

By MISSOURIAN STAFF

From Missourian

COLUMBIA — The MU College of Education has decided not to fill the position of division executive director at this time.

Two candidates, including former military psychologist Larry James, were finalists for the position. The other candidate was Matthew Burns of the University of Minnesota.

James proved to be controversial because of his connection to the interrogations at Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay.

Since 2008, he has been dean of the School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

According to a memo from Education Dean Daniel Clay, Mike Pullis will serve as interim director when John Wedman retires Feb. 28. He will continue in that interim role until another individual is selected.

Wedman will continue in a part-time role throughout the next year to help facilitate the transition.

James was deputy director of the behavioral science consultation team at Guantanamo Bay from January to May 2003 and served as director from June 2007 to May 2008.

He was director of a similar team from June to October 2004 at the Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center at Abu Ghraib prison, according to the curriculum vitae he provided to the College of Education search committee.

During those periods, reports surfaced about the abuse of the detainees in custody. Legal complaints were filed in Louisiana and Ohio seeking an investigation of James' role in the interrogations.

James' memoir, "Fixing Hell: An Army Psychologist Confronts Abu Ghraib," was a chronicle of the events there and at Guantanamo. Ethical situations in his book were cited by critics as key reasons to investigate his role in the interrogations.

James has said that no adjudicatory body has ever found probable cause to initiate sanctions against him because of his connections to the interrogations in Cuba and Iraq.

His critics said a thorough investigation of his possible involvement in the abuses has never taken place. They also asserted that his ethical decisions at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib should disqualify him to practice psychology.

"There has never been any evidence whatsoever for any of these boards to have the slightest cause to investigate," James told the Missourian in early January.

[Read more about Larry James and the hiring process here.](#)

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