MU says tuition increases considered for grad and professional programs

By Ben Wieder
February 2, 2010 | 6:56 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA – Tuition increases could be in store next year for students in some graduate and professional programs, MU Budget Director Tim Rooney said Tuesday. He didn't specify which programs might raise tuition.

Rooney also said many of the recommendations in a letter from the higher education commissioner detailing solutions for coping with anticipated budget cuts do not apply to MU.

Possible tuition increase

Under the terms of a deal reached between Gov. Jay Nixon and the presidents of Missouri's public four-year institutions, campuses agreed not to raise undergraduate in-state tuition in exchange for preserving 95 percent of the state's appropriation, pending approval of Missouri's legislature.

Out-of-state tuition is not included in the deal, but Rooney said he didn't anticipate that out-of-state undergraduate tuition would increase.

If Nixon's tuition deal were approved, MU would see a $10 million decrease in funding from the state, he said.

UM System schools already reserved 5 percent of this year's funding for the next fiscal year, Rooney said.

Rooney said the university has begun to plan for 2012, when federal stabilization funds expire, but they haven't settled on a course of action. Those funds make up more than 10 percent of Nixon's budget recommendation for next year.

Barring another deal with Nixon or legislators, a tuition increase would be likely for 2012, Rooney said.
Missouri's colleges can only increase tuition by the cost of inflation, which was 2.7 percent in 2009. Rooney said if the budget situation is dire in 2012, the UM Board of Curators might apply to the state to increase tuition more than that, but would consider the impact on enrollment.

"Enrollment growth is what has helped us survive," he said.

**Rooney's response to the higher education commissioner**

Robert Stein, state commissioner of higher education, sent a letter to state higher education presidents and chancellors two weeks ago, urging them to work together to increase efficiency and prepare for continued declines in state funding.

Abolishing athletics is one suggestion. But Rooney said the MU Athletics Department is mostly self-sustaining, and the university plans to decrease the level of support for athletics in the future.

Rooney said MU already adopted one of the suggestions proposed by Stein – to increase the portion of benefits costs paid by employees – when MU employees began paying part of their retirement plans this summer.

But cutting programs would be difficult, Rooney said, because of the complex nature of higher education.

"You can't just close a program and lay off tenured faculty," he said.

The content of Stein's letter wasn't necessarily news to Rooney.

"Most of the stuff in there I've thought about and laid awake thinking about," he said.
Economic development

Efforts at the university

By Henry L. Waters III
Tuesday, February 2, 2010

For several years the University of Missouri has touted its economic development efforts, one of
the four legs of its mission philosophy.

The idea of translating research ideas into active business enterprises got a boost under former
UM President Elson Floyd and continues under his successor and current holder of the office,
Gary Forsee.

Forsee is the first UM System president to come directly from industry, a new model openly
intended to enhance the institution’s role in business-related activities. Forsee has largely
overcome worries from faculty that his background would cause him to shortchange academic
functions. He has left classrooms to chancellors, provosts and faculty, and academics themselves
are more willing these days to recognize the education value of developing technology for
transfer from classrooms and labs to Main Street.

Today this idea gets an added boost as policy officials seize on economic growth as the answer
to a slow economy. The town-gown push for joint economic development is alive, but progress
could be faster. Forsee recently announced a $5 million, three-year fund to subsidize Missouri-
based companies willing to partner with the university to commercialize faculty and student
research.

The subsidy is a good idea, but the concept of partnership with the university needs some work.

The university has developed a bad reputation. Compared with similar institutions, when a
researcher or business entrepreneur tries to commercialize a product or idea, UM is too greedy
and tangled in red tape. Prospective business operators, including students, and a number of MU
deans talk openly of this difficulty. In recent months I have heard reports of promising
enterprises that have been pursued on other campuses after failed efforts here.

Discussion of this problem is under way, and none too soon. Promoting partnership on the one
hand while discouraging it on the other is not a good way to get ahead.

Meanwhile MU Vice Chancellor for Research Rob Duncan wants to create a new buzz around
research and development similar to the energy one can feel in well-known entrepreneurial zones
such as Silicon Valley in California, the Research Triangle in North Carolina and Route 128 around Boston.

We can do something similar here, Duncan says, if we can kindle the spirit. To light the fire, he is rolling out Club Innovation for Missouri Business (CLIMB) at 6 p.m. Feb. 9 in Stotler Lounge in MU’s Memorial Union.

Duncan says he has a number of ideas that might turn into commercial success but that nothing will happen unless entrepreneurial spirit and energy arise to carry the ball forward. He wants to create a “can-do” attitude permeating the student body, a “continual buzz of excitement where students are encouraged by MU to innovate and excel in the free market.” He says this buzz is so strong at Cal Tech and MIT and Stanford “that you can practically feel it.”

Duncan thinks the time is right for MU, given the research projects already under way and the unique mix of academic programming and facilities located here.

Citing statistics showing a decline in the number of engineering grads in the United States while lawyers and MBAs proliferate, Duncan says “we have evolved over the past few decades from a highly successful society of innovators to a declining society of regulators.” Law and management are important, but we have “overchecked that box,” he says. (“Region is ready to CLIMB,” Tribune, Jan. 31.)

Creating a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial activity — creating the buzz — is harder than getting a few dollars on the table and talking a good game. We will make some progress regardless, but to create our own research geography we need the buzz. Bless Duncan for giving it the old Hinkson Creek try. I hope he has a rousing clambake on Feb. 9 when he tries to CLIMB the mountain.

Everyone is welcome, not just students. The search for the spirit should know no bounds.

HJW III
3 reader comments

The opinions expressed below are those of the readers who submitted them and not those of the Tribune's reporters or editors. Readers are solely responsible for the content of their comments.

b4s354x0r says...

Creating a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial activity — creating the buzz...

LOL - That sounds like a pitch to legalize pot!

Joking aside, this is the way it's gonna be from now on. Education, especially Higher Ed, will never recover from the blow of the Great Recession. We either partner with private enterprise and get our money by being an investor (an interesting way to "tax" business, eh?), or shrivel up and die.

February 2, 2010 at 6:11 p.m. ( link | suggest removal )

realiger says...

MU Vice Chancellor for Research Robert Duncan is obvoiusly energetic, and it appears he will do as well with resources as any one can. Certainly, more power to him.

There are however fundamental challenges at MU.

First, hype aside, MU is not a strong research university, and in the scientific/engineering areas it is mostly ranked very low in the nation. It also has weak leaderships in several science/engineering units. A campus that has a culture of large porkbarrel funding in engineering specially, would have a very tough time being competitive and innovative in technology,

Second, academic/business ventures and partnerships are not easily managed. We already have a situation where MU/UM are in litigation with a faculty member re some patent and related matters. It is known that faculty seeking profits/patents sometimes shortchange their students by withholding knowledge and advice (this has apparently happened in certain areas at even as strong a school as MIT). The MU Research Reactor too has had its share of difficulties and allegations of conflict of interest with some of its commercial activities. Some of the RADIL group's activities posed challenges also, and the group recently had to be separated from MU. At times there is a climate of real fear or paranoia among some students and faculty that their
ideas are stolen for profit by those around them or in the chains above them, and that their requests for investigations/justice elicit retaliation rather than justice.

There are additional issues also- and one needs to remain somewhat circumspect of what MU will be able to accomplish. But even modest progress will be good, but in any case, it will be good not to underestimate the challenges.

February 2, 2010 at 9:02 p.m. (link | suggest removal)

Fatdaddy says...

All it will take is one success to balance out $5M. I applaud the effort. It'd be nice to see the city worrying about economic development with the same conviction that it allocates to worrying about a handful of damned chickens.
Tattletale pills, bottles remind you to take your meds

By Elizabeth Landau, CNN

(CNN) -- If you have problems remembering to take your meds -- or whether you've taken them already -- some high-tech products on the horizon may be able to help you.

Companies are using wireless technology, the same mechanism by which you use a cell phone or the Internet, to develop devices that monitor whether you took your pills as the doctor ordered, beaming information back to you, your doctor or a designated family member. In some cases, this requires swallowing a microchip about as thin as a few human hairs.

The concept may sound invasive, but it has the potential to save as much as $290 billion annually in increased medical costs. That amount is lost every year because of people not taking medications as prescribed, according to the New England Healthcare Institute. Drug adherence is only 50 percent among people with chronic illnesses in developed countries, and in developing nations it is probably lower, according to the World Health Organization.

"The magnitude of poor medication adherence, sometimes labeled 'America's other drug problem,' justifies development of technologies that may improve important health outcomes," said Vicki Conn, associate dean at the University of Missouri School of Nursing, in an e-mail.

One innovation involves a pill that, once ingested, wirelessly transmits information about side effects and how well it's working. The product with the most recent buzz in this arena is being developed by Proteus Biomedical, a California-based start-up. Novartis AG recently invested $24 million in Proteus to secure licenses and options on the company's drug-delivery technologies.

Here's how it works: The patient swallows a pill that contains both medicine and an ultra-tiny sensor chip. This sensor is made of food and vitamin materials, in very small, safe quantities, said Proteus CEO Andrew Thompson.

These materials get activated by the patient's stomach acid, essentially making the human body a battery, he said.
Then, the chip sends a signal to a waterproof skin patch, akin to a bandage that the person wears.

The patch picks up data about heart rate, body angle, temperature, sleep, and other parameters. If the patient comes within 20 feet of his or her phone, the encrypted data are sent to Proteus, which processes it and sends it back in a readable form to a cell phone or e-mail account.

Although this has implications for how doctors treat patients, the focus is on the patients themselves and their families taking care of them, he said. The information that the pill picks up gets shared only with the patient’s permission, he said.

Proteus is working with large technology companies on the privacy aspect of the device, he said.

The pill is in clinical trials for heart disease, hypertension, and tuberculosis patients, and will begin testing in psychiatric illnesses also, Thompson said.

The product should be on the market by late 2011, Thompson said.

That deadline could realistically be met for one of the conditions the pill is being tested for, especially because of support from Novartis, which has a track record of organizing definitive trials, said Dr. Eric Topol, chief medical officer of the West Wireless Health Institute, a nonprofit organization that tracks the wireless health industry.

"With many illnesses such as oncology and transplantation, compliance is a major issue, with an immediate cost to the system. From that perspective in terms of outcomes, the value of this kind of technology is clear," said Joe Jimenez, CEO of Novartis.

Wireless health solutions are a hot area of development when it comes to delivering medication, monitoring physical parameters such as blood pressure, and taking and sending images from inside the human body, Topol said.

"It’s where there’s more going on in innovation in medicine than perhaps any other area," he said.

Other companies are also looking into microchip-driven wireless medication devices.

MicroCHIPS Inc. in Bedford, Massachusetts, is developing devices such as a long-term implanted glucose monitor that delivers wireless measurements for diabetics. There is also the Philips’ iPill, a drug delivery system that sends information about health parameters to an external control unit.
There are also wireless monitoring innovations that don't involve ingesting.

The GlowCap, made by Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Vitality Inc., helps people remember to take their medication.

The GlowCap is packaging for your pill bottle that flashes orange when it's time to take your medication, then plays a melody if you haven't taken your medicine within an hour. It comes with a nightlight that communicates wirelessly with the cap, and also turns orange at pill time. Vitality sends you -- and anyone else you want to know about it -- a report with how well you stuck to your medication regimen.

Those who forget to take their medicines despite the reminder from the GlowCap will receive a call or text message after a few hours.

The product is being sold on Amazon.com for $99, but the makers envision it as a free add-on to pills distributed at pharmacies, said Joshua Wachman, president of Vitality. The company has implemented the technology with a transplant drug, a diabetes drug and a hypertension drug, Wachman said.

**The GlowCap relates to the finding of Conn's group's research that strategies that signal people to take their medicine, such as visual and auditory cues, may help with compliance.**

"The devices that provide feedback about the effectiveness of medications, such as physical changes in the body in response to medications, are also likely to be successful."
Nixon proposes additional $74.3 million in budget cuts

By Trevor Eischen
February 3, 2010 | 12:01 a.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — Less than two weeks after announcing almost $200 million in cuts to the state budget, Gov. Jay Nixon cut an additional $74.3 million Tuesday.

The budget cuts accompanied the release of the state's Jan. 2010 revenue report. According to the report, Missouri collected 12.5 percent less for the first seven months of the fiscal year than last year.

The administration and legislative leaders previously predicted only a 6.4 percent drop — a figure Linda Luebbering, state budget director, acknowledged now is unlikely.

Luebbering said the magnitude of the tax collection decline came as a surprise.

The resulting budget cuts announced Tuesday will affect several government departments and organizations.

Technology programs are among the hardest hit — $24 million cut from the federal-state rural broadband expansion project, **$637,000 from MOREnet** and $29 million from a multiyear program to develop a new-generation statewide public safety communications system.

In addition, $2 million would be cut from the Parents as Teachers program.

**Higher Education**

Earlier in the day, lawmakers discussed Nixon's higher education recommendation constraints for fiscal year 2011. Robert Stein, higher education commissioner, began the meeting with somber statistics.

"As a system, we perform average," Stein said, adding that Missouri higher education ranks No. 31 in the nation.
Stein said a well-funded higher education program is a solution for economic recovery, but the funds just aren’t there.

Stein said higher education should focus more on an all-encompassing budget to help all higher education institutions — not just funding for specific institutions.

Nixon and Missouri four-year public schools agreed to freeze tuition as long as the state does not cut state funding more than five percent.

Stein pointed at Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, and Sen. Joan Bray, D-University City, and said the focus should go beyond institutions in Columbia and near St. Louis.

Schaefer stressed transparency in the budget as vital for getting higher education the needed funds.

"As appropriators on this committee, we need to know the details," Schaefer said.

For example, institutions can raise the tuition on the school’s budget books without implementing the increase. If the freeze-in-tuition agreement were to end in the next year, the increased budget would be implemented immediately.

Schaefer said the more transparent way for institutions to obtain funds from the state is to petition with a waiver. He said the increase without implementation is not transparent enough, especially for students.

"My concern is with the aspect of the deal that is not transparent at all," Schaefer said. "If you put tuition increase on the books, most students won’t know that. They’re not going to know they’re setting themselves up for a tuition increase next year. It’s a very back door way of hiding a tuition increase."

One program receiving cuts under Nixon’s budget recommendations for the next fiscal year is the Bright Flight program, which provides scholarships to high-achieving students. Nixon’s recommendation alters the spending from $25 million this year to $16 million in fiscal year 2011.

"We don’t have money for the expansion of that program," Deputy Commissioner Paul Wagner said.
Woman tells of rape outside frat house

Tuesday, February 2, 2010

A 19-year-old female told police she was raped Friday night outside the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity house at 24 E. Stewart Road.

The woman reported the incident to Columbia police at about 8:30 p.m. Saturday after undergoing a medical exam, said Columbia police spokeswoman Jessie Haden. The woman told police her assailant was about 5 feet, 6 inches tall, with an average build, but she could not describe his clothing or race.

The incident occurred at about 11 p.m. Friday as the victim waited outside the Tau Kappa Epsilon house for a ride from a party at the fraternity, Haden said. A male approached the woman, held her by the hand and led her to the side of the house. The victim told the suspect to let go several times, but he refused, Haden said.

After the rape, the woman told police she pushed her assailant away and found a ride home. After speaking with a friend, Haden said, the woman went to the hospital for an exam.

Police are reviewing exam results as well as the woman’s clothing.
MU student reports rape outside fraternity house

By Lindsay Ross
February 2, 2010 | 8:20 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — A 19-year-old MU student reported being raped outside of the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity house early Saturday morning after attending a party at the house.

The woman told police she was standing outside the fraternity house at 24 E. Stewart Road around 1 a.m. when the man approached and raped her, Columbia Police Sgt. Don Hawkins said.

Hawkins said the only details she could provide about the suspect were that he was about 5'6" and of average or slightly muscular build. The woman went home after the incident but later decided to contact police, Hawkins said.
Hospitals boost MU ties

Goal is 30 percent more med students.

By Janese Heavin

The University of Missouri School of Medicine is teaming up with hospitals in southwest Missouri to try to increase the number of qualified doctors practicing in the state.

CoxHealth and St. John’s Health System in Springfield have agreed to expand their partnerships with the school, allowing more MU students to complete clinical training at their hospitals and clinics. Administrators from the school and two health care systems expect to spend the coming months hashing out details.

Normally, MU’s School of Medicine admits 96 students each year, although the state’s Caring for Missourians program has allowed for an additional eight students this year and next. The school hopes to develop a plan that would allow enrollment to increase to 128, said Linda Headrick, senior associate dean for education at the School of Medicine. That stems from a charge by the Association of American Medical Colleges for medical schools to increase enrollment 30 percent by 2015.

For the past couple of years, MU’s School of Medicine has received more than 1,200 applicants, but limited capacity means turning away hundreds, “including people who are academically qualified and would be excellent doctors for the state of Missouri,” Headrick said.

The four-year medical education program requires students to undergo two years of education and two years of clinical training at patient-care facilities. Since 2005, 75 MU students have done so in southwest Missouri. The pending plan would boost that number.

“Our goal is to not only produce more physicians and improve patient access to care, but to increase the medical students’ access to quality clinical education in our area of the state,” said Robert Bezanson, CoxHealth president and CEO.

Additionally, allowing students to work in Springfield and surrounding rural areas “introduces them to the area and the benefits of practicing here in the Ozarks,” said Jon Swope, St. John’s Health System president and CEO.

Even with increased capacity for clinical training, the School of Medicine needs to find additional resources to fund more faculty and facilities for the first two years of medical education. Increasing class sizes is not an option, Headrick said. The current 8-to-1 student-faculty ratio, she said, is key to the program’s success.
"We’re quite convinced ... that way of training our students is part of the reason we get such outstanding physicians graduating from our school," she said. "We’re very committed to that education model and wouldn’t want to increase size and stretch things to the point of having more doctors but not the outstanding doctors we think people deserve."

Although the plan is preliminary, public-private partnerships might be a possible way to secure those dollars, Headrick said. Not only would that offset a lack of state funding, it’s also a “good way to do business,” she said. “By partnering with private partners in communities, we get to know them better and are then better able to understand and serve their needs.”
Springfield hospitals, MU school to focus on hiking enrollment

CoxHealth, St. John’s Hospital and the School of Medicine at the University of Missouri will spend the next year identifying the strategies and resources needed to increase enrollment at the school and expand educational opportunities for students at Cox and St. John’s hospitals and clinics.

“We plan to build on the existing medical education partnership between Cox, St. John’s and MU,” Robert Bezanson, CoxHealth president and CEO, said in a news release.

“Our goal is to not only produce more physicians and improve patient access to care, but to increase the medical students’ access to quality clinical education in our area of the state.”

Of the more than 75 students who received training in southwest Missouri since 2005 through MU’s rural track program, 48 students were trained through the partnership with CoxHealth and St. John’s.

The program encourages physicians to complete part of their clinical education in underserved areas and to then practice in Missouri.

“A large part of our service area is rural, so having medical students available in these clinics not only helps them complete their education, it also introduces them to the area and the benefits of practicing here in the Ozarks,” explained Jon Swope, St. John’s Health System President / CEO. “We are looking forward to possibly expanding many educational opportunities, which benefits both physicians and patients.”

The Association of American Medical Colleges has called on all medical schools to increase class size by 30 percent to address the physician shortage not only in Missouri, but across the country.

For each of the past two years, MU has received more than 1,200 applications to medical school, but only has the capacity to accept 96 new medical students annually.
LETTER: Live tiger at football games idea should be caged

By A. J. Ralls, Columbia
February 2, 2010 | 11:28 a.m. CST

I have heard a lot of foolish ideas in my time, but acquiring a live tiger to display at MU football games is one of the most foolish. There are moral and ethical arguments against this, not to mention the financial, legal and economic realities.

With all of the things that are going on in the world and all of the challenges that today’s college students face, I would think that acquiring a live tiger to display for six home football games a year would be about the last concern or item on the priority list. Please tell me that this has been a bad joke.
State mulls disclosure measure for educators

Superintendents say rules hurt ability to warn about teachers.

*Alan Scher Zagier*
*The Associated Press*

Columbia -- Missouri school superintendents who want to keep troubled teachers from returning to the classroom said Tuesday they feel hamstrung by rules that restrict them from sharing information on why teachers lose their jobs.

The legislature is considering a measure that would give civil immunity to local districts and employees who share more detailed employment histories of job-hunting teachers.

Similar proposals have fallen short the past two years.

Twenty-two superintendents gathered at the University of Missouri for a round-table discussion of educational policy issues told Attorney General Chris Koster they need the lawmakers' help.

"We just feel like our hands are tied," said John Robertson, superintendent of the Hallsville R-IV School District.

A 2007 Associated Press investigation found that 87 licensed teachers in Missouri lost their credentials from 2001 through 2005 because of sexual misconduct.

In one instance, state personnel laws intended to protect an employee's privacy instead allowed a teacher fired for sexual misconduct to hop from one small, rural school district to the next, without any warning to his new bosses about his past problems.

That teacher held eight jobs over 15 years, including three after he quietly resigned from the Kingston district in 2000 following complaints of sexual harassment by at least a dozen students.

Rather than report teacher Greg Crowley to the state for possible punishment, the Kingston district instead agreed to accept his resignation and paid him a severance worth more than $16,000.

The legal agreement also prevented the Kingston district from telling future employers the real reason why Crowley left.

Such pacts are essentially "gag orders," said Dan Lowry, a former superintendent in LaMonte, Trenton and Moberly who now leads the university's Partnership for Educational Renewal.

Koster, a former state senator, told the superintendents he planned to share their concerns with former colleague Charlie Shields, the Senate president pro tem -- perhaps as soon as Wednesday.

Koster stopped short of endorsing any changes, though.
State law requires local districts to report certain severe offenses to authorities, including child abuse. For other misconduct that falls short of a criminal offense, districts have more discretion.

Todd Fuller, a spokesman for the Missouri State Teachers Association, said school districts and superintendents have only themselves to blame if they sign confidentiality agreements.

"They're not dealing with their responsibilities," he said. "If the district isn't dealing with that particular issue, or the administration isn't, then shame on them."