



# The Cost of



# Renewal

By Erik Potter  
Photo by Justin Kelley

For universities, growth is not optional; it's an existential imperative, an antidote to entropy. Since the \$1 billion *For All We Call Mizzou* campaign concluded in 2008, the University of Missouri has grown its enrollment by 17 percent, pushed its freshmen retention rate (87 percent) above the national average (80 percent) and kept tuition increases below the rate of inflation. The university has added three National Academy of Sciences members and a Royal Society of Canada fellow to its world-class faculty and opened new fields of study to research, teaching and learning. But the work is not done. Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin is determined to ensure that a new generation of Tigers has access to high-quality education and that university faculty can continue to push the boundaries of knowledge. Toward that end, he is shepherding *Mizzou: Our Time to Lead*, a comprehensive campaign with a goal of raising \$1.3 billion to renew Mizzou's people, places and programs.

**L**oftin walks slowly from the Reynolds Alumni Center toward the Residence on Francis Quadrangle. The damp evening air still holds the day's heat. It's the summer session, and Francis Quadrangle is quiet. Loftin, in close-cropped graying hair, a grayer suit and his signature bow tie, pauses periodically on the way. His first stop is in front of Lafferre Hall, home of the College of Engineering.

The complex was born in 1892 and expanded helter-skelter over the next 12 decades to its current 300,000 square feet of floor space. The middle and largest section was its hub. Originally built in 1935, it was expanded in 1944. But the expansion was built at a different grade, and the two halves didn't connect on the second floor. So students on the second floor on the Sixth Street side of the building couldn't go directly to the second floor on the Quad side. They had to take the stairs or elevator to the first floor, pass through the hub section, and then go back to the second floor. It was this kind of labyrinthine layout that inspired students to coin #LostInLafferre as a social media in-joke. The utilities were a litany of maladies. The air conditioning was famously temperamental, oscillating between sauna and meat locker seemingly at random. Toilets sometimes refused to flush. Copper water pipes wore through from the inside. Eighty years of wiring and rewiring meant that some wires in the walls were simply mysteries. Then there was the roof. Five-gallon plastic buckets in blue, gray and yellow stood stacked in hallway corners on the first and second floors, ready to be deployed to catch the rain. Graduate students on the second floor covered their computers with plastic sheets to keep water from destroying them. "The conditions were so bad," Loftin says. "I felt very sad we were asking students, faculty and staff to work there."

Conditions will improve after workers complete a \$44.6 million rehabilitation project, funded primarily by state bonds. But one rehab won't finish the job. The current project, part of a \$70 million renovation package, will take more than just state support to complete. The college is raising \$6 million in private donations to augment the state bonds, with \$1.5 million coming from the family of the late F. Robert Naka, BS EE '45, and \$500,000 from the Burns & McDonnell engineering firm. Loftin says the current work has galvanized alumni. And when he asks for support from engineering firms that hire MU graduates, the responses are encouraging.

Seeking private support for public buildings is a new approach for state-supported institutions. Typically, tax dollars cover infrastructure needs, while private donations bolster scholarships, fac-

ulty and programs. But as infrastructure needs outpace state funding, that calculus has changed. Buildings are one of three top priorities in the new fundraising campaign.

This turn of thinking can be found in the new School of Music building project. Slated for construction on the northeast corner of Hitt Street and University Avenue beginning in fall 2016, it is another campus renewal project requiring philanthropic support.

Currently, the School of Music uses parts of 12 buildings across campus and in the community to muster the space it needs for practice, performance and office work. The choir rehearses in a former campus gym and performs in a downtown church. On campus, the Whitmore Recital Hall's main stage fits only a handful of performers, who play and sing before a dizzying backdrop of narrowly spaced stage-to-ceiling wooden slats. Minimal acoustic insulation means anyone in the classroom next door or in the practice rooms above can hear what happens on stage and vice versa. The practice rooms — yellow cubes the size of walk-in closets — hold upright pianos or an occasional baby grand, if they haven't been turned into shared offices for adjunct faculty or graduate teaching assistants.

A decade ago, Jeanne Sinquefield began supporting the School of Music based on a shared vision for making Mizzou a mecca for music composition. With \$2.9 million, she has funded a new music competition, weeklong summer music camps and scholarships for composition students. In April 2015, she and husband Rex Sinquefield gave \$10 million toward the \$74 million construction of a new music building and renovation of the existing Fine Arts Building. "Even though initially she was interested only in the programmatic direction of the School of Music," Loftin says, "she began to realize you've got to have a place for people to do the work."

**L**oftin turns east and crosses the Quad just north of the Columns. The 173-year-old limestone pillars are wrapped in protective plastic at their bases. The perpetually trampled grass at their feet has been scraped away and the bare earth leveled, made ready for a layer of durable stone pavers, impervious to the innumerable footfalls of students. Before Loftin reaches the residence, he passes a more colorful example of MU's constant improvement effort: a flower bed of Siloam shocker daylilies, blaze peonies and coronation gold yarrow.

"Anything we put together as humans is going to deteriorate," Loftin says. "Look at the campus. It's beautiful. But we replant flower beds here three or

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← Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin welcomes incoming students with a friendly high-five at Tiger Walk.

four times a year.” He pulls back to 30,000 feet and fills in the metaphor. “A university is like an organic entity. We need to continue to grow and change and adapt. What was an important research topic 30 years ago may not be today. What was an important area of education 30 years ago may not be today. We can’t simply say we created a university with programs, research and education and leave it alone. The world passes you by then. You end up becoming very ineffective at meeting your mission of education, research and service.

“Renewal doesn’t come free,” Loftin says. “You’re going to have to come back every now and then and find the resources to add a program, to add a facility, to bring to campus faculty in topic areas that didn’t exist a decade ago, to compete for the most promising students and to provide opportunities for the ones who can’t afford an education on their own.” Loftin says donors already are helping extend the reach of Mizzou’s research and discovery. He points to programs such as the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders (established with an \$8.5 million gift by William, BS CiE ’68, and Nancy Thompson, HES ’67), which now serves more than 2,800 patients a year and has trained more than 8,000 health professionals; and the Kinder Institute on Constitutional Democracy (established with a \$1.67 million gift from the Jack Miller Center for Teaching America’s Founding Principles and History and endowed with \$25 million from the Kinder Foundation, founded by Rich, BA ’66, JD ’68, and Nancy Kinder). (See story on Page 16.)

**L**oftin crosses his legs in the residence’s sitting room. Muted evening rays through the glass patio doors cast the room in a somber blue. Loftin recalls how, as a high school senior, he decided which of three college acceptance offers he would choose — if any.

“We had no money,” he says of his working-class family from tiny Navasota, Texas. Even with a scholarship to cover tuition, “I was considering

taking a year off and working to save some money to make college possible for me.”

Then a letter arrived that changed his life.

A physics alumnus of Texas A&M University who died a few years before had endowed a full-ride scholarship for high-achieving physics students in financial need. Loftin hadn’t even applied for it, but it was his. “It made my life possible,” he says, eyes creasing as he smiles. “I owe that man. I never had the chance to repay him [personally], but I give money to scholarships today because of him.”

Building a legacy through giving is something Loftin talks about often, and he always uses the same word to describe it: powerful. “When a donor begins to understand that an endowment will give you the ability to project your passion and impact well beyond your lifetime, that’s a pretty powerful message,” he says. “That’s a big deal.”

Building MU’s endowment is another priority of the fundraising campaign. An endowment offers stability. Endowed funds are designed to contribute only a portion of the interest they earn each year to scholarships, programs or whatever purpose they were created for. The rest of the interest grows the original gift so that it can continue to support the university in perpetuity.

The threshold to create an endowed fund is \$25,000, but existing endowed funds, such as the Chancellor’s Fund for Excellence, are open to contributions of any size; even a \$5 donation will grow over the years.

Every gift pushes Mizzou forward, whether it’s giving students access to higher education; attracting or retaining top faculty; pushing the boundaries of science with new research centers; or providing students and faculty with the space they need to collaborate, learn and ply their craft. And that’s the whole point of the campaign.

“We simply cannot be static,” Loftin says, shadows now filling the room. “We cannot sit still and allow our students to be underserved by their education or to miss the opportunity to change the world for the better by the impact of our research.” **M**

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