Employee drug tests could be in UM’s future

By Janese Heavin

Thursday, March 18, 2010

The University of Missouri System’s human resources office is discussing the possibility of drug-testing for faculty and staff members suspected of being under the influence.

Talks are preliminary and are part of a continuous review of employee policies, UM spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said. “The university continuously updates its policies to help ensure a safe, productive workplace for employees,” she said.

The Tribune learned of the discussions after inquiring about drug-testing rules in light of a House bill filed this week. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Chuck Gatschenberger, R-Lake St. Louis, would require public colleges to randomly drug-test employees.

Gatschenberger said he doesn’t think drug use among college employees is a problem, per se, but his proposals are part of a push to drug-test all public employees. He filed a similar proposal last year that would have required drug tests at public elementary and secondary schools.

“I have been getting a tremendous amount of people who work at places where employees are drug-tested and they’re paying taxes,” he said. “And they’re shocked that people who get welfare or people who get our tax dollars are not subject to the same standards they’re held to when they go to work on a daily basis.”

The UM System would not be in favor of that proposal, Hollingshead said, adding that the university, not the state, should adopt employee policies.

UM System employees on the four campuses undergo background screenings before employment but are not subject to drug tests. MU Health Care requires drug tests for new employees, those who transfer between departments and those suspected of being impaired, spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said. The cost is $40 per drug test, and the health system has $100,000 set aside for its testing policies.

Preliminary discussions are about testing only faculty and staff members suspected of being under the influence, not all employees. MU Faculty Council Chairwoman Leona Rubin questioned how administrators would decide who to test. “Sounds like the makings of a good witch hunt,” she said.
James Tarr, an associate professor of learning and teaching and chairman of the Faculty Affairs committee, said he didn’t have a problem with the idea.

“This is just my personal and limited opinion, but it’s something I don’t think anyone should fear,” he said. “I acknowledge there are sometimes false positives with any drug-testing, and certainly that needs to be considered. But if there are reasonable grounds for it, I don’t see that as a problem.”

Marijo Dixon, chairwoman of MU’s Staff Council, said she was hesitant to give an opinion because she was not previously aware of the discussion. But in general, she said, she does not support spending money “to test people unless there’s a very good reason.”

The university “might get away” with testing for cause, said Dan Viets, a local attorney and advocate of legalizing marijuana, but he thinks Gatschenberger’s legislation would result in constitutional violations.

“There’s no way you can randomly drug-test adults just because they’re on a college campus,” he said. “Private employers can get away with it, but public employers cannot. Public entities are restrained by the Fourth Amendment.”

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
College leaders OK scholarship equity

Access Missouri has possible fix.

By Janese Heavin

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Some private college presidents have given up their fight against Missouri lawmakers who want to equalize Access Missouri scholarships.

In a meeting Tuesday at the home of University of Missouri System President Gary Forsee, 10 private and public college presidents agreed the state should provide equal maximum scholarship award levels to all students, regardless of their college choice, according to the Missouri Department of Higher Education.

Access Missouri was set up to provide scholarships to in-state students who demonstrate a financial need. The program provides scholarships of as much as $2,150 for students who attend public four-year colleges and $4,600 to students at private schools.

Forsee has been a vocal critic of that structure, saying it’s unfair for taxpayers to spend more on students who opt for a private college education. Through a spokesman, he declined comment on the compromise.

Supporters of the existing program have argued that the monetary amounts represent similar percentages of tuition.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, sponsored legislation this year that would equalize those scholarships to $2,850.

Marianne Inman, president of Central Methodist University in Fayette who had been opposed to equalizing the scholarship amounts, attended the meeting at Providence Pointe.

Asked why she agreed to the compromise, Inman said: “Given the situation with budget challenges in the state and the importance of higher education being unified, we simply feel that we want — all of us want — to be part of the solution.”

She indicated that further discussions are under way about specific scholarship amounts but declined to elaborate. “Some points have arisen, and we will be ironing out the details,” she said.
Gov. Jay Nixon last week suggested eliminating Access Missouri scholarships to students who opt for private education.

But public college presidents at the meeting agreed the state should help needy students attend the college that best meets their individual needs, regardless of whether the institute is public or private, Inman said.

"Obviously, choice and access to higher education are essential if we're going to accomplish our state goals," she said.

Access Missouri sunsets in 2013 under state law, but college presidents are asking legislators to eliminate that expiration date. Schaefer's proposal to equalize the amounts would take effect in 2014, which technically would require legislators to either remove the sunset or approve a new Access Missouri program.

Rep. Mary Still, D-Columbia, said she supports continuing the program but equalizing the scholarships starting with the freshman class in fall 2011. That way, she said, students now enrolled on the scholarships don't "have the rug pulled out from under them."

The compromise reached earlier this week would appear to be a victory for Forsee, who has publicly denounced Access Missouri scholarship levels for at least a year.

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University presidents discuss future of Access Missouri

Gov. Jay Nixon proposed cutting scholarships for private school students.

By Abbey Sussell
Published March 19, 2010

Ten university and college presidents met at UM system President Gary Forsee's home to discuss the distribution of Access Missouri scholarships. Department of Higher Education Commissioner Robert Stein facilitated the meeting.

Under the Access Missouri program, the maximum scholarship amount for students attending private schools is $4,600 and $2,150 for students in public universities.

The presidents' meeting took place less than a week after Gov. Jay Nixon announced a proposal to cut the scholarships for private school students.

The meeting resulted in an agreement on eight principles concerning the design of the need-based scholarships, according to a Missouri Department of Higher Education news release. Attendees agreed public and private scholarship award amounts should be equalized and support the choices of Missouri students.

According to the release, the university presidents proposed students enrolled in the Access Missouri scholarship program not be affected by changes in scholarship award amounts.

The task force acknowledged the importance of state support for a student's chosen university regardless of institution.

"I think it's a real positive sign that this very diverse group could come together and agree on eight principles given the variety of their viewpoints," MDHE spokeswoman Kathy Love said. "If the spirit of cooperation and commitment to the state's needs and the students' needs goes forward, then I think that the students will benefit from the collective alignment of (the task force's) ideas."

The debate continues to focus on the ideal way to distribute scholarships within the $95 million budget.

In his State of the University address, Forsee spoke out against giving more money to private school students than public school students under the Access Missouri scholarship program.

"(Eliminating private school scholarships) is not a reasonable decision," Central Methodist University spokesman Don Cullimore said. "We have more than 500 students who receive the Access Missouri scholarships. Students would either have to attend a public campus or drop out of school. It greatly limits the student's choices and opportunities."
Two bills to equalize award amounts for public and private four-year institutions, one for the Missouri Senate and one for the Missouri House of Representatives, have been submitted.
FROM THE LAB TO THE MARKETPLACE, AREA RESEARCHERS BREAK NEW GROUND

by Dennis Boone

What’s the real value of research?

For sure, it has helped us live longer lives, and better ones. It has produced higher crop yields and made our food supplies safer. It supports environmentally friendly practices to keep the planet spruced up. It contributes to national defense and national security, it helps cut down on youth violence in schools and improve small-business performance. It’s hard to think of any aspect of our lives that hasn’t been touched in some way by what takes place in the lab, in the field or under the microscope.

But there’s another value, as well. The better we get at it, and the more we do here, the less reliant we become on legacy business sectors like manufacturing. For every complaint that “We don’t make anything anymore,” there is a counter-argument: “A decade ago, we weren’t doing a lot of drug reformulation, bioinformatics, or genome research here, either.”

From all indications, the Kansas and Missouri bi-state region is taking significant strides toward strengthening its economy through development of the life sciences sector.

For just one measure of how that new economy is shaping up, look no further than Columbia. The University of Missouri represents but one sliver of the regional research assets, yet estimates that its combined research programs produce an economic impact of $440 million in the state, and support more than 9,000 jobs. Last year alone, MU filed 45 patent applications, and since 2000, faculty expertise there has yielded one new startup company, on average, every 120 days.

Multiply that by what takes place at Kansas State and the University of Kansas, at UMRC and Wichita State, at the region’s research hospitals like Children’s Mercy, Saint Luke’s, Research and KU’s medical and cancer centers, and one begins to see the formidable clout exercised by research activities.

The amazing thing is, we may just be scratching the surface of what a more research-based economy can mean to this region. We’ve already demonstrated an ability to exceed expectations, said Tom Thornton, chief executive with the Olathe-based Kansas Biotechnology Authority.

“I think the region has done extremely well for itself,” Thornton said. “We’re gone from ‘Can we pull this off?’ to achieving substantially bigger goals than I think any one of us might have envisioned. And with the commercialization and expansions in the region and some of the bigger opportunities in venture sites, I think we’re doing quite well.”

Kansas, he pointed out, had recently been ranked as the ninth-most vibrant biotechnology environment in the nation. “Who would have thought that ranking was possible four or five years ago?” he said.

And while he said that Missouri could benefit from a peer organization with funding authority similar to KBA’s, the true long-term needs for the region boil down to three things: Follow-through, capital investment—and patience.

“Biotechnology takes a long time,” he said. “Capital is a big deal, too. Especially for the early-stage companies, that remains a huge constraint. Without those venture funds, they’ll just go somewhere else to start their business.”

All that said, what follows here is a compilation—by no means comprehensive—of the kinds of innovative projects that are taking place in the Missouri-Kansas region. Some involve human health, some focus on animal health, still others are advances in process and
That's the focus in to include visionaponent of research toward higher-profile ranking as a Cancer Institute for drugs to cell the essentials, region KII Health Cancer Treatment UNIVERSITy hospitals will share volume of pal-titularly, because patients. This is an work~ing research efforts. The work is Kaitffman, the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute and the those in that work may mean the Food and Drug Administration Thc problem of much text prublem of Cancer Center, whcrc he is working to reformulate drugs prescribed for adult use, tailoring them specifically to toddlers and young patients. This is an important area of emerging research, because too many kids receive "child-sized" doses of adult meds that haven't been through clinical trials to determine whether there are any consequences—and particularly, fatal ones—to simply downsizing the volume of a dosage.

The first two products from the institute are about to go to the Food and Drug Administration for approval. Once those products are brought to market, the participating hospitals will share the revenues, helping drive additional research efforts. The work is funded in part by grants from the Kaufman Foundation, the University of Kansas, the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute and the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation.

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS

Cancer Treatment

Rakesh Srivastava, a researcher with national credentials, left the University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler for the KU Cancer Center, where he is studying the molecular mechanisms of cancer cell growth and death to develop novel drugs to treat and prevent cancers.

But as much as that work may mean for individual patients, the Kansas City region itself has a stake in Srivastava's success: He brings with him National Cancer Institute funding, which is a key element of the Cancer Center's pursuit of National Cancer Institute designation later next year. Attaining that higher-profile ranking as a national-research facility status has been a key component of the Time to Get It Right initiative, the visionary plan for transforming the regional economy to include more bio-technology and life sciences research.

Pet Sterilization

The face of veterinary medicine in the nation could be transformed if researchers at KU Medical Center succeed in their quest to develop a sterilizing agent taken in a single dose, applying to both male and female cats and dogs. That's the focus of a research project under the direction of Joseph Tash, a professor in the department of molecular and integrative physiology, and Katherine Roby, in the department of anatomy and cell biology.

Their work could go a long way toward revising what veterinarians do—neutering is by far their most frequent procedure—as well as reducing the expenses that cities and humane shelters have to do with rounding up and disposing of as many as 9 million unwanted stray cats and dogs every year. The sterilant, dubbed KU-AS-272, is a single-dose anti-spermatogenic agent that has already been proven effective in male mice, rats, rabbits, and non-human primates. Additional studies on female mice have demonstrated a disruption in egg development.

The project also would draw a distinct link between the life and animal sciences, the twin pillars of this region's quest for a stronger biotechnology sector.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

Personalized Donor Organs

Organ rejection is the biggest reason for transplantation failures. The human body, we have learned, just doesn't accept the notion that even a close genetic match is as good as the real thing.

So what if we could make the real thing? That's the focus of work overseen by Gabor Forgacs, a professor of theoretical physics at MU. His work in tissue replacement technologies has already led to a spinoff company, based in California, that hopes to develop tissues on demand for medical transplantation. And they're not merely acceptable matches for the recipient; either—they would be made from each patient's own cells.

The process is essentially the same as you'd find in an inkjet printer, but instead uses cells to "print" replacement arteries, for example, one layer at a time. Those cells, grown directly from each patient's tissues, eliminate the risk of organ donation rejection. Successful development would revolutionize the transplantation industry around the world.

"Every scientist," says Forgacs, with a penchant for understatement, "has a dream that his or her basic research will be useful someday."
Cancer Detection

What if it were possible to go to the store and buy a kit to quickly and accurately diagnose cancer, similar to a home pregnancy test? A University of Missouri researcher is developing a tiny sensor, known as an acoustic resonant sensor, that is smaller than a human hair and could test bodily fluids for a variety of diseases, including breast and prostate cancers.

One interesting aspect of his work is that, while Jae Wan Kwong is indeed a doctor, he’s not a physician—he holds a PhD and teaches electrical and computer engineering at MU.

“In a liquid environment,” Kwong says, “most sensors experience a significant loss of signal quality, but by using highly sensitive, low-signal-loss acoustic resonant sensors in a liquid, these substances can be effectively and quickly detected—a brand-new concept that will result in a noninvasive approach for breast-cancer detection.”

Finger-Licking Soy

Fu-Hung Hsieh, a professor of biological engineering and food science at MU, has a different take on whether the chicken or the egg came first. He thinks the correct answer may be: the soybean. He’s trying to produce low-cost soy substitute for chicken by doing more than adding color and flavor to soy. Hsieh says, “If you’ve ever tasted ‘chicken’-flavored soy, you know why his work could hold promise.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Illinois-Missouri Biotechnology Alliance are funding his project, which has had some early success. The results, though, sent him back to the drawing board, because the product tasted more like...turkey. Foods made from soy contain important nutritional elements, some of which help maintain healthy bones and prevent a range of cancers, including prostate, breast and colorectal. Perhaps more important, though, could be the dietary contribution that a tasty soy-based alternative to poultry could help Americans combat record levels of obesity.

Food for thought, anyway.

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Bacon Heaven

K-State researcher Raymond Rowland just might be the patron saint of bacon-lovers everywhere. A national expert in the study of PRRSV, a virus that imposes annual losses of $560 million on swine herds, Rowland has been involved in a range of work for pork-related research efforts in Manhattan. Among a wide range of his projects is one funded by the federal Department of Agriculture grant of $4.5 million and $250,000 from the National Pork Board. It has him teamed up with K-State’s James Murphy in an effort to track down the genetic roots of PRRSV. Rowland and Murphy, if successful in identifying the factors involved, could open the door for the creation of a vaccine to combat the virus.

Their work is just part of a wide range of K-State research projects focused on animal health—research that has real-world implications for the nation’s livestock herds. But it has global implications, as well: The U.S. accounts for roughly 25 percent of the pork on the world market, and pork exports run about $4 billion annually.

Stem Cells, Sans Controversy

The KU Cancer Center is the higher-profile institution, but the fight against cancer offers plenty of research work to go around. Kansas State University is also part of that fight with studies taking place at its Umbilical Cord Stem Cell Project for Pancreatic Cancer. Working with the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, researchers hope to demonstrate that gene therapy using umbilical-cord stem cells, can improve the treatment of pancreatic cancer. A by-product of that research: The team also expects to develop a new strain of genetically engineered rats that will serve as a model of human pancreatic cancer.

Perhaps as innovative as the scientific approach involved has been the political one: stem cells gathered from umbilical cord blood raise none of the moral objections attached to use of embryonic stem cells, are much cheaper to acquire, and can be harvested not only in large numbers, but relatively easily.
"For the average teacher in high school biology or a science classroom, there's an education gap between what we're trying to teach ... and what many of us received in our own education. This allows us to expand our knowledge."

— Eric Kessler, Blue Valley school district science teacher, on the Stowers Institute's STARS program

UMKC

Combating Shock

Every year, the twin killers of septic and hemorrhagic shock claim the lives of 200,000 Americans. Often the result of a traumatic injury, shock by its medical definition is abnormally low blood pressure caused by poor blood flow. The lack of flow to the liver, kidney, intestine, and brain can cause a wide range of maladies.

That gives you a sense of mission for those who are working at UMKC's Shock Trauma Research Center. Funded by more than $600,000 annually in research grant support from the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, the Scoland Foundation, and other organizations, they are exploring ways to combat the effects of shock. One way is by helping the body identify infecting microbes—taking the science of medicine to the molecular level.

By measuring white-cell responses to various infectious agents, researchers are trying to formulate molecular inhibitors, restoring vital oxygen to affected parts of the body. That could lead to development of drugs to improve treatments for patients with sepsis.

Dental Safety

When you head for the dentist to get a cavity filled, the last thing you're probably thinking about is whether he's using materials that are safe. But the wide range of resins, sealants, fillings and more—many from sources outside the control of federal regulators in the U.S.—can pose risks. Reducing them has been the goal of researchers at UMKC's School of Pharmacy and School of Dentistry. Among other focuses within the schools, they have explored the safety testing of experimental dental resins and composites. They also contract to do toxicology testing for businesses in the region, generally at costs lower than having similar tests done by private companies.

THE STowers INSTITUTE

Paying it Forward

The 800-pound research gorilla in Kansas City is the Stowers Institute, which dramatically raised the profile of life-sciences research here when its first researchers came on board in 2000. Today, it continues to lead the way in lab studies of everything from cell differentiation in human embryos to the biology of fruit flies. It also incorporates a program to expose area science teachers—and by extension, their students—to the laboratory practice of life sciences research. Its innovative STARS program, for Science Teachers Access to Research at Stowers, brings in high school and community college teachers for workshops that expose them to the latest in research tools and techniques.

Stowers' support for the development of tomorrow's researchers pays off for the region by exposing teachers to hands-on science that they can take back into their own classrooms, said Eric Kessler, who teaches in the Blue Valley school district: "For the average teacher in high school biology or a science classroom, there's an education gap between what we're trying to teach in advanced-placement biology and what many of us received in our own education," Kessler said. The Stowers program, he said, "allows us to expand our own knowledge."

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

Cardiac Cooperation

Five years ago, the Time to Get It Right report on lifesciences initiatives in Kansas City called for more collaboration by regional institutions to advance a broader community goal. One shining example of such cooperation is the technical and translational research involving cardiac cases. Among the players in that effort: the Mid America Heart Institute at St. Luke's Hospital, Truman Medical Center, Midwest Research Institute and the Schools of Medicine, Arts and Sciences and Nursing at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, as well as its Computing and Engineering School.

The participating organizations call this project the country's leading effort to define patient and treatment characteristics for those who have cardiovascular disease—the most common cause of death for Americans.
New treatment tools and techniques coming from this research, presented in a trademarked program dubbed ePrism, can be applied to invasive cardiac surgery, angioplasty and treating coronary-artery blockage, and include tools to help physicians customize patient care. Using such patient data as genetic information, lifestyle and medical history, the first-of-its-kind program generates risk-prediction models, showing how similar patients fared with alternative treatments.

THE BUSINESS SCENE

Personalized Cancer Vaccine

Standard approaches to treating cancer have long centered on three treatments: Surgery, to reduce the size of tumors or excise them completely; radiation, to kill cancer cells; and chemotherapy, which uses powerful chemical compounds to attack various cancers. Each approach, though, involves considerable side effects. TVAX Biomedical of Lenexa is taking a more natural approach, creating what it calls a personalized cancer vaccine.

The process involves injecting inactivated cancer cells back into a patient, then harvesting cells created in response by the immune system. After some success in early tests, TVAX is now conducting a Phase I safety study—one step closer to securing federal approval for marketing the treatment. The Kansas Bioscience Authority has invested $600,000 in the company, hoping to attract $2 million more in private investment.

Feeding Premature Babies

The human brain is an outrageously complex organ that doesn’t fully develop for years. But even at birth, a good deal of hard-wiring has taken place, producing such involuntary actions as the sucking needed to feed. That’s not the case in many newborns, whose random brain signals have yet to codify into a message triggering that reflex. In many cases, they must be fed by a tube that runs through the nose and into the stomach. KC Biomedix, based in Shawnee, Kan., has addressed that challenge with a breakthrough device that includes a pulsating pacifier. Its NTrainer System helps corral those brain signals to produce a reflex action that trains babies and moves them more quickly to oral feeding. The result is not just an improvement in neonatal development, but lowered costs with shorter hospital stays.

Cleaner Carbon

Carbon black, a nearly pure elemental form of carbon, is one of the top 50 industrial chemicals manufactured worldwide. But it’s not what you’d consider an environmentally friendly product: Producing it involves burning oil or natural gas. Carbolytic Materials Co., based in Maryville, Mo., has developed a “cracking” process to produce a cleaner alternative for carbon black from the scrap of waste tires, potentially cutting back on landfill needs for tire disposal, trimming emissions into the atmosphere.
and reducing the need for oil to produce the goods—in fact, it generates oil that can be refined again into transportation fuels. As innovative as the production process is, though, the company’s founding was just as unique. It was launched through the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Northwest Missouri State, which itself is being recognized for a new approach to nurturing innovative start-up companies, and first-rate example of how public institutions can prime the private-market pump.

From safeguarding blood-transfusion recipients to new ways to harvest carbon black, organizations throughout the region are pushing the boundaries of innovation.

Life-and-Death Applications
As football coach at Kansas State University, Bill Snyder has long preached the need for long-term success grounded in incremental improvement: small, consistent advances to yield big changes. No surprise, then, that Snyder sits on the board of directors for Nanoscale, a recent startup based in Manhattan that, as its name implies, thinks very small. The company’s expertise in advanced chemistry has translated into products and services for environmental cleanups, gas scrubbing and odor abatement. It also provides treatments for potentially deadly chemical substances, toxins, bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Among its range of contract research projects, Nanoscale is developing nanomaterials for the Department of Defense, attempting to neutralize biological warfare agents. It is also researching the use of nanoparticles for earlier cancer detection and reducing the risks of damaging healthy tissue during treatment.

Blood-Supply Safety
When hours—even minutes—can spell the difference between life and death, paper records can kill. Physical documents, particularly in medical cases, can be difficult to locate and interpret on urgent deadlines. That was the impetus for the Community Blood Center to press for development of what so far is the only blood antibody registry in the United States. Its online records follow patients regardless of hospital, physician or insurer, helping reduce risks associated with blood transfusions. So far, the registry contains more than 5,000 patient records. Those records help eliminate potential transfusion incompatibilities that can lead to potentially fatal delayed reactions to transfusions or to destruction of red blood cells.
March 19 (Bloomberg) -- The U.S. Treasury Department refused to disclose names of Citigroup Inc. executives who haggled over bailout terms in late 2008 after the bank said they might be harassed like the American International Group Inc. workers pilloried for taking big bonuses.

The Treasury decided to withhold the names earlier in 2009 when processing a similar FOIA request from News Corp.'s Fox Business Network, department spokesman Andrew Williams said. The Treasury gave New York-based Citigroup a chance to preview the documents, as required under federal rules, and the bank objected to the release of the names, Williams said. Treasury agreed, he said.

"Public disclosure of these names and personal contact information could lead to episodes of harassment or other disturbances in these individuals' personal lives," Citigroup personnel head Paul McKinnon wrote in a June 2009 affidavit for the Fox case. The disclosures "would not shed any additional light on government activities" and included private discussions with the government over executive pay limits, he wrote.

'Piano Wire' Executions

The disclosure shows executives of other bailed-out companies feared they might also become targets of threats such as those directed at AIG following payouts of multimillion-dollar bonuses. The backlash against New York-based AIG included demonstrations in front of employees' homes, and the company said employees were "subjected to death threats, hate mail and harassment."

One year ago this week, then-AIG Chief Executive Officer Edward Liddy told employees that some critics of the company's decision to pay $165 million of bonuses to the unprofitable Financial Products unit went too far. At a March 18, 2009, Congressional hearing, he read
examples of death threats including one that said executives and their families should be “executed with piano wire around their necks.”

McKinnon didn’t say whether any threats had been made against Citigroup executives. Citigroup spokesman Stephen Cohen declined to comment.

‘Matter of Public Record’

The government is being too conservative in balancing the executives’ right to privacy against the need for a full examination of the Treasury’s decision to provide a bailout, said Charles Davis, a University of Missouri journalism professor and executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition, which advocates open government.

“They have been the requesters and recipients of an amazing amount of government largesse, and as a result their names should be a matter of public record,” Davis said.

Citigroup is 27 percent owned by the Treasury after $25 billion of bailout money was converted last year into 7.7 billion common shares. In December, the bank repaid $20 billion of bailout money and terminated $301 billion of asset guarantees.

The Treasury didn’t redact the names of government officials copied on the e-mails or mentioned in the documents, nor did it withhold the names of Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP lawyers who represented Citigroup.

Compensation Information Sought

In December 2008, Fox News Network LLC, parent of Fox Business, filed suit in U.S. District Court in Manhattan to force the Treasury to release documents related to the Citigroup and AIG bailouts.

The channel has since decided not to fight for the release of the executives’ names because it’s more interested in documents detailing negotiations between the companies and government officials over executive-pay issues, Steven Mintz, Fox News’s lead attorney in the case, said in an interview.

“We’re really trying hard to get compensation information,” Mintz said. A hearing is set for tomorrow, Mintz said. Fox Business spokeswoman Caley Cronin said she didn’t have a comment.

AIG also objected to the release of executives’ names and e-mail addresses.

‘Palpable Risk’

“The release of their names and contact information could create a palpable risk to their safety and well-being,” Nicholas Kourides, AIG’s general counsel for life insurance and restructuring,
said in a June 2009 affidavit. He cited “numerous threats of physical harm that have been made against AIG employees in recent months.”

AIG spokesman Mark Herr declined to comment.

Citigroup’s McKinnon objected to the release of much of the contents of the documents, saying they might impair the bank’s ability to compete with peers. Many of them detail “back-and-forth” negotiations between Citigroup executives and government officials over executive-pay limits, he said in the affidavit.

The negotiations “reveal and highlight issues and policies regarding executive compensation, and limitations on executive compensation, that Citigroup treated as significant and worthy of special attention during the negotiations,” according to the affidavit.

“If this information were to find its way into the hands of Citigroup’s competitors, which I presume would occur if these documents were disclosed to a FOIA requester, those competitors would gain valuable insights into Citigroup’s strategies,” McKinnon wrote.

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Revised academic integrity statement draws debate from MU Faculty Council

By Nicole Lebsack
March 18, 2010 | 8:09 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA - In a heated exchange Thursday, members of the MU Faculty Council objected to a proposal that would take away the ability of professors to impose consequences for incidents of academic dishonesty.

The proposal includes general guidelines for all four UM campuses and gives each academic department the task of establishing a uniform process for dealing with student infractions.

Faculty Council members called the proposal confusing and ineffective.

The plan, now being drafted by UM counsel, would be forwarded to the board of curators. If approved, it would be added to the statement on academic integrity included in student handbooks and course syllabi.

Wilson Watt, MU's representative to the Intercampus Faculty Council, told the group the intent is to develop a policy for academic integrity that would be consistent across the four campuses.

The reason is "to ensure that decisions on what happens to a student when there is a violation of academic integrity aren't capricious or arbitrary," he said.

Academic integrity refers to plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty. Such procedures need to be consistently applied, Watt said, and a uniform policy would allow for fairer and less subjective implementation.

One guideline would limit a professor's ability to fail a student based on one incident.
"For example, you can downgrade an individual assignment as far as you want, but you can't fail a student if they get 100 percent on the other 75 percent of assignments," Watt said. "As a professor you need to address academic integrity, but you are not empowered to be punitive."

Faculty expressed concerns about the wording of the statement and whether it was possible for a department to agree on reasonable consequences.

"Not everyone reading this statement would interpret it the same way," said Doug Wakefield, director of the Center for Health Care Quality. "The problem is that the language isn't clear and is subject to interpretation."

Art Jago, a professor of management, pointed out the policy would not be uniform if each department sets its own standards.

"I just don't see this as adding to consistency," he said.

In explaining the policy, Watt also told the council that professional codes of ethics could still be a factor in developing the standards.

Watt cited programs such as medicine, nursing and social work. If a professional code includes honesty as a value, for example, cheating could be considered a violation of the code, he said.

"In this case, these students could fail a course if they are dishonest because that's not compliant with the professional responsibility of the profession they are attempting to enter," Watt said.

Clyde Bentley, an associate professor of journalism, said it would help to have legal advice on how to appropriately word statements for fields without professional codes.

Watt said the proposed policy change would be presented to all four UM campuses. He asked for written statements from MU faculty outlining their problems and suggestions to take back to the Intercampus Faculty Council.
Faculty Council discusses academic integrity policies

The policies are not consistent throughout the university.

By Mary Novokhovsky
Published March 19, 2010

Thursday's Faculty Council meeting focused on the issue of academic integrity.

Intercampus Faculty Council member Wilson Watt brought forward a revised statement of the academic integrity policy for discussion.

"The old language of the policy statement allowed professors to flunk a student who cheated on a test that represented 5 percent of their grade," Watt said. "That kind of punishment would be arbitrary."

Watt said there is a need for consistency among academic integrity policies within specific colleges and the university as a whole.

"Statements should be consistent among all professors in a certain field," Watt said. "Every student should get the same message."

Watt said the rewrite of the academic integrity statement is meant to protect students from professors taking arbitrary action in regard to cheating. He said professors are allowed to give students a zero on an assignment they find to be completed in a dishonest manner, yet they cannot be punitive and fail the student in the course.

Faculty Council Chairwoman Leona Rubin said though the rewrite of the policy focused on protecting the student, it was important for professors to continue reporting academic dishonesty.

Electrical and computer engineering professor Harry Tyrer said the action of reporting student cheating is not a simple task because it requires an investment of time and energy on the part of the professor.

"If you want to bring something before the provost, you have to make a case for it," Tyrer said.

Agronomy professor Bill Wiebold said he agreed the academic integrity policy should protect the student. He said the policy wasn't meant to allow students to get away with cheating, but it was there to establish consistency among the departments.

"You can flunk a student, but you got to be ready to go to court," Wiebold said. "You may win, you may lose, but be ready to justify your action. We need to protect students from capricious acts."
The discussion surrounding the changes to the academic integrity policy ended in a general consensus that the new version of the policy was problematic in its language; there was no clear interpretation in regard to policy consistency.

Wilson said all four UM system campuses would revisit the document at the next Intercampus Faculty Council meeting in order to address the issue.

Other topics discussed during the Faculty Council meeting included degree revocation policy, the development of a diversity-training module for faculty and the rights behind intellectual property.

"There is no policy on our campus where a degree can be revoked after it has been given," Rubin said. "This will be an IFC issue."

Rubin said, in response to the recent crime at the Gaines/Oldham Black Culture Center, UM system Human Resources was in the process of creating a diversity-training program for faculty and staff.

"I am working with HR about the development of a diversity training module that can be used online by faculty and staff," Rubin said. "It's similar to a sexual harassment training we had in the past."

On the topic of intellectual property, Rubin said for the most part students own the rights to their intellectual property, but discrepancies arise when someone is under the employment of the university.

Rubin said the general faculty meeting in April will discuss the idea of intellectual property in greater depth.
COLUMBIA, MO. > MIZZOU REVEALS PLAN TO FIX UP CAMPUS Stymied by repeated, unsuccessful efforts to get state money for new buildings, the University of Missouri’s flagship campus announced a new plan Thursday that focuses on fixing up what’s already there. The 2010 master plan a campus blueprint for the ensuing decades includes plans for enhanced landscaping and strengthened connections between the campus and surrounding parts of the city. Missouri’s shaky economy has made it difficult for the school to get money for new construction, such as a replacement for the aging Ellis Fischel Cancer Center in north Columbia.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

2010 MU Campus Master Plan emphasizes density

By Katelyn Amen
March 19, 2010 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA -- In his final presentation as MU's campus master planner Thursday afternoon, Perry Chapman emphasized the importance of density in campus development.

As part of MU's commitment to sustainability, Chapman said the 2010 Campus Master Plan "gives new life to important legacy structures" on campus by making use of existing space.

"A sustainable campus is really, in my view, maintaining compact development patterns," he said. Going forward, Chapman believes sustainability and maintaining the heritage of MU are important to its development.

Chapman provided recommendations on three sections of campus in a long-range plan that he hopes can be accomplished by 2035.

- East Campus: Chapman anticipates a natural area from the northern edge of campus to Dairy Lawn near College Avenue Hall that would serve as an experimental forest and give the area a "pastoral landscape identity," he said.
- Southeast Campus: Near the corner of Stadium Boulevard and College Avenue, Chapman suggests creating a park. That would give MU more of a public presence and would be a counterpoint to Peace Park on the northwestern corner of campus.
- Central Campus: Chapman said MU should focus on renovating existing structures rather than building new ones. Current renovations to Tate and Switzler halls, for example, use historical parts of campus rather than expanding into new areas.
Linda Eastley from Sasaki Associates, an architecture and design firm in Boston, will replace Chapman, who is retiring this year after 12 years in his position.

Like Chapman, Eastley was a principal architect at Sasaki. The company in 2007 presented recommendations for the redevelopment of downtown Columbia as a consultant for MU, Stephens College and the city, according to a previous Missourian article. Its plans included a new MU performing arts center and a new Missouri State Historical Society museum. It also called for the elimination of blight and for more buildings of five to eight stories or more. And it called for converting Elm Street into more of a parkway and extending it to College Avenue.

Eastley said compact campuses contribute to sustainability.

"The most sustainable building you can have is not having to build the building," she said. She said renovating existing space uses MU's natural environment to the campus's advantage.

The 2010 Campus Master Plan provides a list of past campus projects, current renovations and future plans.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UPDATE: Stolen credit card used, police release surveillance photos

By Jordin Ruthstein
March 18, 2010 | 10:06 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — **MU police have released photos from the investigation of a March 7 armed robbery near Conley Avenue Garage.**

A credit card belonging to the victim was used at 2:49 a.m. the morning of the robbery.

The card was used at the Petro-Mart convenience store at 1004 N. Stadium Blvd. on the corner of Bernadette Drive and Stadium, according to a department news release.

MU police are looking for two men and two cars seen on surveillance videos from the convenience store.

The vehicles are:

- A silver or white four-door passenger car, possibly a Pontiac Grand Prix, with a spoiler.
- A dark gray or tan four-door passenger car, possibly a Nissan Sentra.

People with information about the vehicles or the men in the surveillance photos can contact Detective Michael Laughlin at 884-2605 or CrimeStoppers at 875-8477.
Facebook group reignites Tiger Spot discussion

The deteriorating mosaic has been covered by a tarp since August 2007.

By Mary Novokhovsky
Published March 19, 2010

A Facebook group in support of restoring Tiger Spot on Lowry Mall has gained more than 1,400 members since its creation March 10.

Sophomore Bethany Welcher, creator of the "Restore the Tiger Mosaic" group, said she was motivated to launch the page after reading an article about Tiger Spot.

"Originally, I just posted a link to the article on my Facebook," Welcher said. "I got back from my classes for the day and had nothing to do, so I decided that I can go ahead and start a group. Within an hour I had 80 members. Now there are over 1,300."

Tiger Spot is a 30-foot-diameter glass tile mosaic of a Bengal tiger. The spot has been covered by a tarp since August 2007 when the mosaic became damaged by natural wear and tear. The artist of the piece, Paul Jackson, is an MU graduate. Students first called for its removal in 2006, but Jackson hasn't cooperated with attempts from MU to remove it, claiming it would violate his intellectual property rights.

Welcher said her goals for the group are to spark interest among different organizations on campus, create a forum where alternative measures for the Tiger Spot can be discussed and educate underclassmen about the story behind the spot.

"The big talk on the wall is that a tacky tarp doesn't represent us well," Welcher said. "Most guests walk through Lowry Mall, and we could do a much better job representing our school. We know it's probably going to cost a lot of money to do anything but lets at least think about it."

Welcher said she hopes the group will get the MU administration to understand that students care about the Tiger Spot, and they won't stand for a tarp to solve the problem of the damaged artwork underneath.

"They're saying we can't restore it and we can't remove it so let's just not worry about it," Welcher said. "They should come to the student body with the issue."

MU has made numerous efforts to fix Tiger Spot and discuss the issue with the artist, MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said in an e-mail. At this point, Banken said discussions with the artist would only continue if they came to a resolution.

"However, experts tell us that due to the extreme range of Missouri's temperatures, the Tiger Spot cannot be fixed," Banken said in the e-mail.
Although MU administrators did not comment on whether they were open to student opinion on the matter, the Missouri Students Association discussed the topic of renewed interest in the Tiger Spot during its Tuesday meeting. The issue was assigned to the Student Affairs Committee.

MSA President Tim Noce said most students don't really know the facts about the Tiger Spot.

"Unless you're my age or older you wouldn't even remember the Tiger Spot," Noce said. "It's a tricky subject. When I saw it I thought it was kind of cool, and then I realized there were a lot of holes and big cracks. It seemed less convenient each day."

Although there is no resolution concerning the issue of Tiger Spot, Welcher said she hopes the renewed student interest her Facebook group would push the administration to get serious.

"Even a new tarp would be good," Welcher said. "At least they could cover it up with something that looks nice."

Noce said he agrees something must be done with Tiger Spot.

"Obviously the students and campus don't want to fork out too much money on repair," Noce said. "Yet, it's something that will have to be dealt with."