash services to MU are \$425,400 annually.

The council's actions now mean Watkins can officially present the amendment to MU.

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## Nixon cuts \$200 million from state budget

*Funding to MU technology and health care programs was reduced.*

**By Wes Duplantier**

Published Nov. 3, 2009

Gov. Jay Nixon announced more than \$200 million in state budget cuts Wednesday, including reductions in funding to MU technology and health care programs.

The latest reductions mean Nixon has slashed some \$634 million from the budget as it was passed by the legislature in May. Citing a decline in state revenues due to the recession, Nixon said the reductions were necessary to avoid raising taxes and still balance the budget, as the state constitution requires.

"This isn't Washington, we don't get to print money," Nixon said in a transcript of his remarks obtained by The Maneater. "We must and we will make the fiscally responsible decisions to balance our budget this year, next year and every year after."

Nixon said the reductions were aimed at protecting jobs, education and health care. He emphasized there will be no cuts to the core budgets of any state universities or universities and said the tuition freeze will remain in effect, even as other states are raising public university tuition to close similar budget gaps.

But Missouri's latest cuts mean some 700 state employees will lose their jobs, with 200 of them being full-time positions. Additionally, MU's technology provider, MOREnet, lost more than \$3 million in state funds.

MU Health Care saw appropriations for its hospitals and clinics cut by \$3 million as well. The Missouri Kidney Program, the Institute of Mental Health and a telemedicine program based at the hospital all lost 25 percent of their budgeted appropriations. Nixon said these cuts were necessary to leave core university budgets untouched.

Chancellor Brady Deaton released a statement shortly after governor's announcement and said the MU's budget had not been affected, but said those cuts could affect MU programs.

"We are very grateful that the core budget of the University of Missouri was not reduced," Deaton said. "However, several of the cuts will have both direct and indirect effects on our operations, primarily in health care and other statewide programs administered by the university."

MU Health Care spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said MU Health Care does not know exactly how the cuts to its hospital and clinic funds will affect services yet.

"Really all I can tell you is that we're very concerned about the cuts and we're in the process of assessing the impact," she said. "It could take several days to a few weeks."

MOREnet is a separate business unit within MU that provides IT services to public schools and colleges, libraries and other state entities. MOREnet spokeswoman Anissa Lockett said the company would be putting off network equipment maintenance but said MOREnet was also still trying to figure out how to work with less money. She said the company was trying not to raise prices for customers, such as MU.

"We're going to be deferring or eliminating the replacement of some network equipment," Lockett said. "Currently, we're doing everything we can so that we don't have to impact member fees this year."

Several other state agencies saw their budgets cut deeply. One such agency is the Missouri Arts Council, which will lose \$4.4 million in funds for grants from the state. The council's Director Bev Strohmeyer said grants paid by those funds will still be honored using money from the council's trust fund.

But the council is also the state agency assigned to distribute state funds to public television and radio stations. The \$1.7 million previously allocated for public broadcasting was cut by \$738,000 on Wednesday.

"We are covering all our grantees," Strohmeyer said. "But we also issue grant contracts to public television and radio stations and we will not be honoring some of those grants."

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## Coal Free Mizzou celebrates Halloween

*The group used the theme 'coal is scary' to show dangers of coal usage.*

**By Megan Donohue**

Published Nov. 3, 2009

Despite the 22 mph winds Friday, Coal Free Mizzou members could be seen dressed up in costumes that followed their Halloween theme "coal is scary," brandishing props and petitions in Speakers Circle to raise awareness for their Campuses Beyond Coal Campaign.

"Well we were trying to have a really fun time, have a great Halloween event, but also really raise awareness about the dangers of coal-fired power use," Campuses Beyond Coal organizer Ryan Doyle said. "We've been joking around a lot and having a good time with our costumes, but the fact of the matter is it is pretty scary the amount of health impacts, environmental impacts, climate change impacts that come from coal."

Most of the costumes represented coal miners, with dirt smudged across the members' faces, hard hats, tombstone props and even several capes.

"We just want to show that we are representing coal miners that are seeking something better and are seeking clean energy," spokeswoman Melissa Vatterott said. "So we came out and we talked to students and petitioned a little bit as well, and tried to get more student involvement and participation."

Coal Free Mizzou saw wide support for its campaign Friday, Vatterott said.

"I feel like people were definitely looking and interested," Vatterott said. "I talked to a few people that were really interested in the idea of moving towards energy. I talked to someone who said their future is going to be in working with energy types, so I definitely think it was successful."

Events and Grassroots Coordinator Mallory Schillinger, the person responsible for organizing the props, said she thinks the props were effective due to the large numbers most displayed.

"One of our props is one about deaths," Schillinger said. "We have 53,000 deaths a year due to coal. Then there is one about asthma. I just think that it really gets across just how many people are affected."

Schillinger, sporting a "coal is scary" cape, said MU's dependency on coal-fueled energy is un-American, and referred to a prop that had the date of the first coal burning plant and the acronym ASAP to demonstrate the need to change to a newer energy source.

"It shows how long we have been using this type of energy and how far we've come with other technologies," Schillinger said. "Why are we still using this? It's so un-our type of society. We always want the best, we always want everything new."

Schillinger said she wished it weren't so windy so they could display the paper tombstones and signs better. She said people were taking note of them when the group was taking group photos though.

Some of the more effective props were the costumes, Schillinger said.

"Obviously I wouldn't be wearing a cape to class or we wouldn't have dirt on our faces to class," Schillinger said. "It engages people, then they ask questions, then we can tell them what's going on and how they can get involved or how they can help as well as if they do agree, because of course we want to speak for the students. That's why we do petitioning."

Coal Free Mizzou is hoping to set up a meeting with Chancellor Brady Deaton sometime in the next few weeks to present its petitions and letters from the student body that represent the widespread support it has received and discuss the issue, Doyle said.

At the moment it is still focused on gathering tons of student support through events such as this, Doyle said.

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## Letter to the Editor:

### Sustainability still needs work

**By Cambelle Logan, sophomore**  
Published Nov. 3, 2009

Recently, Mizzou was granted a B- grade from the Sustainable Endowments Institute. The improved grade shows Mizzou is making strides in sustainability and responding to the call of the numerous student groups who have rallied around the cause. However, the administration and students of Mizzou need to remember that an incredible amount of work still needs to be done. The environment, our families' health, and our climate cannot wait for the drastic changes that need to be made.

Currently, the university gets 80 percent of its energy from coal, and relying on coal for energy is far from green. In response to student efforts around the nation, 600 universities have committed to reducing their carbon emissions to zero through the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment. However, Mizzou will not be able to reach this goal while still getting a majority of our energy from a dangerous substance like coal.

Our university needs to further develop its sustainability goals by ending its dependence on coal, and investing in a vision for a clean energy future. Mizzou has the capability to improve its carbon footprint and become a true leader in sustainability, now all we need to do is take action.