

MIZZOU ✪ WINTER 2019

Students

A new, comprehensive approach to ensuring that students succeed is “ship-shape” — mentorship, leadership, entrepreneurship, scholarships and much more. Story by Erik Potter

on the *Move*



When Chancellor Alexander Cartwright was a college student, his biggest obstacles were not in the classroom. Instead, they had to do with paying for school, navigating higher education's complex financial and administrative structures, and feeling that he did not fit in as a nontraditional student.

About a decade later as a professor and mentor, some of his students were experiencing similar issues. During his office hours, they told him about challenges, such as managing work and school schedules and living with family members who did not understand the demands of college. Some students faced food and housing insecurity. These difficulties had a big effect on their academic experience.

During Cartwright's administrative career, he kept returning to such issues, wanting to understand how institutions could help those students succeed in the academy and in life.

As the provost and executive vice chancellor of the State University of New York, he led a program that improved graduation rates of academically and economically disadvantaged students. The initiative holistically addressed difficulties inside and outside of the classroom to help students with creative solutions and support.

Now, in his second year as chancellor at Mizzou, he has launched a comprehensive student success initiative using academic and extracurricular strategies to increase the number of students who enroll at Mizzou, the quality of their education, and the percentage who not only earn a degree but also land a job or pursue more education after they graduate. He has also made funding the student success initiative a priority in the

\$1.3 billion Mizzou: Our Time to Lead campaign.

The initiative is one piece of a five-part, five-year strategic plan centered around five compacts with Missourians — excellence in student success; research and creative works; engagement and outreach; inclusiveness; and planning, operations and stewardship.

But the plan goes far beyond numbers, explains Jim Spain, vice provost for undergraduate studies. In the home of the Missouri Method, Mizzou is pledging that every student, whether rich or poor, a fourth-generation Tiger or a first-generation college student, will have at least one high-impact educational experience, such as an internship, externship, study abroad trip, undergraduate research project or opportunity to present research at a conference. Those opportunities have always existed for Mizzou students, but under the new initiative, in collaboration with faculty, they will be integrated intentionally into the curriculum, Spain says. They will become an expectation, not a lucky break.

The initiative addresses the needs of graduate students, including increasing the number of "four plus one" programs that allow students to earn a bachelor's and a master's degree in five years, says Jeni Hart, associate vice chancellor for graduate studies. It also includes individual development plans, which help graduate students define their academic and career goals and track them throughout their programs so they are best prepared for careers inside or outside of academia.

"We're going to have to become more efficient to fund these things and ensure we're delivering on our promise," Cartwright says. But the result will be a university that has a more profound effect on the lives of its students. For him, that makes it all worth it. "Everything we do should be about our students." ➔➔





Lessons

of the

Emerald Isle

By the end of her six-week stint in Galway, Ireland, organized through Mizzou's Office of Service Learning, Maggie Fellabaum had learned how little you know until you know someone. A confident, outgoing senior studying health sciences, she discovered while working in an adult day center for people with disabilities that you can't treat everyone the same.

"Some people could pick up on sarcasm and some couldn't," says Fellabaum, whose nature is to smile and tease. "Sometimes I had to go back and apologize and communicate my point in a different way." She learned that motivations vary, too. She could coax some people to undertake an activity, such as brushing teeth, if she did it with them. But that made others uncomfortable.

The observations she made and the lessons she drew were orchestrated through the service-learning curriculum, which integrates community service and student instruction. Before going to Ireland, the students attended a month of biweekly classes on their roles as temporary volunteers and on the people they would serve. During the trip, Fellabaum met with her 14 fellow volunteers and talked through ways of handling the situations they were facing. Faculty members on the trip also offered advice.

Before Ireland, Fellabaum had worked only with children, and she was nervous about connecting with adults. "But I came out really loving it," she says. "I'm trying to get involved now with Special Olympics."

Mizzou students have many opportunities to learn and serve outside the classroom, including faculty-led study abroad trips and student-led service organizations such as Mizzou Alternative Breaks.

HOME WORK

Koby Gooden sits down in the third-floor lounge for his MIZZOU interview. A student walks past in the hallway behind him.

"Shoot," Gooden says, looking over his shoulder. "I missed him."

Gooden hates to pass up an opportunity to say hello to any of his "kids" in the third floor of Hawthorn Hall. A sophomore in psychology from Macomb, Illinois, Gooden is a residential adviser (RA) for the floor.

Gooden wants to become a social worker, and he approaches his RA job with the earnestness of an apprenticeship.

"I've learned so much about myself," he says. "I thought I was confrontational before, but we had kids throwing a party, and I wasn't as confrontational as I wanted to be, so another RA helped me."

Mizzou offers a variety of student employment and internship opportunities that help students grow outside the classroom. Many can be found at HireMizzouTigers.com.





Research GEM

Dominic Romero was a young undergraduate student at Mizzou. Bioengineering Professor Sheila Grant was a star faculty member. Romero had never met her, but he wanted to work in her lab. He worked up the nerve and reached out to her. At first, he sat in on her lab meetings. Then he volunteered with graduate students on their projects, then he became a lab fixture, working there until he graduated last May with a bachelor's degree in biomedical engineering. Although Romero hadn't planned on graduate school, he had discovered a love for research and didn't want to give it up. At Mizzou, he was a member of the IMSD-Express program, which helps involve students from underrepresented backgrounds in research. Through the program, he discovered (and later won) the national GEM Fellowship, which pays for graduate school. He now studies nanotechnology at the University of Arkansas. "Working with Dr. Grant helped me see the value and importance professors have in mentorship and guiding undergraduate students," he says.



Maximizing the Missouri Method



Karina Zaiets sits alongside her editor, Katherine Reed, in the *Columbia Missourian* newsroom.

Together, they go over every word and every punctuation mark in Zaiets' stories. "She sits with me for half an hour," says Zaiets, an international graduate student from Kyiv, Ukraine. "She really cares, and she tries to make the story the best it can be."

Zaiets earned a bachelor's degree in television reporting from Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts. She came to Mizzou in fall 2018 on a Fulbright scholarship and expects to graduate in May 2020 with a master's degree in journalism.

The science journalism student has wasted no time taking advantage of the Missouri Method, joining the *Columbia Missourian* staff as a public safety and health reporter. Zaiets sees her writing skills improving, despite working at the paper for just a few months. She also feels "more free" talking to people by phone and in person, a task that used to scare her.

As part of its student success initiative, Mizzou is committed to every student participating in at least one Missouri Method-style experiential learning opportunity, such as an internship, undergraduate research project or study abroad program.

Zaiets' career goal is to create an international media company dedicated to science reporting. "This is a challenge — to read through complicated research, digest it and then put it simply so a common person would be engaged and think it's interesting," she says. "I like challenges like that."

— Sarah Sabatke

Now Appearing
in
Las Vegas



Anthony Blatter paced outside the hotel conference room, waiting for his final-round performance in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) lower-classmen collegiate competition. When it was his turn, Blatter walked to the front of the room and announced his song — “If I Were a Rich Man” from the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*. Then he lowered his head, closed his eyes and gathered his thoughts. He looked up and began to sing.

Two years before, Blatter didn’t imagine being in college or singing competitions. He was a St. Louis high school junior with poor grades. “But in music, I would get A’s all the time,” he says. A music teacher saw Blatter’s talent and desire and pushed him to develop it. His success fueled the rest of his studies, taking him to Mizzou in fall 2017.

He joined the Phi Mu Alpha music fraternity. Music had been a lifeline for Blatter; he wanted to toss that line to anyone who needed it. In his second semester, he became diversity chair. He focused on building an open, trusting community. Eight to 12 of the brothers talked weekly about race, class and other prejudices in society. “It started opening people’s eyes to what [increasing diversity] should be all about,” Blatter says — namely that it works from the inside out. To attract a diverse group of new members requires current members “to know our stuff and be accepting.”

By the end of his second semester, a week before the Las Vegas competition, Blatter still didn’t think he’d be performing there. He didn’t have the money to go. A friend suggested he start a fundraising campaign online. Blatter raised \$1,200 in four days, bought the plane ticket and made the flight.

After he finished the song and heard his name announced as the winner, he remained stoic. But when he returned to his hotel room, the tears poured out. “I did this,” he thought. “Life is so cool.”

Affordability!

Starting in summer 2019, new rates for dining plans and residence halls cut prices for about 83 percent of students, who’ll live and dine on campus for as little as \$850 a month — nearly \$150 a month less than this year’s lowest rates.

Affordability measures have priced 70 percent of textbooks at less than \$55, and low-cost digital materials included in course fees have saved students \$3.3 million.

UM System need-based and merit-based scholarships will increase \$75 million and \$25 million, respectively, over five years.

The Missouri Land Grant Compact covers otherwise unmet tuition costs for Pell-eligible Missouri students.

An expanded Black and Gold Scholarship gives out-of-state legacy students with ACT scores of 25 or 26 a \$7,500 award. Those scoring 27 and up continue at in-state rates.

THE POWER OF HEALING

In a family assistance center full of recovery resources, a teenage girl lingers outside the entrance to the play area. Her father had just been at the concert where the Las Vegas mass shooting happened. Lindsey Murphy, M Ed ’12, sees her from inside. “I could tell she wasn’t sure if it was the place for her,” she says.

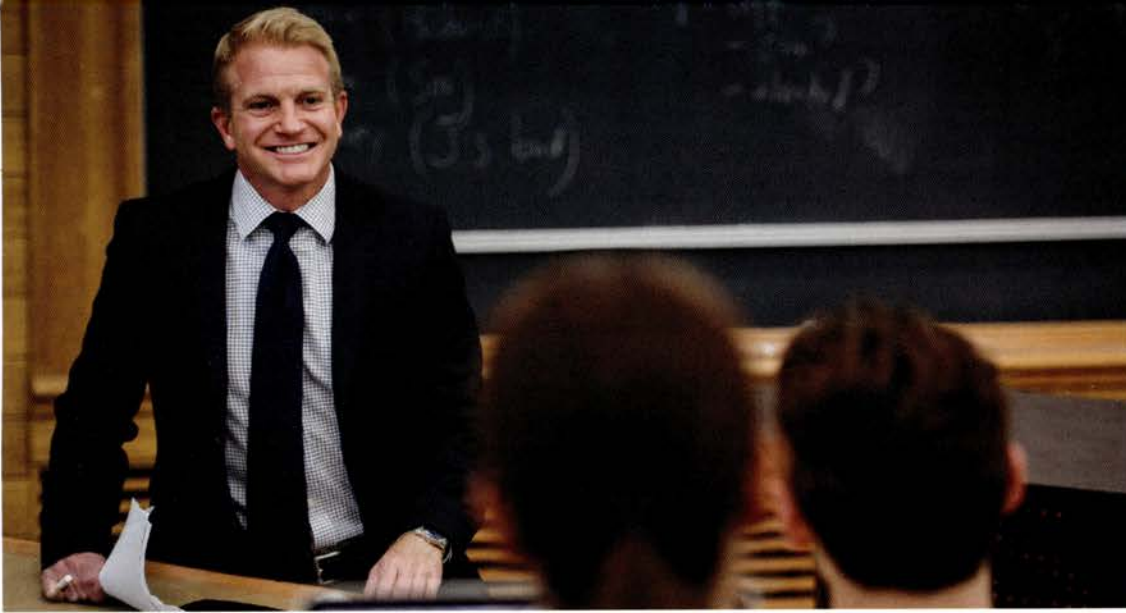
Murphy is the co-founder of Child Life Disaster Relief, a nonprofit that helps send certified child life specialists to traumatic events to assist children. She is also a doctoral candidate in human development and family science at Mizzou.

As a certified child life specialist, Murphy decided after the Joplin, Missouri, tornado to start a nonprofit that met children’s therapeutic needs in the midst of disasters. First, however, she enrolled in a doctoral program. She had no plans of becoming a faculty member; rather, she wanted to learn how to win grant money and how to apply science-based methods to her interventions. Working with her mentor, Associate Professor Sarah Killoren, Murphy has learned how to conduct and consume research, write grant proposals and describe the value of her organization.

Since Child Life Disaster Relief started in 2016, the network has responded to dozens of disasters, including the Las Vegas shooting, where Murphy eventually coaxed the young girl to come inside the play area. Another young girl joined them. They simply played cards. When her mother arrived to pick her up, the girl hugged Murphy with tears in her eyes. “Thank you,” she said, “for letting me see that others are going through the same thing I am.”



† Clockwise from top right, Lindsey Murphy served as associate director of the Family Assistance Center after the Las Vegas Route 91 Harvest Music Festival mass shooting. She worked with Director Katie Nees and child life specialists Balilea Scanlon and Samira Moosavi.



TEACHING FOR LEARNING

A professor wraps up an energetic class period. The students were engaged, inquisitive and clearly mastering the material. Tori Mondelli wants MU's new Teaching for Learning Center to be the place professors go to share that success story. "Remarkable teaching for learning goes on at Mizzou every day," says Mondelli, the founding director of the center. "I want to raise the visibility of these experiences to strengthen this culture of excellence."

Mondelli is only a few months on the job, and the center is still a year or two away from having a physical location on campus. Its future is still on the drafting board. But Mondelli has a vision, one where the center is an easy-to-use link to resources already available for instructors on campus; where it convenes instructors to share, learn and grow from one another's experiences; and where it develops innovative programs that support unmet instructional needs.

The bulk of the center's work will be promot-

ing the latest evidence-based teaching and learning practices — proven strategies that just need to be adapted to the Mizzou environment. Some of those, such as high-impact practices requiring meaningful faculty interaction and learning outside the classroom (for example, service learning courses and credit-based internships), are applicable across all disciplines. Others are program-specific.

The center will also push the boundaries, exploring an R&D Lab to innovate and test new approaches to teaching and learning. The big-picture goal is that, by engaging faculty and graduate instructors in critical reflection on the learning experience inside and outside of the classroom, the center can help boost student learning, which contributes to rising retention and graduation rates.

↑ Law Professor Thom Lambert won a 2017 William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence.



Help Finding That First Job

Already, 90.4 percent of recent Mizzou graduates have a successful career outcome, either finding employment, continuing their education, joining the military or joining a public service organization such as the Peace Corps. That rate is higher than the Association of American Universities public-institution average (75.6) and the Southeastern Conference average (75.5). But Mizzou's not done. As part of its five-year strategic plan, the university is pushing to achieve a 95 percent rate of successful career outcomes.

The MU Career Center already offers alumni access to web-based job boards and other career search tools. They are now developing partnerships with recruitment firms that specialize in recent graduates. Amanda Nell, senior student services coordinator for the Career Center, says Mizzou plans to roll out a new partnership next year with a firm known for its quality assessment of graduates' skills and interests. "We are making partnerships with people who can help our students find their way into the labor market in a way that they will be happy and successful in their roles," she says.

Baubles, Mentors and Beads ♦♦♦♦♦

The biggest lesson Bea Doheny's alumna mentor taught her was actually a feeling. Kelsey Meyer Raymond, BS BA '11, president and co-founder of Influence & Co., a Columbia-based content marketing firm, had started in college helping local businesses improve their marketing efforts. That work grew into a business that now employs more than 60 people. Doheny met Raymond through the Entrepreneurship Alliance program in the Trulaske College of Business. Doheny had been making astronomy-themed jewelry since high school, and through the program, she received seed money to build up an inventory and launch her hobby as a business. But that takes confidence, and she had doubts. *Who am I to do this now? I'm just a student.* Connecting with Raymond, discovering that they had attended the same St. Louis high school, that they graduated only a few years apart and that Raymond had started assembling the building blocks of her business while "just a student" like her, gave Doheny the confidence she needed. Doheny, BS BA '18, now runs Astronobeads full time in San Diego.



LAMBERT: SHANE EPPING; DOHENY: CLINI HESS; BAG: DALE SMITH