



Rob Hill photo

OUR ROLE & SCOPE

By CAROL HUNTER

The University of Missouri-Columbia is Missouri's premier public research institution — bolstering the state's economy, enhancing the citizenry's quality of life and offering superior undergraduate, graduate and professional education to high-ability students. MU's reputation as one of the nation's leading comprehensive universities is worldwide.

MU educates more people than any school in Missouri, public or private. And the education they receive is like no other in the state. Mizou is where a student can learn from one of the world's leading dialysis experts, read a 500-year-old book, send an experiment to the moon, befriend a scholar from mainland China, view antiquities dating to 5000 B.C., cheer for a nationally ranked Division I sports team.

Yet while MU clearly is a leader in Missouri, it has yet to reach the top echelon nationally that its citizens deserve. The main reason is lack of funding. Missouri spends less per capita on higher education than every state except New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

Higher education was a distinct product in 1839 when Missouri pioneers built MU, the first state university west of the Mississippi. But today Missouri revenues go to 29 public colleges and universities, and to 30 private colleges in the form of Missouri student grants. In this climate, no single university can be, or even needs to be, all things to all people. Not surprisingly, the governor, legislators, Coordinating Board for Higher Education and other special committees have asked that the various missions of institutions of higher education be clearly defined.

So what should we be about? What is MU's mission? "MU serves Missouri citizens as the state's leading community of scholars engaged in education, research, scholarship, creative achievement and public service," says Chancellor Haskell Monroe. "I believe this University has the potential to enhance every Missourian's quality of life more than any other single institution."

As Missouri's pre-eminent public research university, MU offers the most extensive research and graduate programs in the state. MU confers 71 percent of the doctoral degrees awarded by public institutions in Missouri — preparing people to reach the highest level of their professions, preparing the college professors of the future, preparing researchers for the Monsantos of Missouri and beyond.

And MU research produces considerable economic dividends for

Missouri. Soybean research, for instance, has added one-third bushel per acre yield to the crop in recent years. The College of Engineering provides basic and applied research for McDonnell Douglas, Union Electric and other Missouri firms. A team of medical doctors and chemistry professors at MU developed a radiopharmaceutical that can be used to help study and diagnose strokes,

seizures and Alzheimer's disease. In Springfield, Mo., Kraft Inc. claims to have saved \$500,000 through more efficient management practices recommended by MU's Missouri Institute of Executive Development.

Though perhaps not as obvious, the research mission equally benefits undergraduates. "There is a different kind of teaching where faculty are involved with the discovery of

Officials cite need for more state money

While the accompanying story lists a number of factors of which MU can be proud, additional funding must be secured to ensure that the University and the state remain nationally competitive. Mizou's basic chemistry laboratories date back to the 1940s; the money is not there for renovation. The College of Agriculture will need \$110 million in new laboratory space and equipment over the next decade, and the biological sciences division cites the need for \$1.5 million in research and teaching equipment to keep pace with changing technology. Faculty salaries are 19 percent below the average for Big Eight and Big Ten universities, the institutions with which Mizou competes for top teachers and researchers.

Some of the older buildings on Campus actually violate current building codes — the list includes Jesse, McAlester, Gwynn and Swallow halls, along with the sociology building — and the state says it cannot find the money to correct the situation. MU requested \$73.5 million from the state for maintenance and repair this year, but will receive only about \$2 million.

"MU must maintain its role as Missouri's nationally competitive public university," Chancellor Haskell Monroe says. "If we suffer, the entire state suffers. Private giving cannot do it all. To achieve our goals, we must receive additional state funding."



states, maintain economic growth and attract new jobs. The groups urged the state to spend an additional \$300 million a year on higher education, and recommended that another \$311 million be raised for computers and building maintenance, possibly through a bond issue.

The report confirms the ideas of those who have been working to increase state funding for colleges and universities. "We must come to grips with the changing demographics of our society," says state Sen. Roger Wilson, M Ed '86, D-Columbia, a member of the state's new Business and Education Partnership Commission. That group is examining the status of higher education and is expected to make a report by the end of the year.

All of this adds up to a push for a tax increase for higher education in 1991, says Bill Mann, chancellor of the Metropolitan Community Colleges in Kansas City and chairman of Missourians for Higher Education, the group spearheading the call for additional funds. The MHE envisions a scenario in which the Missouri General Assembly would pass legislation early next year calling for an election for a tax increase; Gov. John Ashcroft would support it; and voters would go to the polls next summer and approve the plan.

"The outcome of this issue will determine the future of our state," Monroe says. "We must demonstrate that Missouri's very finest public university needs, and is worthy of, increased public support." — Terry Jordan

knowledge or the creation of art. Our faculty are writing the books and articles that are going to be the heart of what people believe about a subject in the next decade," says Dr. Larry Clark, dean of the College of Arts and Science. "As the knowledge of a field grows, the things discussed here will become part of teaching on other campuses."

Furthermore, MU looks upon the entire state as a kind of campus. Through Extension and continuing education, MU, the state's original land-grant university, shares its knowledge with Missouri's citizens.

And MU's storehouse of knowledge is ever expanding. In the past five years, for example, MU professors have published more than 300 books. MU students, from freshmen to PhD candidates, interact with active scholars. Since research cultivates the skills to work from problem to solution, "Teaching and research should always come together," says Dr. Bill Bondeson, philosophy professor and faculty liaison to the MU Alumni Association. "We're here to learn, but more fundamentally, we're here to help other people learn, to put them in a position to learn for themselves. So research should be for the sake of teaching, not the reverse."

By its nature, a research university requires an extensive library, laboratories, museums, computers and other equipment primarily to support faculty and graduate students. But of course these facilities also enrich the undergraduate experience. MU Libraries maintain the largest research collection in Missouri. Every MU student has access to computing. MU also operates the most powerful research reactor on a university campus. Its mere presence reminds undergraduates of MU's caliber.

Not surprisingly, the best and brightest students seek out the challenges and opportunities that only MU can offer. MU enrolls more Bright Flight scholars and more Missouri valedictorians than any other school. The average ACT score of MU freshmen is 24, more than four points above the state and national averages. Competing in this atmosphere, students are motivated to take the initiative and become more self-reliant.



MU belongs to an elite group selected for membership in the American Association of Universities and ranked by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as Research Universities 1.

Leading U.S. Research Universities

While bigger is not necessarily better in education or in any other realm, the economies of scale do provide distinct advantages. Mizzou has more academic programs in one place than virtually every other university in the land. Only four others can match our array of schools and colleges: the University of Florida, the University of Minnesota, Ohio State and the University of Wisconsin. "That means, from a student's point of view, there is an enormous range of courses of study," Bondeson says. "From a teaching perspective, we have a unique opportunity to put together a group of scholars from across many fields to deal with a particular issue and then help students learn about it."

Bondeson's medical ethics course, for example, draws from campus experts in medicine, nursing, law, economics and religious stud-

ies. The result: "Students can deal with an emerging field in a unique, creative way. They can't do that at any other university in the state or in this part of the country," he says.

These multiple viewpoints help students realize a valuable lesson: Intelligent scholars may legitimately reach different conclusions from the same evidence.

A major university such as MU also can sustain programs and services not available at smaller schools. The Honors College, Concert Series, Black Studies, Women Studies, career counseling programs, NCAA Division I athletics and overseas study programs are examples. In addition, MU students may choose from 360 cocurricular activities, building leadership skills and enriching their lives.

Here's another perspective on size: MU's College of Arts and Sci-



1. University of Washington
2. University of California-Berkeley
3. California Institute of Technology
4. University of California-Los Angeles
5. University of California-San Diego
6. University of Arizona
7. University of Colorado
8. University of Texas
9. University of Minnesota
10. University of Iowa
11. University of Missouri-Columbia
12. University of Wisconsin
13. University of Chicago
14. Northwest University
15. University of Illinois
16. Washington University
17. Michigan State University
18. Purdue University
19. Indiana University
20. Vanderbilt University
21. University of Michigan
22. Ohio State University
23. Case Western University
24. University of Pittsburgh
25. Carnegie-Mellon University
26. University of Rochester
27. Cornell University
28. Pennsylvania State University
29. University of Virginia
30. Duke University
31. University of North Carolina
32. University of Florida
33. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
34. Harvard University
35. Yale University
36. Columbia University
37. New York University
38. Princeton University
39. University of Maryland

ence has more academic departments offering degrees from the bachelor's through the PhD than any other college in Missouri. A&S touches each student at Mizzou, whether in a freshman history survey course or its graduate program. But its influence is global, says Dean Clark. "Our main concern is with the citizens of Missouri, but a national and international presence is automatically part of the fabric of this Campus. We expect faculty to be known nationally and internationally."

Reflecting the quality of our faculty, MU is the only public institution in Missouri to be awarded the highest designation, Research Universities I, by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Out of 3,400 colleges and universities nationwide, only 70 are so classified. Only one other Big

Eight school, Colorado, is in the Research I category. Selection criteria include quality of programs, outside funding and level of doctoral education. Nationwide, MU is one of 54 schools admitted to the American Association of Universities. This select group is chosen based on quality of faculty, research and libraries.

MU's reputation regularly brings prominent visitors to Campus. This infusion of ideas and viewpoints complements MU's rich diversity. Our students come from every Missouri county, every state and 109 countries. MU students have the opportunity to understand and appreciate different cultures, which is increasingly important in an interdependent world. And study abroad programs allow MU undergraduates to explore the world, whether searching for archaeological finds in Peru or studying at Oxford.

While MU students enjoy a multitude of options in their classwork and beyond, "We want to give students across the board a set of basic skills which will help them throughout their lives," Bondeson says. MU graduates should be equipped to think critically, read analytically, write effectively and speak persuasively. They should understand what disciplines other than their own offer. And they should be familiar with some of the masterpieces that human beings have created in the fields of art, science, literature and philosophy. "Until you come in contact with human genius, you don't understand what human potential is all about," Bondeson says.

But without adequate resources, MU cannot reach its potential to fulfill the mission that the state of Missouri and our students deserve. MU is for Missouri's future. ☐