Nixon, Forsee speak out on possible Mo. higher ed budget cuts
AP/St. Louis Public Radio (2010-11-17)

JEFFERSON CITY, MO. (St. Louis Public Radio) - Gov. Jay Nixon says he will use the powers of his office to try to hold down tuition increases at Missouri colleges and universities.

Missouri's higher education institutions are in the second year of a tuition freeze as part of a deal to avoid deep funding cuts by the state.

Nixon said today that he expects colleges and universities will have to take "substantial cuts" in the next state budget. But he's not expecting them to respond with substantial tuition increases. Instead, Nixon said he will pressure them to keep tuition hikes reasonable.

Today's meeting with the governor included a small group of higher education beat reporters, but barred several other media outlets, including St. Louis Public Radio.

Speaking in St. Louis Wednesday, University of Missouri System President Gary Forsee said that state government must do its part to fund higher education, despite ongoing budget cuts.

Forsee also said that state contributions to higher education have not increased since 2000, while tuition over that same time has increased by 70 percent.

One mechanism to boost revenue would be to increase the tax on tobacco and alcohol, according to Forsee.

"We are the lowest state in the union with cigarette taxes at $.17 cents a pack of cigarettes," Forsee said. "If we were the national average, which is $1.54, that's about $600 million of incremental revenue to the state."

Forsee said that he has told Governor Nixon that the university cannot continually fund budget shortfalls on the backs of students.
UPDATE: Gov. Nixon to press against big college tuition hikes

By DAVID A. LIEB/The Associated Press
November 17, 2010 | 7:41 p.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon pledged Wednesday to pressure Missouri's colleges and universities to hold down tuition increases even while warning that they likely will take "substantial cuts" in the next state budget.

Nixon also encouraged Missouri's higher education institutions to eliminate lightly used degree programs, collaborate on redesigning common courses and try to boost the number of people obtaining college degrees.

"We want excellence," Nixon said. "We're taking a much more comprehensive and — in my view — thoughtful view of what we can do to position our institutions to competitively educate more students for years to come."

Nixon outlined his education goals Wednesday to The Associated Press and several education reporters for other media outlets invited to his Capitol office.

Missouri colleges and universities are in the second year of a tuition freeze they voluntarily implemented as part of a deal brokered by Nixon to avert deep state funding cuts. But the deal expires before the 2011-2012 academic year.

Nixon said he expects "substantial cuts" next year for higher education institutions — in excess of the roughly $50 million cut this year — because of the expiration of federal stimulus money for states. But he said it's too early to say exactly how large of a cut he will recommend when he proposes a budget in January.

Regardless, Nixon said he is not expecting colleges and universities to respond with substantial tuition increases.
"I'll use the resources at hand of the chief executive of the state to keep downward pressure as best I can" on tuition, Nixon said. He declined to specify what percentage of a tuition increase he would consider to be reasonable.

While state funding has fallen and tuition remained flat, Missouri's colleges and universities have experienced significant enrollment increases. Nixon wants to eliminate courses producing only a few graduates.

At the urging of Nixon's administration, Missouri's public colleges and universities have undertaken a course review to identify programs graduating fewer than 10 bachelor's degree students annually, five master's degree students or three doctoral students.

It's up to the governing board of each institution to decide whether to phase out those programs. The state's colleges and universities already have identified 61 degree programs to eliminate with the possibility of more, said interim state higher education commissioner David Russell.

Academic officers from 13 institutions also agreed in October to work together to redesign the curriculum for 13 of the largest undergraduate courses, Nixon said. The state is providing $100,000 for the effort, the institutions $190,000, and they plan to apply Friday for an additional $250,000 private grant, Nixon said.

The goal is not to make basic algebra or economics the exact same at every campus but rather to develop a model, Nixon said. One potential application could allow students to do math homework online and have it automatically graded when they arrive for class the next time.

"Missouri's going to be the first state with this level of multi-institutional collaboration on course redesign," Nixon said.

About 37 percent of Missouri residents have college degrees. Nixon wants that to rise to 60 percent by 2020, an increase that cannot be accomplished solely by getting more high school graduates to attend college. To attain that mark, Nixon said some of the roughly 746,000 Missourians who already have college credits but not degrees would need to return to school to complete their coursework. Nixon said he also wants to eventually move Missouri toward a higher education funding model based on the school's missions and performance, instead of enrollment.
What does that mean? Misunderstandings can endanger your health

By Darla Carter • dcarter@courier-journal.com • November 18, 2010

If you've ever had trouble understanding your doctor, gotten lost at a hospital or been unable to decipher medical literature or paperwork, you're not alone.

"Everyone seems to have a story where something wasn't understandable or they couldn't get around," said Diane Smith, an occupational therapist and health literacy researcher at the University of Missouri. It's time to "make things easier so people can understand it."

Improving health literacy — which the government defines as the degree to which people have the capacity to get, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions — has been deemed a national priority by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In May, the department released a report called The National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy. It calls for efforts to simplify health information, improve communication with the public and build Americans' health literacy skills, from childhood.

Right now, almost 9 out of 10 adults have trouble using routine health information from medical facilities, the media and others, according to the department.

"Without health information that makes sense to them, people can't access cost-effective, safe and high-quality health services," said Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius at the time of the Action Plan's release. "We need payers and providers of health care services to communicate clearly and make the necessary changes to improve their communication with consumers, patients and beneficiaries."

Some local medical facilities have addressed health literacy issues in recent years or plan to do so. Changes have included improved signage; encouraging nurses and others to have patients demonstrate or repeat back instructions or techniques; and adding more services for people who don't speak English.

Health literacy is not just about reading; it's also "getting around the health care system," Smith said. "Is there an easy way for people to find stuff?"

Baptist Hospital Northeast in Oldham County has given the hallways street names — complete with street signs — to help people get around, and it has maps available in bins.
University Hospital is training employees on how patients' religious or cultural background might affect how they interact with the health care system, and the hospital is putting special phones in each room to provide translation for those who don't speak English. It's also seeking input from patients and their families on projects, from signage to whether diagnoses are being delivered clearly.

"The information they give is invaluable to changing our practices and our policies and the way we operate to be more patient-family centered," said Pam Ward, director of staff performance and development.

For several years, Clark Memorial Hospital in Jeffersonville, Ind., has encouraged personnel to walk visitors to their destinations to help keep newcomers from getting lost. It also emphasizes the importance of having certain patients, such as diabetics and new moms, demonstrate skills they'll be using at home, such as how to take care of the baby's umbilical cord or how to give themselves insulin.

"We do a lot of teaching, but we also let the patient demonstrate their learning to us," said Kathy Neuner, vice president of inpatient clinical care at Clark.

The goal of that and other health literacy initiatives is to make sure that when patients "go home that they're safe and understand what their disease process is and what they need to do to help keep themselves (or their baby) healthy," Neuner said.

That's something that's very important in this era of health reform, said Smith, chair of the University of Missouri's occupational therapy department, where she's also an assistant professor.

Today, people are "having to take more responsibility for their own health care because basically you're discharged as soon as you're medically stable," Smith said. "People have to take care of themselves or others (as caregivers) ... more than perhaps in the past."

*Story continues*....
Two cranes have been erected along Hitt Street east of University Hospital to work on the seven-story patient care tower. The cranes will be in place for the next 16 months as University of Missouri Health Care begins the next phase of construction on the structure, which is targeted for completion in 2013.

By Jodie Jackson Jr.

Wednesday, November 17, 2010

Construction of a $203 million patient care tower at University Hospital has gone vertical.

Two industrial cranes — one 160 feet tall and one that will be taller — will be in place for the next 16 months as University of Missouri Health Care begins the next phase of construction on the seven-story structure, which is targeted for completion in 2013.

Site preparation and relocation of underground utilities began last summer, said Clarissa Easton, chief facilities officer for MU Health.

“The installation of these cranes will allow the project to go vertical, so now all additional construction is above-ground,” Easton said.

One crane ultimately will be 200 feet tall; the second will be 160 feet tall. Both will be used to construct the patient care tower’s foundation, frame and exterior walls.

The first two floors of the new building at 1 Hospital Drive will be devoted to a new Ellis Fischel Cancer Center to replace the aging facility on Business Loop 70 at Garth Avenue. The UM Board of Curators in May approved the sale of $30 million in revenue bonds to pay for the Ellis Fischel relocation.
Last summer, the UM System issued $332 million in bonds to finance more than a dozen projects on all four campuses. Most of the bonds were on buildings, such as residential halls or health facilities, which generate revenue to repay that debt.

University officials said the bonds issued in May will be repaid over time from revenue produced by the new medical facility.

Nikki Krawitz, UM vice president of finance and administration, said in May that the existing Ellis Fischel building would be too costly to renovate. Revenue from the possible sale of the building could either be used to pay down debt or to buy equipment for the new center.

Bill Caldwell, Ellis Fischel medical director, said this morning that no decision has been made on what to do with the existing building.

"It's way, way premature" to speculate, he said. "We're not opening that building until 2013. This is something that has been and will continue to be discussed."

The new patient care tower also will provide additional operating rooms, pre- and post-procedure rooms, and private patient rooms. The area for Ellis Fischel's outpatient services will provide space for clinical services such as chemotherapy treatment, radiation therapy and cancer screening.

The third and fourth floors will house surgical services, including six state-of-the-art operating rooms and 25 procedure rooms, with future expansion space for another six operating rooms and 25 more procedure rooms. The fifth, sixth and seventh floors will house inpatient units with 90 private rooms, visitor lounges and treatment facilities.

The project hit a potential snag in July when an unsuccessful bidder, claiming the university accepted a bid that did not meet specifications, sought a temporary restraining order to stop construction and rebid a portion of the work.

The case was dismissed Nov. 2 without prejudice by Boone County Associate Circuit Judge Jodie Asel. The Kansas City attorney for Architectural Wall Systems of West Des Moines, Iowa, did not return a phone call this morning to comment.

Reach Jodie Jackson Jr. at 573-815-1713 or e-mail jjackson@columbiatribune.com.
Number of international students studying in Missouri on rise

By The Associated Press
November 17, 2010 | 7:08 a.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — The number of international students studying in Missouri increased by 18 percent last school year.

A national report found that Missouri colleges and universities had more than 13,000 international students. The number of Missourians studying in other countries increased by 2.6 percent last school year.

Roughly half the international students in Missouri came from China, India and South Korea. The highest enrollments were at MU, Washington University, the University of Missouri-Kansas City and Missouri State University.
Kreklows are the first family of MU sports

By MIKE DeARMOND

COLUMBIA | There are rumblings around town that support is growing for a nickname for homegrown hoops standout Ricky Kreklow, a Missouri freshman.

“The Mighty Condor,” KFRU-AM’s Spencer Kane said.

Kreklow is 6 feet 6, with a wingspan to match, and has a habit of going airborne to launch threes and swooping in to shut down opponents’ drives to the basket.

But to that proposed moniker, cousin Molly Kreklow, also an athlete at Missouri, wrinkles her nose and says: “I don’t see that one. He’s too soft for that. If people knew his personality, they would not say that.”

And, besides, what kind of a nickname is that for a member of The First Family of Missouri Athletics? That’s what the Kreklow family is right now.

Apologies to the Andersons, the previous holders of that honor before Michael Anderson Jr., son of MU men’s basketball coach Mike Anderson, ended his playing days at Mizzou, and before daughter Yvonne took her considerable hoops skills to Texas.

Mike Jr. is still on the scene as team manager, and MU’s top recruiter, T.J. Cleveland, is an Anderson nephew. DeMarre Carroll, another Anderson nephew, helped launch the program’s resurgence before moving on to the NBA. Most of the players on Missouri’s current team — which opens its regular season against Western Illinois tonight at home — call Marchetta Anderson, Mike Anderson’s wife, Mom or Mom A.

But the Family Kreklow is so new, and so now.

Wayne and Susan Kreklow coach the Missouri women’s volleyball team, on which niece Molly is a 6-foot freshman setter. She’s won the Big 12 newcomer of the week award five times already, and, heading into Wednesday night’s match at Texas, she led the Big 12 with 11.74 assists per set.

Susan and Wayne are more than just Molly’s proud aunt and uncle, or Ricky’s parents. Coming over from Columbia College, where they ruled NAIA volleyball, the husband-and-wife duo has coached Missouri into the NCAA Tournament in eight of the last 10 seasons.
Susan was Big 12 Coach of the Year in 2000 before stepping aside to be director of volleyball. Wayne picked up the reins, and he has an NBA championship ring from 1980-81, when he was Larry Bird’s teammate with the Boston Celtics.

The entire family — including Ricky’s younger siblings, Ryan and Ali — probably will be on hand at Mizzou Arena tonight.

But the spotlight will be on Ricky, who is already something of a fan favorite. Perhaps because he’s a homegrown kid who was an all-state star at Rock Bridge High School. Or maybe because he has a Pete Maravich-type appeal, all arms and legs and floppy hair and a dead-eye shooter.

Wayne and Susan Krcklow worried about that hometown stuff — they wanted to get away, to avoid the pressure of making good on a familiar stage if Ricky chose to stay.

“It’s happened a lot to kids here in Columbia in a lot of sports,” Wayne Krcklow said. “It’s kind of a mixed blessing, being right in this town and having good kids.

“When we took visits, we went as far away as we could from here. We visited Virginia. We visited Minnesota. We visited Stanford and Cal. The only thing missing was someplace down south.

“As he got into the process, he told me one time that ‘If I go to school anywhere in the Midwest, it’s going to be at Mizzou.’ ”

After choosing Missouri, Ricky, so far, doesn’t appear fazed by the pressure that worried his parents. He just plays hard. And his teammates have noticed.

After his nine-point, four-steal effort in his first game at Missouri, an exhibition, junior teammate Laurence Bowers praised his efforts.

“A lot of people label Ricky as a shooter,” Bowers said. “A lot of people didn’t see him do all the dirty and gritty work. You saw it. He gets in there.

“On the free-throw line, he tries to tip every ball. Even if he can’t get it. He’s scrappy. Everything that you can ask out of a person, Ricky’s going to give it. You’ve got to love guys like that.”

Recruiting Molly to Mizzou was different. She wasn’t a hometown girl, hailing from the Twin Cities area in Minnesota.

“Honestly, we really took a hands-off approach on that one,” Wayne said.

“They did the visits and went a lot of places. But Mom (Marsha Krcklow, also a college volleyball player), several times made comments: ‘She always keeps coming back and talking about Missouri.’ ”
As for Molly, she sees herself as the adventurer; cousin Ricky, not so much.

“Ricky wanted to stay close to home,” she said. “I wanted to get away from home. I think he’s more of a homebody than I am. But it’s just nice to have him here. We get along really well, and it’s really fun.”

Ultimately, it is an extended family affair these days at Mizzou. A Kreklow Family Affair.
FDA restricts caffeinated alcoholic beverages

by Mark Slavit

Posted: 11.17.2010 at 4:12 PM

COLUMBIA, MO. -- A popular drink among young people is losing its caffeine and keeping its high alcohol content.

FDA officials have put drinks like Four Loko on a federal warning list.

Recent controversy surrounding drinks, like Four Loko, contain 12 percent alcohol and as much caffeine as a cup of coffee after some college students in New Jersey and Washington ended up in emergency rooms with high levels of alcohol poisoning.

Some University of Missouri students said the caffeine ban is a good idea.

"I feel it's a lot safer, for many college students especially, who have been trying this on multiple occasions," MU Student Alison Hoseli said.

"People drink Four Loko because of the convenience of the energy and the stuff together already," MU student Marc Painter said.

Removing caffeine from drinks like Four Loko won't stop people from getting their alcohol and caffeine buzz. All they'll have to do is buy an energy drink on the side.

Blending alcohol and caffeine is nothing new. One of today's more popular drinks combines the energy drink Red Bull and vodka. Members of the MU Wellness Resource Center want to remind everyone that Four Loko will still contain a 12 percent alcohol content.

"If you are going to drink, do so responsibly. It's always your choice. We don't tell students not to drink, but we want to give them the tools and the education to keep themselves safe," MU Student Life Wellness Resource Center Peer Education Graduate Assistant Jenna Jordan said.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration sent warning letters to four companies that said caffeine added to their malt alcoholic beverages is an unsafe food additive.

FDA Officials have not set a deadline to remove banned products from store shelves.