Announcer ([00:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Letterman ([00:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Later this month, Missouri State University will host its 20th annual Public Affairs Conference. For two decades now, the event has been a highlight of the year for many and the pinnacle of the university’s public affairs mission.

This year’s theme is Navigating the Now: tradition, innovation and wisdom in a world of change. Event organizers hope to reflect on tradition, celebrate innovation and explore a variety of ways to both embrace change and to exercise strength in the face of struggle.

I’m Emily Letterman.

Today, I’m joined by Shannon Wooden, a MSU English professor and the current provost fellow for public affairs.

Much of what the university does is driven by its public affairs mission. Let’s break that down for a minute. What does public affairs mean at Missouri State?

Dr. Shannon Wooden ([00:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Public affairs affords us the opportunity to dig really deeply into questions and showcase for our students that educated people approach difficult questions in specific and interesting ways. The public affairs mission encourages us at every level of education here to emphasize cultural competence, community engagement and ethical leadership. So, from our general education program up, we design our courses and we design our programs around those three pillars of public affairs

Emily Letterman ([01:28](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

With a mix of free, in-person and live virtual panel sessions this year’s Public Affairs Conference runs Sept. 26-28 on campus.

Dr. Shannon Wooden ([01:37](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

What the Public Affairs Conference does is affords us the opportunity to say educated citizens participate in difficult it, it participate in solutions to difficult problems in small ways all the time. This year's theme is Navigating the Now: tradition, innovation and wisdom in a world of change. It started because we were really interested in kind of popular concepts like resilience and grit and the way those popular concepts encourage us to be strong and flexible in a world of transition that can be even chaotic. But also those words are sort of insufficient to capture the kind of wisdom that we want our community to develop. Said another way, we live in very chaotic times. There are a lot of things changing very, very quickly, and some of those changes are exciting and some of those changes are terrifying. And we find ourselves frequently, I think, overwhelmed by the vastness and the rapidity of those changes.

Emily Letterman ([02:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

For the 20th annual event, Wooden is excited to bring in a group she’s long sought – Ill-Abilities.

Dr. Shannon Wooden ([03:02](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

And they are unbelievable dancers, all of whom have a disability, significant disability in one way or another. So it started about 10 years ago by a dancer out of Toronto, Luca Patel is his name, and Luca was, you know, committed to dance. It's not a inspirational overcoming of disability narrative. He's animated by dance and what he set out to do was demonstrate that expressing one's strength and power and beauty with one's body, whatever that body can do is the very nature of dance. So they're gonna speak and they're gonna perform, and they're gonna do workshops with some of our students. I'm very, very excited to have them come.

Emily Letterman ([03:54](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Other speakers at this year’s conference include NPR science correspondent Yuki Noguchi and Diego Senior, who would discuss the implications of IA chatbots and mental health.

Dr. Shannon Wooden ([04:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Being a professor, being somebody on the academic side, I tend to focus a lot on how public affairs teaches our students, but one of the things that's really exciting about public affairs is that it gives us an opportunity to educate and include our larger community as well. So all of these events are free and open to the public. Lots of, uh, members of the community attend in person or attend virtually, and certainly any of them are free to engage with our speakers and ask questions. Our staff gets very, very involved. So it's much, it goes way outside the classroom.

Emily Letterman ([04:38](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

To learn more about the Public Affairs Conference happening Sept. 26-28, visit publicaffairs.missouristate.edu

My guest today has been English professor Dr. Shannon Wooden, current provost fellow for public affairs.

I’m Emily Letterman for the Missouri State Journal.
Announcer ([04:56](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/DhJKS6KyA6Et_VuYxqUtWkqQ61_gy6idAx62w3gDfwPBXo20nztnCsb6_H9yjMlvrzdkWuYZ-typzNpAncgqvzvq9vA?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6397. The Missouri State Journal is available online@kmu.org.