

First Five Fridays: A vlog conversation with UM System President Mun Choi
Transcript of Episode 5 – *My Story*
March 31, 2017

Fougere: Why did you decide to study engineering?

Choi: I've always enjoyed math and sciences, and for me, growing up in the state of Illinois, I had a natural inclination to attend the University of Illinois and I recognized that they had a very strong engineering program. And so, my reasons for selecting engineering, growing up in Illinois, it's not any different than students who would grow up in Missouri thinking about degrees in technology because it is becoming so pervasive in our lives.

Fougere: What was it like being a faculty member? Tell us about your research.

Choi: My research was on the burning of hydrocarbon fuels, and we measured the sooting characteristics to understand the efficiencies of burning, as well as the environmental impacts of creating soot when burning fossil fuels. And those experiments were being performed at the International Space Station. And I've been involved in that project for over 30 years, and I really enjoyed the intellectual curiosity that really peaked in me and also the opportunity to train graduate students who are now making their own important contributions in their own way.

Fougere: How do you think your time as Provost and Executive Vice President at the University of Connecticut has prepared you to be the University of Missouri System?

Choi: As Provost of the University of Connecticut, I was involved in not only the internal workings of the university, ensuring that we had resources to operate the academic affairs component, providing support for faculty members to start the research, and developing a type of academic plan investments that would create higher profile, greater reputation for the university. But I also participated in external activities, working with the legislatures, with the governor's office, and philanthropic activities with the alums as well as corporations. And so, that broad base of activity, working on the internal mechanics of running the academic affairs, but also providing resources from external sources to support the activities of the university, I think are key elements that are gonna come in very, very handy in my new role.