New cancer center gets its funding

The University of Missouri's Board of Curators on Friday approved issuing $30 million in revenue bonds to finance construction of a new Ellis Fischel Cancer Center.

The $52 million cancer center is to be funded with the revenue bonds and $22 million from University of Missouri Health Care. It will replace the 70-year-old Ellis Fischel Cancer Center on Business Loop 70 in Columbia.

Harold A. Williamson Jr., a physician and health system vice chancellor, said relocating Ellis Fischel to the University Hospital and MU campus will enable clinicians, faculty and researchers at the MU School of Medicine, Sinclair School of Nursing and School of Health Professions to collaborate on cancer research and the latest diagnostic, medical and surgical treatments.

The new facility, scheduled for completion in 2013, will include space for various types of cancer treatment services and outpatient surgical procedures, plus 36 examination rooms and several recovery areas.

It also will include a pharmacy, screening and rehabilitation services, and the Margaret Proctor Mulligan Breast Center. Also available will be services for cancer survivors and families.
The UM System's total outstanding debt is $1.15 billion, Krawitz said.

Forsee assured curators that health care operations generate enough revenues to pay back the newly issued bonds in the normal time frame of 25 to 30 years.

Reach Janese Heavin at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jheavin@columbiatribune.com.
MU curators approves funding for new Ellis Fischel building

By Taylor Glascock
May 21, 2010 | 5:59 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Plans to build a new Ellis Fischel Cancer Center that will replace the 71-year-old facility on Business Loop 70 got new life Friday when the UM Board of Curators voted to float revenue bonds to help pay for the project.

The bond issue became necessary after the Missouri General Assembly again this year voted not to fund the project.

“By all accounts, it’s an inadequate facility in just about every way you look at it,” board member Bo Fraser said of the current Ellis Fischel. “The citizens of this state deserve an up-to-date cancer hospital.”

The curators met by teleconference Friday evening to vote on the bond issue. It won unanimous approval.

The plan now calls for $30 million in revenue bonds to be combined with $22 million to pay for the project, which was initially to be financed by proceeds from the sale of assets of the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority.

Funding for the project did win the approval of the Missouri House on April 28 after what 24th District state Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, said in a Missourian opinion piece was “an amazing display of bipartisanship.” The Senate Appropriations Committee, however, voted 10-1 to strip project funding the very next day.

“The university is fulfilling its responsibilities where the state failed,” Kelly said.

The cost to renovate the current Ellis Fischel facility would be impractical when compared to the cost of adding the center to the new patient care tower already under construction at the University Hospital campus. Construction costs and historically low interest rates made now the time to act, Fraser said.
The care tower will be seven floors. Ellis Fischel will occupy the first two. The rest of the tower will house operating rooms, pre- and post-procedure private rooms and three floors of patient care units. A "healing garden" will be the center of the facility, and patients will be able to view the garden from every floor.

Patients of the new center will receive access to the latest therapy, rehabilitation and family support services.

Tower completion is expected in 2013.
COLUMBIA, Mo. – Last month, first lady Michelle Obama launched "Let's Move," a new campaign to combat childhood obesity. The initiative seeks to improve school nutrition programs and promote physical activity. In Missouri, one elementary school is seeing the benefits of incorporating physical activity in their classrooms with the adoption of the Active and Healthy Schools Program. The program, implemented by University of Missouri researchers, has helped to increase kids' activity levels, improve their attention span and reduce discipline problems.

The Active and Healthy Schools Program is being tested at Leslie Bell Elementary School with the guidance of Steve Ball, MU associate professor of exercise physiology and MU Extension state fitness specialist. As a part of the program, students participate in 3-5 minute activity breaks throughout the day. Activity breaks include activity-based games such as jumping, walking or climbing stairs, and may occur inside or outside of the classroom. After breaks, teachers resume schoolwork and students' attention levels are restored.

"The kids love the activity breaks because it gives them something active and fun to do," said Amanda Fienkeldie, guidance counselor at Leslie Bell Elementary School. "Since the program began, discipline referrals among kids with chronic behavior problems have decreased, and there is a significant improvement in their academics, participation and ability to stay on task."

In addition to activity breaks, students and faculty wear pedometers to fuel competition among students and teachers and increase the number of their steps. Activity zones are placed throughout playgrounds to engage students in different activities, including hula-hoop, jump-ropes and games. Signs and pictures with healthy messages about nutrition and activity are displayed in classrooms and throughout the school.
"The idea is to help schools demonstrate to kids the importance of physical activity and nutrition," Ball said. "The program encourages small changes that schools can build on to gradually create an environment that reflects health and fitness."

Prior to implementing the program, teachers were instructed on how to manage activity breaks without disrupting academic schedules. Ball presented research explaining how the program can improve learning, decrease discipline problems and increase physical activity in students at a young age, which makes them more likely to be healthy as adults.

"Now, the kids are more excited about PE and recess," said Gayle Frerking, physical education teacher at Leslie Bell Elementary School. "Students are starting to participate more in youth basketball, dance and gymnastics programs. What they're learning in school is being spread outside the school and into the community."

Initial research for the Active and Healthy Schools Program was conducted at Arizona State University. In the initial study of the program at a school in Arizona, researchers found significant increases in students' steps and a reduction in absences and school nurse visits. The researchers also received positive feedback from parents, students and school personnel.

The current study is designed to further evaluate the program and encourage surrounding school districts to adopt similar efforts. It is funded in part by a grant from the Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City.
Re-inventing recess may yield dividends

COLUMBIA, Mo., May 24 (UPI) -- U.S. researchers say introducing physical activity -- re-inventing recess, so to speak -- as part of elementary school class time will reap benefits.

Researchers at the University of Missouri in Columbia suggest instead of scheduling breaks around academics, schools should incorporate into classroom time several 3-5 minute breaks -- both in and out of the classroom -- during which students jump, walk, climb stairs or do some other form of physical activity.

The "Active and Healthy Schools Program" includes having students and faculty wear pedometers to measure steps, activity zones with hula hoops and other play equipment and posting signs with healthy messages.

"The idea is to help schools demonstrate to kids the importance of physical activity and nutrition," Steve Ball, University of Missouri associate professor of exercise physiology, says in a statement. "The program encourages small changes that schools can build on to gradually create an environment that reflects health and fitness."

As the activity of children increased in research projects, there were added dividends such as a reduction in discipline problems, an increase in attention span, reduction in absences and a reduction in school nurse visits.
Startups highlight teamwork

MU teams bring talents to bear.

By Janese Heavin

Sunday, May 23, 2010

If you want to see what can happen when you cross-pollinate researchers and students from multiple disciplines on the University of Missouri campus, look no further than Adroit Motion LLC.

The startup company that hopes to someday commercialize laparoscopic medical devices came out of an interdisciplinary fellowship and moved forward with the help of graduate-level business students. Last month, an MU student team snagged a NASA Earth/Space Engineering Innovation award for developing Adroit Motion’s business strategy during the Rice University Business Plan Competition in Houston.

“It is very much a success story and shows that success comes when you remove intellectual barriers at a world class university like Mizzou,” Vice Chancellor of Research Rob Duncan said.

The story dates back to the 2008-09 school year when Anthony Harris, a surgeon-in-training with an MBA, teamed up with an engineer, Rebecca Rone, and a doctor to complete a one-year biodesign fellowship. Co-sponsored by the School of Medicine and the College of Engineering, fellowship participants are tasked with finding solutions to real-world medical problems. Out of Harris’s fellowship were born two startups, one of which was Adroit Motion, which aims to develop a laparoscopic medical device that gives doctors finger-like movements during minimally-invasive surgeries.

Like any good idea, Adroit Motion needed a business plan. That’s where Jake Halliday’s MBA students came in.

Halliday, president and CEO of the Missouri Innovation Center, created the course five years ago to give students a chance to develop business strategies around real products.

Last semester, Xandra Sifuentes, a second-year graduate business student, and Brad Snow, an MU mechanical engineering doctoral student, worked with Harris to develop Adroit Motion’s award-winning business plan. The team’s prize earnings at the Rice competition totaled $24,100, money they plan to use to turn a computer model of the device into a prototype to show investors. Sifuentes, who graduated last weekend, is expected to become CEO of Adroit Motion, replacing Harris, who will return to surgical training.

Adroit Motion isn’t the only success story to come out of Harris’s biodesign team. They also started Dermele Skin Care LLC, which last month won a VentureBounce award during InnovateVMS
Ventures in St. Louis. The competition allowed 40 startups to display their products and services to a private audience. Harris and Rone created the company to commercialize a collagen dermal product used to erase wrinkles.

The startups show what can come from students and researchers working, Duncan said. He’s hopeful MU will see more of these types of collaborations with the creation of CLIMB, a student-led club aimed to promote innovation. Duncan envisions students teaming up with researchers to analyze the marketability of ideas, then helping commercialize products.

“I think if we can take our No. 1 responsibility as educators and mentorship of our students and couple that with open source innovation where faculty openly discuss ideas, then I think we’ll have a situation where we can really move out very rapidly in terms of new opportunities to commercialize,” Duncan said. “Anthony Harris is a great example. He has a medical degree but also an MBA and has been outstanding at bringing medical innovation and business together to provide outstanding service to this emerging spirit of innovation.”

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Mizzou hosts Midwest immigration conference

Associated Press - May 24, 2010 5:14 AM ET

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - A 3-day conference that explores issues facing Latinos and other immigrants in the Midwest continues Tuesday in Columbia.

The annual Cambio de Colores conference features sessions on economic development, health care, education, human trafficking and more. Chancellor Brady Deaton of the University of Missouri's Columbia campus and university system president Gary Forsee were among the scheduled participants on Monday.

The conference is organized by the university's Cambio Center, which focuses on immigration and cultural issues in Missouri.

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High schools stop ranking students

By Jessica Bock
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH
Sunday, May. 23 2010

The intense competition among students that comes with ranking graduating seniors has school districts across the country abandoning the tradition.

A host of districts in the region — Clayton, Francis Howell and Belleville among them — have dropped the practice, as have many private schools. This is the last year Webster Groves will rank students.

And now, Varun Mehrotra and his classmates in the top 10 at Lafayette High School know they will be some of the last in the Rockwood district with a class rank.

After a decision this year, Rockwood students in the class of 2013 and beyond will instead earn cum laude, magna cum laude and summa cum laude designations.

For nearly all of Mehrotra's high school career, his class rank was at the top of his mind.

After four years peppered with honors and college-level courses, he'll graduate Monday among the top 10 students with the highest grade-point averages at Lafayette. But the achievement wasn't without stress. In his sophomore year, Mehrotra's rank dropped to 16th, and the B's he received in those more difficult classes made him worry that he'd messed up the chance of getting into the college of his choice.

"It was just a number, but it made me work hard because it was important to me to be in that top 10," Mehrotra said. "But at the same time, I didn't really know if it was worth all the stress it was causing."

Counselors are advocating for dropping graduation rankings on two fronts: They say that it gets rid of the stress of unhealthy competition, and that it could help more students land a spot in an elite college.

They argue that colleges might overlook a student ranked 15 or 20 when only one-hundredth of a percent may separate that student from the top-ranking one.
"It's going to depend on the school and the community, but many feel like their students have a better chance of being admitted to a college without class rank," said Mel Riddile, an associate director at the National Association of Secondary School principals.

More than 50 percent of schools in the country have done away with ranking graduating seniors, he said.

Sharon Sevier, Rockwood's director of guidance and counseling, said that many students chasing a class rank took an honors course because an A in such a class was better for their GPA than an A in a standard class. But Sevier said choosing a different course might make them more well-rounded students.

"And we are seeing some of our highly qualified students not being accepted when colleges simply look at rank and test scores and not the whole package," she said. "There can also be some pretty unhealthy levels of competition."

Recognizing more students, rather than a select few, for their achievements is not about schools' going soft, proponents say. You can't say that honoring students with a 4.0 who are taking extremely difficult courses is rewarding losers, Riddile said.

Melissa Clinedinst, assistant director of research with the National Association of College Admitting Counselors, said class rank had become less of a deciding factor when evaluating student applicants. In the early 1990s, about 40 percent of colleges deemed class rank to be considerably important in admission. Now that number is less than 20 percent, she said.

"When you are trying to compare students from a lot of different high schools all over the country, it is hard to compare them with just their rank," Clinedinst said. The most important aspect colleges look at, she said, is how well students did on college preparation classes. They also seriously look at strength of curriculum and ACT or SAT scores.

When a high school does not rank its students, some college admission counselors are forced to look more closely at an applicant, such as grades over time, coursework and accomplishments, Sevier said. **Others, such as the University of Missouri-Columbia, use their own formulas and calculations to look at a student's performance in required classes for acceptance.**

At Ladue Horton Watkins High School, eliminating class rank in 2003-04 hasn't hurt top students, who still stand out to colleges because of their advanced courses, grades and test scores, said Ken Fox, college and career adviser at Ladue.

Other Ladue students have won scholarships at Mizzou based on their GPA rather
than where students were ranked. Before eliminating rank, some Ladue students who had scored a 33 on their ACT didn't get a $3,500 annual renewable Curators Award because they didn't land in the top 5 percent of the class, Fox said.

"Our job in the high schools is to prepare students as best we can rather than compare students," he said.

Collinsville also does not rank its seniors, but recognizes the top 10 percent. The school changed to a college-ranking system four years ago after students complained to administration about the exclusivity and complications of class rank.

Even though the school has gotten rid of class rank, it still has the student or students with the highest GPA speak at graduation. Class rank also is printed on every student's report card and transcripts for college.

Sarah Klarich, a senior at Collinsville who has been No. 1 in her class since her freshman year, said that doing away with the traditional class rank hadn't made the students in her school any less obsessed with it. She said that if the administrators wanted to cut down competition, they should get rid of ranking all together. But at this point, she doesn't see a reason not to have a designated valedictorian.

"I know we all want to make people feel good about themselves, but we are not little kids anymore," Klarich said. "By the time we get to high school graduation, we should be comfortable with what we have learned and accomplished instead of feeling like we need to be treated equal and have administrators trying to make us all feel good about ourselves."

Top students at Rockwood have mixed feelings about their district's eliminating class rank. They liked seeing where they stood in comparison with others each semester on their report card. But the pressure to take certain classes to stay on top often left them with scheduling issues and other course conflicts.

"Education isn't about competition," said Mehrotra, who was accepted to Washington University. "You don't want to encourage students to be cutthroat kids just to get an A."

Sara Lenz of the Post-Dispatch contributed to this report.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Sensory Sensitive Saturday screens Shrek 4

By Kristina Casagrand
May 23, 2010 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — With pillows tucked under his arm, Eric Carter arrived at Hollywood Theater on Saturday morning to enjoy a film with his family. This was a rare outing for the Carters because Eric's daughter Madeleine has autism, which can make activities such as movie-going difficult.

The screening of "Shrek Forever After" was part of Sensory Sensitive Saturday, a program designed by occupational therapy students to offer children with autism and their families the opportunity to see movies together. Temperatures, sound and lighting are adjusted during the showings to make children with autism more comfortable.

Sensory Sensitive Saturdays came about from a class that involved a community service project, said Lauren Chronister, who founded the event along with three other graduate students at the MU School of Health Professions. All four women who started the program had volunteered for the Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders. It was inspired by a similar program run by the Autism Society of America, which started when a movie theater asked a family to leave when their child sang along to a showing of "Hairspray."

When starting the program in Columbia, Chronister and the other founders surveyed parents and medical professionals to find out the specific needs of the community.

“Columbia has a ton of resources for the autism community, but they don’t have leisure activities for the whole family,” said Sarah White, another founder.

Autism can sometimes make leisure activities harder for children. Paula Carter said her family had never been able to sit through a whole film in a theater before Sensory Sensitive Saturdays.

"They can see a movie in a way they can handle," she said.
Kirk Davis’ son Gavin, 10, has pervasive developmental disorder, which had prevented him from ever going to a movie theater before the event on Saturday.

“This is a good way to try out movies without disturbing other people,” Davis said.

Davis read about Sensory Sensitive Saturday in the newspaper before moving from Minnesota in March.

Seven families came to the show and got their pick of the seats. Because some children require gluten-free, casein-free diets, they were allowed to bring their own food and drinks.

Children chatted softly as they pointed to the screen and moved around in the aisles.

“It’s nice to have an environment where everybody understands, so if a child were to get up and roam the aisles, it’s acceptable,” White said.

Joe McKie, Hollywood Theater manager, said he enjoys being able to support Sensory Sensitive Saturday.

“These are things I love to do,” McKie said. “It’s very heartwarming to see these families come together. It’s worthwhile even if it’s a small group.”

The program also encourages social interaction among the parents.

“It’s good to see all the other families in this community,” Paula Carter said. “I didn’t realize that others dealt with the same issues ... It’s like a club.”

Although the Carters couldn’t stay to watch "Shrek Forever After" because the 3-D format was too scary for Madeleine, the family said they still hope to see more showings in the future.

Because the original founders of this program will graduate next May, they are getting the class below them involved. White said that 26 of the 30 members of the younger class expressed interest.

Several of them will help with the next Sensory Sensitive Saturday, which will show Toy Story 2 on June 26. McKie said he will work to obtain a 2-D copy.
Rusnack leads $2 million investment in Newsy.com

St. Louis Business Journal - by Christopher Tritto

MU mention page 2

Media

Newsy founder and President Jim Spencer has a couple million reasons to thank his supporters in St. Louis.

His Columbia, Mo.-based startup, which provides online video news analysis to smart phones, Apple iPads and other computers through Newsy.com, closed May 5 on a $2 million second round of financing, bringing Newsy’s total to more than $2.7 million since it began raising money in early 2008. Most of the first-round and more than 70 percent of the second-round funding for the company came from St. Louis angel investors.

“There was a tremendous amount of persistence and passion that went into raising the round during a difficult economic period,” Spencer said. “St. Louis has a community of people who step up and rise to the occasion.”

Newsy does no original reporting, but rather monitors the world’s news coverage, and then integrates small portions of online reports by various news outlets into two- to three-minute videos. Attribution to original sources is provided throughout the videos and in accompanying transcripts.

“We help people navigate through the giant firehose of information that is coming at them,” Spencer said. “The idea is to make people smarter faster and give them additional perspectives. As long as a news organization is monetizing their Web site, we are sending traffic to them.”

Spencer declined to name specific investors, but said his local relationships began with the St. Louis Arch Angels. The organization is made up of about 50 individuals who provide seed and early-stage capital in the range of $250,000 to $1 million to promising companies in the region. From there, Spencer broadened out to additional St. Louisans. “There is no better introduction to a potential investor than from another investor,” he said.
Gil Bickel, chairman of Arch Angels and a senior vice president with Morgan Stanley in St.
Louis, said his group has seen several startup deals from Columbia since Arch Angels helped a
similar angel network called Centennial Investors get off the ground there four years ago. Arch
Angels Treasurer Bill Rusnack, formerly of Premcor Inc., said he was Newsy's first Arch Angels
investor and has put in about $50,000.

"Newsy is focusing on people who want a broad spectrum of news from a wide range of
reports, and the fact that the University of Missouri Journalism School was deeply involved
and brought along its academic excellence was very important in my decision," Rusnack
said.

Newsy's latest cash infusion will allow it to expand its content offerings and let Spencer focus on
developing revenue streams through distribution and marketing partnerships. And it comes as
Newsy is making some news of its own.

The company's iPad app, released April 21, became a top 10 free business application for
Apple's new tablet computer and held the No. 11 spot as of May 19. That popularity is all the
more remarkable considering the top 10 is filled with apps from major media outlets, including
such heavyweights as the Financial Times, USA Today, Wall Street Journal and New York
Times. Newsy is hanging tough thanks to its smooth mobile video operations, high consumer
ratings and word-of-mouth growth.

Spencer, a Missouri native who earned a master's degree in journalism from the University of
Missouri, previously held management positions with Ask Jeeves, AOL, and MSNBC.com. He
relocated Newsy from California's Silicon Valley to Columbia in June 2008. The company
operates from a $250,000 digital newsroom it built across from the journalism school, and eight
of its 10 full-time employees are Mizzou J-School graduates. The school feeds Newsy with
additional part-timers and interns, and Newsy executives teach a couple of classes.

"Missouri is to journalism what Stanford is to computer science," Spencer said. "I wanted to
show you could pick up your company, move it to Missouri, raise money here and be successful.
We can operate here for about 20 percent of what it would cost in California or New York."

Spencer said he expects Newsy to become financially self-sufficient and profitable in the next 12
to 18 months.

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