Salaries will remain priority, Forsee says

Retention issues concern faculty.

By Janese Icavin

Friday, December 4, 2009

University of Missouri salaries continue to be a budget priority, even though the system expects to see less state funding next year, President Gary Forsee told employees this morning.

"I continue to be very focused on the issue of competitive salaries," he said. "Now we have to figure out how to make the investment. This is a constant topic of discussion."

But the tough economic times that have kept university positions vacant and reduced budgets aren't expected to end soon, Forsee said during a town hall meeting with MU Health Care professionals. The university system is expecting to see a $21 million cut in state funding this coming year and, per an agreement with Gov. Jay Nixon, in-state undergraduate tuition will not increase. Administrators are in the process of determining whether that tuition freeze also will be applied to graduate and out-of-state students.

Although faculty members are loyal to the university, Rebecca Johnson, an associate professor in the Sinclair School of Nursing, said she worries about losing quality faculty members who might receive better offers. She asked Forsee what could be done to retain those employees in tough times.

The best short-term solution is to make faculty members and employees feel appreciated, he responded. That's one reason Forsee said he's using part of his town hall meetings to express gratitude to faculty and staff.

As state funding has gone down and enrollment has increased, the university has maintained its quality, he said.

"I'm proud the university has been able to do more with less, not less with less," Forsee said. "We've managed to keep our quality and brand and image strong."

Today's town hall meeting was one of a series Forsee has been hosting on all four campuses. He's expected to share his message with MU faculty and staff at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday.
After the new year, Forsee plans to travel to all four campuses again to meet with civic leaders in each community.

He’s not sure what will come out of those meetings, but he has high hopes partnerships between community and university leaders will have tangible results, such as moving forward with university building projects and capital improvements.

Forsee said he came up with the idea when visiting the Rolla campus, where administrators expressed a shortfall of funding for a building project but hadn’t considered partnering with the city on an existing vacant building.

“We have a set of tools, and communities and cities have sets of tools,” Forsee said. “Let’s just get everybody in a room and lay out those tools.”

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
Kelly: Forsee letter 'an incredible success'

By Janese Heavin

Posted December 4, 2009 at 1:25 p.m.

UM System President Gary Forsee's letter regarding cap-and-trade is getting a "kudos" from at least one Democrat.

Rep. Chris Kelly, D- Columbia, said the letter now ensures, in writing, MU's power plant isn't a "covered entity" under the legislation.

"The bill was not clear about whether MU would be covered," Kelly said. "Now we have clear legislative intent."

U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, specifically said in a memo the proposed bill would not apply to MU's power plant because of the small amount of electricity it sells to the grid.

So, now, if the congressional legislative intent of the bill is every challenged in court, "we have a clear indication of legislative intent in Waxman's own words," Kelly said.

"I think Forsee did what he gets paid to do, and that's to take care of the interests of the University of Missouri," Kelly said. The letter "was an incredible success."
In the recent Columbia Daily Tribune article “Cap and Trade Bad for MU, Forsee says,” it was revealed that University of Missouri System President Gary Forsee wrote a letter directly to federal lawmakers urging them to oppose comprehensive climate change legislation, or at least to “ensure that specific exemptions are included” for the biggest polluting energy sources, such as coal.

As someone who has worked directly with hundreds of MU students on cleaner energy initiatives this fall, I have witnessed a lot of frustration and disappointment from students and faculty in response to Forsee’s letter, which inhibits strong and effective climate action and undermines imminent and necessary progress in moving towards clean energy at MU and across the nation.

While the article made it sound as if Forsee represented the views of the broader UM System, a closer look reveals that Forsee’s views more accurately represent those of our nation’s most polluting special interests. These views directly oppose the opinion of most students at MU and contradict previous promises made by Forsee’s own administration in regards to global warming and sustainability.

In Missouri, the “specific exemptions” Forsee requests would go directly toward maintaining an unfair advantage for dirty coal, which provides 85 percent of the state’s energy, rather than the clean energy initiatives laid forth in last year’s passage of the Missouri renewable electricity standard, best known as Proposition C.

Though it has spent millions on ‘clean’ coal advertising, the truth is that the coal industry has for years actively fought against cleaning up the existing coal fleet. Meanwhile, from coal ash and mining to soot and carbon pollution, coal remains one of
Missouri's dirtiest businesses. It poses enormous costs on our health as well as significant environmental and social costs on our society, like the $62 billion in "hidden" costs that a recent National Research Council study attributed to coal in the US each year.

It is clear that the industry will not clean itself up; that is why strong regulations, including cap and trade, are vital to protect families and communities from coal's dangerous side effects.

Strong regulations also put us on a path to cleaner technology that will boost economic growth, create jobs and protect the planet. In fact, successfully meeting Proposition C's 15 percent renewable electricity standard is expected to save Missourians $331 million over the next 20 years, according to Renew Missouri.

On the contrary, extended exemptions to Big Coal will only continue provide Big Coal with an unfair advantage and inhibit Missouri's transition to existing clean, renewable energy solutions.

Certainly, there is evidence that MU is taking some encouraging steps in favor of clean energy and climate action. Within the last year, MU has been moving forward with plans to begin construction of a new biomass boiler next fall, has signed the President's Climate Commitment, and has hired a sustainability coordinator. Just as encouraging, this semester was the vocalization of support by MU Chancellor Brady Deaton for student and faculty efforts to move the university beyond coal.

However, MU has much to do still to transition to socially responsible energy sources, rapidly phase out the tons of dirty coal it burns each year, and to successfully follow through on its promise to become climate neutral. Forsee's recent actions only threaten to hinder this urgent transition.

Forsee claimed that federal climate and energy legislation would be "bad for MU." In reality, his letter was a huge misrepresentation of campus opinion and the facts around effectively transitioning to a cleaner energy future.

Understandably, a lot of people at MU are incredibly disappointed and wondering why Forsee would suddenly speak out against an issue that MU has frequently claimed leadership on. I would like to remind Forsee that his job is to represent the interests of
the students, faculty, and staff of the UM system, not the special interests of the biggest polluters in our nation, like Big Coal.

*Ryan Doyle is a Sierra Club organizer with the Beyond Coal Campaign.*
Let MU lead us away from dirty coal

BY PAUL ROLFE

Sunday, December 6, 2009

The other day I saw two political pundits on TV debating the reality of climate change, and I was astonished. Glaciers are melting, a hurricane decimated New Orleans and most scientists concur global temperatures continue to rise. While controversy and debate might sell well with the media, human-caused climate change has been widely recognized as the reality. Clearly our world’s climate is on a slippery slope to chaos.

Science has shown the cause of these effects comes down to greenhouse gases, mainly carbon emissions. In the United States, coal contributes nearly 40 percent of carbon dioxide emissions.

Simply put, coal equals carbon. With every light switch flipped, TV show watched and adjustment of the thermostat, we are feeding the coal habit. We are feeding it with 183,000 tons of dirty coal a year here at the University of Missouri. To put that in perspective, if you piled all that coal onto Faurot Field, that pile would be more than 150 feet high.

Many people will claim it’s too expensive to move to renewable sources of energy. This has been shown to be false on a long-term scale or when including the externalities of coal. If you include the external cost of miners’ lives, destruction of environments and communities destroyed by mining, chemicals put into the air when coal is burned and the way carbon emissions are throwing our climate into an erratic mess, it quickly becomes clear that using clean and renewable energy is by far the most economical option we have. It is also the only option that will improve our families’ health, protect our climate and create permanent, sustainable job growth in our stagnant economy.

MU has made some noteworthy sustainability efforts of course, with some biomass fuels, natural gas and a new biomass boiler to be installed by 2012. Yet more than 80 percent of all the campus energy supply still comes from coal burned locally at the MU power plant, and even more is burned by our outside energy supplier.

The real concern with our energy consumption is there is no plan or vision to ever stop burning coal. Chancellor Brady Deaton has said he agrees with implementing clean sources of energy, but he won’t take the next step of commissioning a plan to phase out coal. Change won’t come instantly, but if we don’t take action now, the most destructive effects of coal will be inescapable.
Other schools are already moving beyond coal. The University of Wisconsin has begun the transition to move completely off coal to a combination of natural gas and biomass by 2012. Ball State University is moving completely to geothermal power. These solutions will massively cut carbon emissions at both schools, provide a greater mix of locally sourced biomass and geothermal energy, create new construction and clean-energy jobs, and drastically cut air and water pollution from coal use.

At MU, we can help launch the clean energy revolution rather than hanging on to our dirty coal habits. Moving beyond coal at MU is a crucial step to show leadership for getting others to kick the habit, too. To do so, we need a strong commitment by Chancellor Deaton and the administration to move beyond coal by increasing investments in solar, geothermal, more biomass, energy efficiency and conservation. These existing solutions could be employed immediately to reduce our dependence on coal in the short term and eliminate its use entirely as quickly as possible.

Let's take the lead in moving beyond coal, starting right here at Mizzou.

Paul Rolfe is the faculty coalitions coordinator for the student group Coal Free Mizzou.
MU president warms to climate change legislation

Columbia — A letter to federal lawmakers from University of Missouri President Gary Forsee opposing federal climate change legislation has drawn the former Sprint Nextel CEO into a dispute with a leading Democratic lawmaker from California.

The Columbia Tribune reported that Forsee recently urged Missouri's congressional delegation to oppose cap-and-trade legislation, which he said would add $5 million to $8 million to the university's energy budget.

That prompted U.S. Rep Henry Waxman, a California Democrat, to send his own letter to Missouri's federal lawmakers suggesting that Forsee's numbers were inflated.

Those numbers were based on the assumption that a university power plant on the Columbia campus would have to buy up to 30 percent of greenhouse gas allowances. But Waxman, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said the proposed bill would not apply to the power plant because of the relatively small amount of electricity it generates. That reduces Forsee's numbers by a third, Waxman said in the memo sent Thursday.

Forsee spoke further about the issue at a Friday meeting with employees of the university's health care system. He said he's not opposed to the environmental goals of federal climate change legislation but remains concerned about the proposal's potential financial impact.

"We're feeling a little better about the interpretation," he said at the town hall meeting on the Columbia campus. "There's still work to be done. We're glad we raised the issue."

The bill would require industries to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Industries emitting more pollutants than allowed would have to buy credits to do so, and industries emitting less could sell, trade or save those unused emissions.

Forsee said he didn't see the letter as contradicting his signature on the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment, which calls for a reduction of greenhouse gases, because he was only asking that lawmakers consider the fiscal impact on Missouri.

"I wasn't saying we don't agree with the presidents' climate initiative," he said.

Forsee's letter to lawmakers drew criticism from some students and faculty, including a group of 30 demonstrators who protested Thursday outside University Hall. Ten students arrived later to show their support for the president's position.


"I am surprised you would not more thoroughly study the facts before sending correspondence mischaracterizing how a proposed federal bill might impact the University of Missouri," Skelton said.
Online help for families facing divorce
Published: Dec. 3, 2009

COLUMBIA, Mo., Dec. 3 (UPI) -- An online course helps divorcing parents improve relationships with their children, U.S. researchers say.

Completion of the course -- called Focus on Kids -- gives parents a better awareness of separation-related problems and how to solve them, David Schramm and Graham McCaulley of the University of Missouri in Columbia say.

The face-to-face version of Focus on Kids satisfies the Missouri law that requires parents who are divorcing to attend an educational program, the researchers say.

Schramm and colleagues in the department of human development and family studies at the university developed the in-person and online versions. They recommend divorcing parents:

-- Avoid criticizing the other parent and arguing in front of children.

-- Reassure children conflict and divorce are not their fault.

-- Plan relaxing activities for kids to make transitions between households less stressful.

-- Establish consistent routines and responsibilities in each household.

-- Avoid using the child as a messenger. Discuss parenting and financial issues directly.

-- Avoid asking questions about the other parent, which can make children uncomfortable.

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Two University of Missouri fraternities are hoping to make the season a little brighter for Columbia.

Beta Theta Pi fraternity brothers Jack Caffrey, left, and Jimmy Hofman help 9-year-old Shamon Mack build a gingerbread house Friday at the fraternity house, 520 S. College Ave.

Members of Delta Upsilon fraternity are spending every weekday until Christmas break ringing bells for the Salvation Army.

And last night, members of Beta Theta Pi teamed up with the Boys & Girls Club to make gingerbread houses and take them to the Lenoir Woods retirement community.

The activities are a first for each fraternity, and members said the goal is to give back to the community.

Nick Park, president of Delta Upsilon, said he came up with the bell-ringing idea after members volunteered for the Salvation Army.

"It's nice to know what we're doing it for is going to something special," he said. "We know because we've been to the Salvation Army in Columbia. The money is staying here. We've been there, so we know where it's going, and we really have a point standing out there and ringing a bell."
Park said he has been impressed with the fraternity members who volunteer to ring bells at Maryland Avenue and Rollins Street on campus. Two members man the collection cans from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day.

Park isn’t sure how much money they’ve raised but said he wants to collect at least $1,500, or $100 a day. Students, members of the campus Greek community and other passers-by have all pitched in, he said.

This is the second holiday Beta Theta Pi has shared with children from Boys & Girls Club. In October, the fraternity helped members of the club carve jack-o’-lanterns. That project was so successful, member Ryan Neff said, fraternity members wanted to do another project.

Last night, the men helped children piece together gingerbread houses from kits before delivering them to the senior living center, where the group members also were planning to sing Christmas carols.

“Hopefully, we’ll teach the children to give back a little to the community, too,” Neff said.

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MU researchers find some common drugs can weaken flu shot's power in animals

Researchers at the University of Missouri's College of Veterinary Medicine have found that some common drugs, when taken before or soon after a flu vaccination, weaken the shot's power against the virus in animals.

They say it is possible that some over-the-counter drugs, such as aspirin and Tylenol, which inhibit certain enzymes, could also dilute the effectiveness of vaccines.

So far, MU researchers have only found this to be true in mice. No widespread study on these findings has been conducted in humans yet, said lead researcher Charles Brown, associate professor of veterinary pathobiology.

He said a study done in the Czech Republic and recently published in The Lancet, a medical journal, reported these drugs had been found to sometimes reduce the effectiveness of vaccines in children.

But he added that more work was needed before the research would affect what flu clinics might tell clients about taking a flu shot.

| Mará Rose Williams, mdwilliams@kcstar.com |
Pay to click?

Will online news consumers pay to click?

By Janese Heavin

Saturday, December 5, 2009

As newspapers search for a way to make money from their online content, researchers at the Reynolds Journalism Institute are charged with finding new ways to keep media alive and sustainable.

Every day, thousands of people visit the Tribune’s Web site to read news stories, browse classified ads and check out the latest online comments, blog entries and editorials.

Circulate, a Web browser toolbar being developed by startup CircLabs, appears above the ESPN.com home page. The image shows how it looks when the user samples a story suggested by the toolbar. A link under the summary allows the user to pay 5 cents for the full story. The toolbar features the logo of the user’s home newspaper, in this case the Quad-City Times, in the top right corner.

Circulate, a Web browser toolbar being developed by startup CircLabs, appears above the ESPN.com home page. The image shows how the toolbar appears while the user is browsing the Web page. A link under the summary allows the user to pay 5 cents for the full story. The toolbar features the logo of the user’s home newspaper, in this case the Quad-City Times, in the top right corner.

But would they pay to do so?

That’s a question nagging many newspapers as they try to compete in an online world where information is easier than ever to obtain.

The Tribune is moving toward an online subscription system that would require Web visitors to pay for content they now access free of charge. Andy Waters, vice president for interactive media, said there’s no timetable for implementing such a system because he’s trying to determine the best way to go about it.

“We’re still looking at what’s going to emerge as the industry standard,” he said. “There isn’t one yet.”
Earlier this year, the Newspaper Association of America requested proposals from companies with ideas for ways newspapers could charge for online content. Giants such as Google and Microsoft responded to the request, as did startups hoping to set the standard for pay models.

Some media companies have been charging for online news since the Internet's inception. Perhaps most notable is the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, owned by Little Rock-based WEHCO Media Inc. WEHCO President Walter Hussman Jr. has been an outspoken proponent of charging for online news coverage, vocally challenging the logic of giving away something in a new format that was previously sold.

In a widely circulated Wall Street Journal editorial, Hussman questioned why computer-savvy readers would buy a newspaper when they can get that information online for free. By giving away online content, newspapers have created competition for their print editions.

Hussman contends that ending the online giveaway protects print newspapers. In his editorial, he noted his circulation was up while circulation dropped among newspapers giving away news online.

There are dozens of ways newspapers could package and sell their content online, said Clyde Bentley, a Reynolds Journalism Institute Fellow and University of Missouri associate professor.

One way would be a digital newsstand that could allow mobile phone users to pay a quarter for their daily newspaper. Or multiple news outlets could bundle their products and offer them in packages, much like cable channels are grouped in television packages.

Researchers at the Reynolds Journalism Institute are charged with finding new ways to keep media alive and sustainable. The institute works with corporate partners such as Apple, Adobe and AT&T to integrate media and technology to create new multimedia products.

One of the products under development at the institute is Circulate, a news tool bar created by startup CircLabs that captures and groups stories of particular interest to users according to their preferences and surfing history. Readers would subscribe to Circulate through their local papers, but the tool would give them a way to purchase stories of interest from multiple sources.

Circulate is in the testing stage of development, and newspapers around the country have expressed interest in signing up, said Bill Densmore, a former RJI Fellow who co-founded the tool.

Waters said the Tribune is leaning toward a metered approach that would give readers a certain number of online stories for free. That would allow readers who are interested in only one story the opportunity to access that story without having to pay. Readers wanting more news content would be able to purchase packages that fit their desired access.
Although details are being hashed out, Waters envisions giving readers the option of paying for a month's worth of news or a certain number of stories, or allowing them to buy online packages in other ways, such as subscribing to sports-only coverage. In any scenario, Waters said, the plan for now is to provide those subscribing to the print edition with free access to the online version.

Waters said he is optimistic that loyal Tribune readers will pay for the paper — be it in print or online — but others who follow paid content trends aren't so sure.

Reynolds Journalism Institute Fellow Michael Skoler is skeptical newspapers can start charging for something they've been giving away for free.

In retrospect, most experts agree, providing news online for free from the beginning was a mistake. But the Internet was birthed in the idea that information would be free, so it might have been tough for media outlets at that time to justify charging, Bentley said.

"The concept was that all information was free and that no one paid for the Internet," he said. "That's always been something of a fallacy, though, because someone had to pay for the telephone line and computer. But we still had this kind of culture that all information was free."

And in the beginning, many believed online advertising would fund the salaries of those collecting and providing content, in the same way print ads support newspapers.

"There was a hope that online advertising would cover the cost of creating the content we put on the Web," Waters said. "But it just hasn't gone that far."

That's partly because those ad dollars have been going to news aggregators such as Google and Yahoo, News Corp. Chairman and Chief Executive Rupert Murdoch said at a conference earlier this week in Washington, D.C. He challenged media outlets to charge for content, in part, to stop those search engines from "feeding off the hard-earned efforts and investments of others," The Associated Press reported.

The trend isn't likely to change anytime soon, the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers said in its annual news trends update this week.

"If newspaper companies wish to maintain their strong content leadership, someone is going to have to pay," association CEO Timothy Balding said in a summary of the report. "It looks like we have to solve the digital payment issue and soon."

Skoler said using the print advertising model with newspaper Web sites hasn't worked, so he questions why newspapers think a subscription mechanism will make online content profitable.
"Erecting pay walls, especially for newspapers, is focusing on the past, keeping what you have and at least making it survive," Skoler said. "I'm interested in how to make news and information a growth industry again, finding a new business model and creating the news business around that model."

Skoler is studying niche outlets that provide unique news and services to targeted audiences, such as Politico.com, which is geared to political insiders, and ConsumerReports.org, a consumer-focused product review site run by the not-for-profit organization Consumers Union.

"Consumer Reports' model is instead of simply gathering information out there and available, they start doing something with it," he said. "They're adding value to content. Going beyond just reporting what's out there and what's happening, that's when people will see value and be willing to pay for it."

Similarly, newspapers are going to have to come up with new services and products to add value to their content, he said.

"You can't simply start charging people for what you're already doing," Skoler said. "Putting up pay walls is the wrong strategy. It's not about creating new value for people. Assuming you're valuable and sticking up pay walls to see how many people agree with you, that's risky."

Waters is willing to take that risk. "What we have to offer is unique enough to get away with charging for it," he said.

Research is partly on Waters' side. A new study from The Boston Consulting Group says most consumers are willing to pay for unique local news, but they're not willing to pay a lot for it. The study found that readers in the United States are willing to pay an average of $3 a month for "meaningful" content.

Bentley said the results make him think of the Apple iTunes store, which offers individual songs, music videos and other content online.

"Nobody wanted to pay $10 for a song, but they were willing to pay 99 cents," he said. "That's what you're seeing there. You can't overprice it, but people are willing to pay."

Niche Web sites that feature free online classified ads and real estate listings pose as much threat to small papers as anything else, Skoler said. "If your community paper is in a relatively small area, you can have those things picked away from you very easily," he said.

Newspapers have seen outside threats before, Bentley said. "We saw the same threat from garage coupon books." he said. "Coupon books were cheap; one person could do them, and they didn't have a lot of printing costs."
Blogging and citizen journalism also are prominent, but Bentley said he isn’t worried those will replace professional reporting.

“Journalism is, essentially, a dirty job,” he said. “Anyone who’s sat in a planning and zoning commission meeting at 1 a.m. knows it’s not a fun job. That part of journalism that documents routine life in a community and parts of civic life — which is our job to cover — that’s not something that is effectively covered by people who don’t want the job.”

Bentley isn’t sure charging for news in Columbia will work unless all media outlets got on board. “It’s going to be a little tougher here than in most places,” he said.

The Columbia Missourian is aware of industry discussion about paid content but has not considered charging for its online news, Executive Editor Tom Warhover said.

It might be tricky for the morning newspaper to do so, Bentley said, because it’s a learning lab under the umbrella of a public university.

Regardless of how pay models are implemented, it’s imperative that media outlets survive, Bentley said. He doubts people want to rely solely on government Web sites and hobby blogs for information about their communities.

“I’m a big advocate of the Web, but I also realize you can’t use the Web to destroy the media system,” he said. “Otherwise, we’re left with a country with inadequate information. We’ve got to do something because America can’t afford for us to go broke.”
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

University Hospital's organ donor program gets national recognition

By Caitlyn Emmett
December 7, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Two years ago, Becky Nelson lost her son, Austin, 16, in an automobile accident eight miles from their home in Freeburg after he fell asleep at the wheel.

"He was truly a gift, a gift you cherish, one that will never and cannot ever be replaced," Nelson said. "A person realizes that more so when that gift is gone."

At about the same time, Bob Wilson's kidneys were working at 15 percent of their capacity, and he was faced with going on kidney dialysis or finding a compatible donor.

Nelson's tragedy turned into Wilson's blessing.

Wilson and Nelson were connected through a mutual friend and had the transplant at University Hospital, which, for the fourth consecutive year, has won a Medal of Honor for Organ Donation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"It's a bizarre relationship when you consider that you're standing there basically in great health because of the tragedy that occurred to their child," said Wilson, 63, a retired lobbyist from Jefferson City. "That's how it is in the real world of organ transplants. Someone as a rule is giving something up, and, many times, it's life."

Nelson said her son had told her from age 15 that if anything happened to him, he wanted to donate his organs.

"Just to know Austin lives on in others is a miracle," she said. "Austin saved five lives with his organs."
Urologist Mark Wakefield, who directs the **renal transplant program** at University Hospital, said the hospital performed 28 kidney transplants last year. Acceptance of organ donation depends on several factors such as the age and health of the donor, age and urgency of need of the recipient, the circumstance of the death of the donor and the degree of match.

"The number of patients referred to our center for evaluation for transplant each year averages about 140 patients," Wakefield said. "At any time at our center, about 85 patients are listed awaiting a kidney."

According to the **United Network for Organ Sharing**, as of 2009 more than 100,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for organ transplants. A major reason that the number of available transplantable organs is below the number needed is because of a lack of organ donation by those who would qualify.

"So the government said, 'Well, how can we improve the number of organs available if we can’t really change the number of people that could be donors?'" Wakefield said. "The answer is get more people to say yes and improve our ability to take care of those organs, and that’s where a lot of our efforts have gone into."

University Hospital joined the U.S. **Department of Health and Human Services’ Organ Donation Breakthrough Collaborative** in 2004 in response to the national shortage of transplantable organs.

**Lori Kramer Clark**, hospital services coordinator for **Midwest Transplant Network**, explained how using the term "collaborative" was an organ donation revolution in 2003.

University Hospital partners with the Midwest Transplant Network, which provides organ and tissue donation services.

"The government offered out to the nation to team-lead this revolution that said, 'Hey, we are going to give you the framework, and we’re going to give you the basics but we need you to show up at the table and together the answers are in this room,'" Kramer Clark said.

As a result of this collaboration, University Hospital’s organ donation rate increased from 61 percent in 2005 to more than 75 percent in 2007. University Hospital was among more than 400 of the nation's largest hospitals awarded the 2009 Medal of
Honor for Organ Donation for achieving these organ donation consent rates at or above 75 percent over a year.

A consent rate is the number of times a family or patient has agreed to donate organs. Often a consent process will include a discussion of the available options and counseling to assist patients or their families in deciding whether organ donation is the right choice for them.

Some factors that have allowed University Hospital to be eligible for the medal are having patients who are eligible for organ donation, having a trauma program and having a large enough hospital to handle a larger patient volume.

University Hospital was also acknowledged for its 20 percent growth in its renal transplant program.

"One of the things we did to do that was we streamlined and increased the personnel in the evaluation of the patients who are potential candidates for receiving kidney transplants," Wakefield said.

Wilson, the kidney recipient, keenly recognizes that his life dramatically changed for the better because he got an organ from a young man who died.

"I have an obligation to him to do everything I can to live my life the best I can and also educate as many people as I can that organ transplants and organ donations are nothing to be fearful of," Wilson said. "It's life-giving, and it's one of the most powerful gifts."