A puzzling agenda

Governor calls on colleges to do more with less.

By Janese Silver

In August, Gov. Jay Nixon ticked off an agenda for Missouri’s higher education network that has puzzled faculty members at the University of Missouri.

Educate more students, Nixon instructed, parroting a national goal to increase the number of degree-holding adults from about 37 percent to 60 percent by 2025. In other words, teach hundreds of thousands more students in less than 15 years.

And, Nixon said in the next breath, do so not with the promise of additional state funds but by culling degree programs and sharing services between campuses.

During a meeting with reporters last week, Nixon said he’s looking at the big picture. Missouri needs more skilled workers for the jobs of tomorrow, he said, and colleges and universities need to work together to make sure that happens, even in lean budget years.

The notion of doing more with less isn’t exactly new to Missouri’s cash-strapped colleges and universities.

MU alone has seen record enrollments for the past several years and continues to accept students despite funding cuts that have left faculty and teaching positions unfilled. Admissions, financial aid, residential life, dining services and other support staff also serve more students every year despite vacancies in their own offices.

The School of Health Professions is a snapshot of what’s happening on the MU campus. That program has seen enrollment triple since it separated from the School of Medicine in 2001.

Today, more than 1,700 students are enrolled in the school, which is housed at Lewis Hall. Classroom and office space there is so tight, the school’s communication officer, Cheri Ghan, had to start working from home this year to make space for an additional student adviser to serve the growing population.

The School of Health Professions exemplifies collaboration, too. It has agreements with five community colleges to more quickly train therapists to work in rural communities. And the
school teams up with the University of Missouri-Kansas City’s pharmaceutical program to provide those courses at MU.

The school’s success didn’t stem from a state mandate, though.

It’s the result of administrators, faculty and staff keeping students in mind, said Meichele Foster, development director for the school. Rather than focusing on what they do, she said, the focus is “on why we do it. We do it to provide affordable and accessible education to Missourians and to serve Missourians.”

Nixon’s least-popular task to colleges and universities, perhaps, was his call to take a look at programs graduating small numbers of students annually.

Using a metric the Missouri Department of Higher Education established years ago, the state flagged programs that graduate, on average, fewer than 10 bachelor’s, five master’s and three doctoral students a year. MU has until Dec. 31 to submit to the state a whittled-down list of small degree programs. The Department of Higher Education flagged 75 so-called “low-producing” degree programs at MU and is requesting administrators eliminate them or somehow realign them to be more efficient.

The degree count alone fails to take critical context into account. Statistics, for instance, might not produce a lot of degrees, but students from a range of studies take statistics courses. And some master’s programs might not produce a lot of graduates, but they are critical steps to doctoral programs that are flourishing.

Most within MU’s small departments have gone into protective mode, trying to convince administrators their degree offerings are justified. Graduate students pursuing careers in art history departments, for instance, can’t just obtain some sort of combined degree and expect to get hired in a specialized field, Kristin Schwain, associate professor in the Department of Art History and Archaeology, told MU Provost Brian Foster at a town hall meeting this month.

Foster has told faculty members MU needs to comply with the state’s charges so it can be a partner in the discussion.

More likely, said state Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, the university is trying to avoid a political fight. Participating is “the lesser of two evils,” he said.

Nixon is looking at degrees across the state’s higher education system. Last year the number of new programs outpaced discontinued programs by a ratio of 5-to-1.

“We simply cannot afford the luxury of supporting programs that are not connected strategically to state needs and priorities,” Nixon said in August.
Although MU hasn’t turned in its final degree review report to the state, some universities have. So far, public colleges and universities have identified 61 degrees they’re willing to drop, Nixon said.

While culling degrees across the state might create more efficiency in Missouri, the notion that the degree review program is a cost-cutting measure has been confusing on the MU campus. Eliminating most of the “low-producing” degrees identified at MU won’t save anything, administrators have acknowledged.

The point is to keep institutions focused on what they do best, Nixon said.

“Rolla has an outstanding engineering school,” he said, referring to the Missouri University of Science and Technology. “We want to keep the focus on that mission. We wouldn’t want them to creep into philosophy or French.”

But MU is already doing that, too. Foster earlier this year unveiled Mizzou Advantage, which aims to capitalize on the university’s strengths. Rather than picking and choosing programs, though, Mizzou Advantage encourages faculty to collaborate across disciplines to focus on real-world problems. In that model, there’s room for small programs. Food for the Future — one of the five initiatives within Mizzou Advantage — doesn’t just focus on nutrition and agriculture but also welcomes researchers from history and folklore, for instance, to look at the culture of food.

The degree review isn’t just getting criticism from inside campus borders. Kelly also questioned the purpose of the degree review.

“It creates an impression of frugality when it doesn’t add any frugality,” he said. “You cannot continue to chop away at programs. Our faculty are the lowest-paid in the American Association of Universities. ‘It’s a stark reality that you don’t fix by doing fictitious reviews.’

Some faculty members have complained in various meetings that Nixon targeted degree programs before asking universities to take a look at their administrative Cabinets and costs first.

The third agenda item he outlined during the higher education summit was, indeed, administrative efficiencies. The call, though, didn’t ask colleges to review their administrative systems. Rather, he called for institutions to provide services “more cheaply” by outsourcing, sharing resources or tying together academic programs.

Sharing services surfaced long before Nixon’s charge. UM System President Gary Forsee has been studying ways to pool staff and services for more than a year. Already, University Bookstore at MU manages the smaller bookstores on the three other UM campuses. Procurement services also have been centralized. Streamlined paper processes in the future also promise some savings.
Although it was the last among Nixon's list of priorities, funding is at the heart of the discussion. Lawmakers are looking down the barrel of a 2012 budget that lacks the $860 million in federal stimulus dollars padding the current budget. The state could see as much as a $600 million shortfall, and after being protected from significant cuts for two years, colleges and universities could bear the brunt of those budget reductions. Nixon said higher education should expect at least a $50 million cut.

Eliminating degree programs or coming up with cross-campus collaborations won't solve the 2012 budget puzzle. Those changes will take years to implement.

Quicker remedies would be to beef up collection of Internet sales taxes or to start charging higher sales taxes on cigarettes, said Rep. Mary Still, D-Columbia.

"There are many things we can do to improve our revenue picture just by modernizing and dealing with the world we live in today," she said.

Nixon doesn't seem interested in the discussion. Asked whether he was willing to entertain discussions of a cigarette tax increase, Nixon noted that Missouri voters have twice defeated such a proposal.

"I'm not in the situation or have the luxury of betting on a pot of gold at the end of any rainbow," he said.

Instead, a task force is studying ways to implement a model that rewards universities with performance-based funding. The task force met for the first time earlier this week. Nixon said he's not sure what will come of the discussions but vowed funding won't be tied to enrollment or degree attainment alone.

At the end of the day, "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."

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
MU faculty criticize state mandate to reconfigure programs

By Walker Moskop
November 19, 2010 | 5:55 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — An MU administrator told faculty and students at a small forum Thursday afternoon that the ongoing review of its degree programs is "political" and leaves university administrators with a difficult balancing act.

"What we've got to do is try and position ourselves where we can reach the best compromise," he said.

That requires university administrators to balance their responsibilities to faculty, the University of Missouri System and the state Coordinating Board for Higher Education, Spain said.

The university must submit a report with suggestions for eliminating or realigning programs to the state by Dec. 31.

The state's criteria identifies a program as low-producing if it fails to graduate at least 10 students per year at the bachelor's level, five at the master's level and three at the doctoral level, averaged over a three-year period.

Twenty-eight from an original list of 75 low-producing programs at MU are being scrutinized, according to a report released by Chancellor Brady Deaton on Nov. 1.
Both faculty and the MU administration have criticized the state’s criteria as simplistic. Several faculty members said Thursday that the value of a program doesn’t carry weight in the current process.

“We need to get our programs up above those thresholds because it doesn’t matter how we count or what we define as productive,” said nutrition and exercise physiology professor Tom Thomas. “We’re going to be back in this room again (in the future) if you’re not above 10, five and three.”

He suggested that perhaps MU should “play (the state’s) game a little bit.”

Geography professor Matt Foulkes said the political objective of reducing the number of programs and the educational goal of evaluating programs to strengthen them were “mutually incompatible.”

“It’s hard to rally around (this process) when everyone knows the goal is to reduce a number,” he added.

Foulkes said he felt a lack of transparency from administrators had frustrated faculty during the process. He said he understood that administrators couldn’t discuss some matters in the public sphere, but he said administrators hadn’t clearly communicated who was driving the agenda and calling the shots.

Several faculty members wanted to push back against the mandate.

“I don’t understand why every now and then you just don’t dig your heels in,” Thomas said.

“Can we not ever do the right thing?” he asked. “Does it always have to be the political thing?”

Although they were upset about the looming deadline, faculty said the process of evaluating programs to identify areas for improvement is a good practice. However, they said rushing the process to meet a political mandate could hurt the quality of education offered by MU.

While various possibilities for realigning programs were discussed during the forum, faculty struggled to come up with viable solutions. Both administrators and faculty have
said the small programs placed on the list shouldn't have to face the reconfiguration process in isolation and larger programs should be brought into the discussion.

But Foulkes said it would be "stupid" for larger programs to commit to anything in such a short time frame without being forced.

"Everybody likes their program. No one's going to want to change their program unless they're forced to," he said. "You can't get away from the list."
Curators to discuss projects

Bonds will pay for buildings.

The University of Missouri Board of Curators is meeting Monday in a special session to consider taking on more debt to pay for various building projects across the four-campus system.

Curators will review projects totaling $325 million during the session, which starts at 9:30 a.m. and will be conducted through the UM System Telepresence network.

In Columbia, all of the proposed projects are buildings that generate revenue. Curators are being asked to issue:

- $30 million to replace and possibly relocate the Green Meadows Clinic, part of MU Health Care. The existing clinic includes 48,000 square feet across seven buildings on a 4.5-acre property. The system estimates the building needs to be 84,000 square feet in one building on a roughly 7.5-acre property. Having the extra space will help the clinic meet increased demand, spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said in September. The revenue bonds would be combined with $2.5 million from health care capital reserves to fund the proposed $32.5 million project.
- $18.6 million in revenue bonds for Mark Twain residential hall, money that would be combined with $3 million from campus dining revenues for a total project cost of $21.7 million. The residential hall needs immediate attention because of deteriorating conditions, according to information from the system.
- $10 million for an East Campus chiller plant — a new chilled water plant needed to serve the new Patient Care Tower. The project, which also will use $5 million from a campus capital reserve fund, initially would provide capacity for 4,500 tons but would allow for expansion.
- $6.5 million for a South Campus stormwater main, a 72-inch concrete pipe system from Monk Drive to the outfall south of Memorial Station. The existing 54-inch system is more than 60 years old, is in poor condition and is undersized, according to the system.

Curators also will review requests to finance academic buildings on the system’s other three campuses. Issuing bonds for academic buildings is tricky because they don’t directly generate revenues like residential halls and health clinics. At the September curators meeting, administrators suggested academic buildings can be revenue generators if they allow a campus to enroll more students. The Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, for instance, has had to turn away qualified students because of a lack of space, so building new classrooms could equate to new tuition dollars.

UM-Kansas City is seeking $18 million for a library addition and $4 million for student success center renovations. Missouri S&T wants $43.2 million for a new chemical and biological
engineering building and renovations to the chemistry and biological sciences building, plus $32.4 million for an energy project. UM-St. Louis is seeking $27 million to add on to and renovate Benton Stadler Science Complex.

MU has not had to turn away students because of a lack of classroom space and isn’t seeking to issue bonds for academic buildings, even though there are about 30 educational buildings in need of renovations on campus.

Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance for the system, said in an e-mail that MU “decided that they do not have a revenue source to support the debt service on an academic building given other budget demands such as salary and benefit increases.”

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MU engineering professor suspended

By Janese Silvey

A University of Missouri professor who has battled administrators for months over a federally funded research project has been kicked out of the classroom.

Greg Engel, an associate engineering professor, had his teaching duties suspended this week after three female Asian students complained he discriminated against them based on race and gender.

Engel is the researcher who helped secure a $2 million federal earmark to proceed with his work creating more advanced electromagnetic launchers, or rail guns. After the earmark was awarded, engineering Dean Jim Thompson and Chair Noah Manring replaced Engel as project lead with Annie Sobel, an adjunct engineering professor who also works in the provost’s office.

MU has countered that Engel was replaced on the project because he was not fulfilling required duties, an accusation Engel denies.

Engel went public with his complaints against administrators, and he has been the target of retaliation since, said his attorney, George Smith.

Smith pointed to a faculty irresponsibility charge Manring filed against Engel in May. The crux of the charge is that Engel refuses to show respect for MU. In the charge, Smith said, Manring demanded that Engel promise to behave respectfully and submit to administrative requests. If not, Smith said, Manring demanded that Engel’s tenure be removed and he be fired.

“Manring has let it be publicly known he is out to get” Engel, Smith said. “To me that is beyond outrageous. In the university setting, there is always backbiting, turf battles and disagreements. But even people who hate each other never come out in writing and say they want his tenure removed.”

Thompson has not taken action on the faculty irresponsibility charge filed May 10, even though rules call for action to be taken within two weeks. This week, Engel asked Thompson to move forward or dismiss the charge.

Engel’s teaching suspension was the result of an informal complaint three students filed. MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said administrators cannot talk about the situation because it’s a personnel matter.
Engel said the students had plagiarized after a previous warning. He said a handful of students in his lab had plagiarized earlier, and he warned them not to do so again. When the three students did so a second time, he gave them zeros, he said. The complaint accused Engel of discrimination based on race and gender.

“These three students happen to be female and happen to be Chinese,” Smith said. “So I don’t know if” they plagiarized again “because they don’t understand English well.”

Smith said Engel met with Manring last week and came up with what appeared to be an acceptable remedy. But then Manring called a meeting Saturday, where faculty voted to suspend Engel.

Engel has not filed a formal grievance regarding his launcher project, but he filed research misconduct charges this week claiming administrators are plagiarizing his research when they continue with the launcher project without him. Smith said he could not disclose who the charges were filed against. But because it dealt with the research project, it’s likely they targeted Sobel, Manring and Thompson.

Typically, research misconduct charges go to Rob Duncan, vice chancellor of research. But Duncan is Sobel’s husband, so there’s a potential conflict of interest. Smith said Engel has asked that the charges be reviewed by the provost at UM-Kansas City or UM-St. Louis.

Engel’s two classes have been reassigned. He is allowed to continue research and still receives his entire salary of $98,000.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.
MU faculty consider capstone changes

By Janese Silver

The University of Missouri Faculty Council is trying to decide whether MU should continue to require the capstone experience for undergraduates.

Currently, students must complete a capstone course or project as part of general education requirements to graduate. The capstone experience can come in the form of a senior seminar, a class, an internship or an undergraduate thesis.

Under discussion is a proposal to only eliminate the capstone requirement, not the capstone experience. That would allow individual schools and colleges to decide whether a capstone course should be required within that discipline without forcing all departments to require it.

In some schools, capstones don’t make sense, said Stephen Montgomery-Smith, a math professor who used his own discipline as an example. Political science Associate Professor Jonathan Krieckhaus agreed, saying his discipline also doesn’t lend itself to the culminating experience that capstones are supposed to provide.

Furthermore, the fact that capstones aren’t supposed to have more than 25 students in a class is a luxury MU can no longer afford, he said.

“We just don’t have faculty for it,” Krieckhaus said. “Logistically, the capstone makes little sense. The small-class experiences always make sense, but we don’t have resources for them.”

Some argued the capstone experience makes MU unique. Because the state is not adequately funding higher education, faculty members said, that type of quality suffers.

“There it is. That’s the impact on education,” Harry Tyrer, professor of electrical and computer engineering, said, referring to continued cuts to higher education funding.

In many cases, the capstone experience is the only 4000-level course a student takes before graduating. Doing away with that would be troubling, said Nicole Monnier, associate teaching professor of Russian.

“To think students could leave with 30 hours of 3000-level courses only, to me that seems like a major statement,” she said, adding that MU should “distinguish ourselves from community colleges.”
Clyde Bentley, associate professor of journalism, suggested the capstone requirement simply be changed to a requirement that students take at least three credits in a 4000-level class.

The Faculty Council is expected to discuss the proposed change at its next meeting in January. If the council approves it, the change will then go to all faculty members for a vote.

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MU stifles creativity

‘Suck-up’ system hurts top faculty.

By EDDIE ADELSTEIN

The University of Missouri, rich in tradition, has long treated creative faculty as problem children.

This philosophy of killing off faculty with creative thoughts is deeply ingrained. It goes back to 1936, when Barbara McClintock, an enormously creative scientist and our only faculty member who has won a Nobel Prize, was told by the chairman of the botany department that if she married or her mentor were fired, she would be terminated. Under this kind of planned pressure, she left the university. Nothing has actually changed.

Faculty members who file grievances and are unsuccessful in achieving satisfaction have a number of common characteristics. They are generally the most creative and productive members of the faculty. They are often awarded for excellence in teaching. Both of these traits segregate with a high level of integrity, and they are not easily bullied. What they lack is the ability to recognize this system does not value those traits and that success is dictated by a well-organized “suck-up” system. Criticism of administration initiates a series of punishments that are predictable and destructive.

Initially, they believe the university takes negative actions simply because it doesn’t understand their creative ideas and actions. They read the rules and regulations and find the rules support them. In disbelief, they find the university ignores these rules and interprets them in self-serving manners. The university lawyers send letters with veiled threats. They are willing to hire outside consultants and spend thousands of dollars to win.

Grievants contact local lawyers only to find, with rare exception, no lawyer in Columbia will vigorously challenge the university. The university usually wins by delaying the process until the grievant runs out of money. Often, they find out late in the legal process that you cannot sue the university except in certain cases. Their research is put on hold. Some never recover. The university puts out campaigns of disinformation, labeling them as “hotheads.”

In this suck-up environment, the quisling phenomena almost always occur. Some faculty members will always view this as an opportunity to advance politically and will be critical of the grievant, hoping for administrative reward. This is often successful.
The university is working aggressively to punish two of our most productive faculty. Greg Engel, associate professor in the electrical and computer engineering department, has research focuses in pulsed power, plasma physics and energy conversions. He has been successful in the private sector and owns several U.S. patents. It is not surprising he was made principal investigator of a Navy project.

Galen Suppes is a professor of chemical engineering with special interests in soy-based polymers, phase-change material and carbon materials. He has received numerous prestigious national awards and is aggressive in marketing his multiple creative ideas. They were both commanded to turn over their intellectual properties and creative actions to the university. The track record of the university actively marketing and protecting the intellectual property of these individuals is poor.

When Suppes and Engel refused to turn over their research ideas and processes to the university, they received numerous threats generated by the university’s legal department. In the case of Suppes, who had filed a grievance against the university, when it became apparent he might win, they chose to interpret the rules of the grievance process that by suing him they could stop the process. That rule was written expressly to allow the faculty to file a lawsuit when the university failed to act upon the grievance. This is an unprecedented action. Further, Suppes said demands included his rights to patents filed before he joined MU and the rights to intellectual property developed by employees of his company.

Engel received notice from our legal department that if he continued to resist the taking of his role of principal investigator of a $2 million grant from the Navy regarding his expertise in pulsed power, he might be involved in “criminal intent.”

The taking away of his direct authority of this grant is egregious and incomprehensible. Rob Duncan, head of research development, has insisted the principal investigator role he turned over to his wife, Annie Sobel, who is a physician. Her lack of expertise, as well as her relationship to Duncan, places their position as indefensible. After Engel’s complaints, there was an offer to allow him to work on this project, but not as director.

Of course, the university did its usual tricks of punishment. Engel received threatening letters from his chairman, and they took away an online course he had established and put him in charge of a course with which he had little experience. True to form, a number of his fellow faculty members have censured him for his actions.

I had hoped the university commitment to entrepreneurial efforts, headed by UM President Gary Forsee, would change this culture and the intellectual rights of faculty would be protected. The ability of faculty members to make productive the creative ideas they put forth remains ahysical.

What we really need is new top-down change. We need leaders who are committed to education, service and research. We need the brightest and most open creative minds for these positions. The road map for success has been clearly drawn for this institution in the evaluations by U.S.
News. We need to make this a faculty-driven institution. We need to increase faculty, award more tenure, decrease class size, reduce tuition and reward creative thought.

How hard can that be?

Eddie Adelstein is an associate professor of pathology at MU's School of Medicine.
Targeting Social Skills in Teaching Autistic Kids

By Rick Nauert PhD Senior News Editor
Reviewed by John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on November 22, 2010

Over the past decade, the diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorders has swelled among children. While authorities are uncertain as to the etiology or cause behind the increased diagnosis, one thing is certain — new educational strategies are needed to improve outcomes for these special children.

As such, researchers from the University of Missouri are developing an effective social competence curriculum, with a virtual classroom component, that could help educators meet the demands of this growing population.

The need to improve social skills among this cohort are critical as statistics show that if these students are able to communicate effectively, they can achieve success in the classroom, and later in the workplace.

The challenge becomes complex as educators face an immediate future of dwindling resources.

Dr. Janine Stichter, a professor of special education at the MU College of Education, and her team have developed a curriculum that has shown success in an after-school format and is now being tested during daily school activities, with help from two three-year grants from the Institute of Educational Sciences in the U.S. Department of Education.

Stichter’s curriculum focuses on specific needs and behavioral traits within the autism spectrum. By doing this, the instructor is able to deliver a more individualized instruction within a small group format and optimize the response to intervention.

“Children with autism have three core deficit areas: difficulty with communication, issues with repetitive behaviors, and social competence,” Stichter said.

“Social competency has a big impact on communication and is essential for post-school outcomes. While there are several social curricula available, they haven’t adequately discriminated between and targeted certain parts of the population. At MU, we’ve worked to develop intervention to meet specific needs, similar to a medical model for treating cancer. Doctors don’t use one treatment model for all forms of cancer, for example.”
High-functioning children on the autism spectrum usually have trouble with determining and managing goals, understanding others’ feelings, and regulating emotions. Stichter’s curriculum focuses the student on recognizing facial expressions, sharing ideas, taking turns, exploring feelings and emotions, and problem-solving.

“For parents, this means a reduction in the need to be shopping constantly for a program that fits their child. There’s a tendency for programs to promote social skill development, but parents have a hard time determining if it fits their children; this program is structured so that parents know they have a good fit,” Stichter said.

“Also, this creates a model for schools so these lessons can be added to the student’s overall educational experience, rather than an add-on to the student’s schedule. To date, the special education teachers involved have been very pleased to have a comprehensive curriculum and with the outcomes for their students. Even general education teachers are saying ‘show us more—we can use this with all of our kids.’”

The ultimate goal is to tailor the learning process for any student who has social competency issues. Part of that goal includes the continuing development of an Internet-based, virtual learning environment that any school in the country could use.
Missouri food scientist develops quicker food poisoning test

By Associated Press

4:01 AM CST, November 22, 2010

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A University of Missouri researcher hopes a new lab test will more quickly identify a food-poisoning bacteria often found in poultry and eggs.

Food science professor Azlin Mustapha says the test detects live salmonella within just 12 hours. Traditional tests can take five days.

He hopes the DNA testing procedure can be used by chicken and egg producers to find salmonella bacteria earlier while limiting market recalls. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports about 40,000 cases of salmonella-related food poisoning each year.

Mustapha developed a similar procedure to detect E. coli in beef that is used by the state agriculture department. His latest research was recently published in the Journal of Food Science.
MU and KU improve in green ratings

By KAREN DILLON

Sun, Nov. 21, 2010 11:16 PM

Some of the produce served in a University of Kansas dining hall is being grown in a rooftop garden on campus.

The University of Missouri has waterless urinals, dual-flush toilets and low-flow faucets and showers to conserve water in a new state-of-the-art green building.

The two universities --- along with Washington University in St. Louis --- were honored recently with an overall grade of B on the 2011 College Sustainability Report Card.

But four other colleges in Kansas and Missouri received a C or worse for their green efforts.

Each year, the College Sustainability Report Card evaluates 300 colleges and universities in the United States with the largest endowments. This year, 22 additional schools were evaluated because they asked to be included in the survey.

The solid B’s that MU and KU received were better than last year’s marks.

“We’re happy to see that our grade keeps improving,” said Steve Burdic, MU’s sustainability coordinator. Still, “there’s always room for improvement.”

Other area colleges didn’t fare so well.

Kansas State University received a C, as did St. Louis University.

Wichita State University and College of the Ozarks failed to respond to the survey and received a D- and an F respectively. Independent researchers compiled the data used for the profile and grades of both those schools.

Wichita State officials decided not to respond to the survey because completing it is labor-intensive and expensive, said Joe Kleinsasser, a university spokesman.

“Sustainability and energy conservation remains a priority,” Kleinsasser said. “It is on the front burner. We are not sitting on our hands on this.”
Elizabeth Andrews Hughes, College of the Ozarks spokeswoman, said the survey was not completely accurate. She said the school had a recycling program and this fall went “trayless” in the campus dining room. In addition, the school has cut its food waste in half.

“For whatever reason, we didn’t receive the survey,” Hughes said. “I don’t see this as an accurate representation.”

Overall, the annual report card found a surge in green initiatives in the past year. More than half the schools received an overall grade of B or better. More than 50 schools received an A- or better.

About 75 percent of schools have full-time staff dedicated to improving sustainability on campuses. And almost half the schools have made a commitment to reduce carbon pollution, which contributes to climate change.

Schools receive grades in nine categories that include climate change and energy, food and recycling, green building, student involvement, transportation, administration and endowment investment.

Highlights of the green movement on some campuses:

• MU has committed to reducing 2008 greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2015. Already the university has reduced the emissions by 8 percent.

In addition, at least 15 student groups have an environmental focus. Sustain Mizzou has developed tailgate recycling. An annual competition has resulted in a reduction of electricity use of 6 percent over three months.

Burdic said MU’s score in the green building category got a big boost, jumping from C to an A. One contributing factor was construction of the Missouri Orthopaedic Institute, which was built to the national LEED Silver standard.

• KU’s campus dining services uses flowers, herbs and produce from an on-campus roof garden. It recently established a Farm to Cart program to sell local produce. All dining locations are trayless. Milk that has no antibiotics or hormones is served.

KU recently entered into an energy reduction contract that aims to save $200,000 annually.

“I’m pleased to see KU’s grade improve … but there is much more we can do,” said Jeff Severin, director of KU’s Center for Sustainability. “The campus community has shown a dedication to making this a more sustainable university, and we’re all looking forward to not only continuing but expanding those efforts.”

• Washington University has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, a 27 percent reduction from current levels.
No bottled water is served on campus. Dining services buys only cage-free eggs and beef that is free of hormones and antibiotics.

In addition, the university is committed to construct all new buildings to a national green-building silver standard. The university provides all full-time students with a free pass for local public transit.

K-State completed its first greenhouse gas emissions inventory last year and is using several energy efficiency measures, including temperature setbacks, LED lighting and steam trap systems. A demonstration solar unit and wind turbine have been installed on the campus.

"Since this survey was conducted, we’ve been making progress in a number of areas," said Ben Champion, K-State’s director of sustainability. "As the report card noted, K-State has several areas of its efforts that could see improvement, and we’re working hard here to see improvement in those areas."
Economists want to stop teachers' degree bonuses

By DONNA GORDON BLANKINSHIP | Posted: Saturday, November 20, 2010 2:09 pm

A version of this story appeared in many outlets across the country.

MU mention page 2

Every year, American schools pay more than $8.6 billion in bonuses to teachers with master's degrees, even though the idea that a higher degree makes a teacher more effective has been mostly debunked.

Despite more than a decade of research showing the money has little impact on student achievement, state lawmakers and other officials have been reluctant to tackle this popular way for teachers to earn more money.

That could soon change, as local school districts around the country grapple with shrinking budgets.

Just this week, U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said the economy has given the nation an opportunity to make dramatic improvements in the productivity of its education system and to do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

Duncan told the American Enterprise Institute on Wednesday that master's degree bonuses are an example of spending money on something that doesn't work.

On Friday, billionaire Bill Gates took aim at school budgets and the master's degree bonus.

"My own state of Washington has an average salary bump of nearly $11,000 for a master's degree, and more than half of our teachers get it. That's more than $300 million every year that doesn't help kids," he said.
"And that's one state," said Gates, the co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, at a speech Friday in Louisville to the Council of Chief State School Officers. Gates also took aim at pensions and seniority.

"Of course, restructuring pay systems is like kicking a beehive," he acknowledged.

As of 2008, 48 percent of public school teachers in this country had a master's degree or above, and nearly every one of them got a bonus of between $1,423 and $10,777 each year, according to research from the University of Washington.

Most school budgets have been tight for years, with districts trimming everything from printing to teachers.

Michael Podgursky, an economics professor at the University of Missouri, said the economic downturn may force payroll reform in some places where the political will has been lacking. And they don't have to blow up the old system to do it, he said.

"We're experimenting now," he said, noting pay-for-performance experiments in New York City, Houston and Nashville.

Ninety percent of teachers' masters degrees are in education, not subjects such as English or math, according to a study by Marguerite Roza and Raegen Miller for the Center on Reinventing Education at the University of Washington.

Their colleague, research professor Dan Goldhaber, explained that that research dating back to a study he did in 1997 has shown that students of teachers with master's degrees show no better progress in student achievement than their peers taught by teachers without advanced degrees.

Goldhaber said his findings were criticized vehemently in the 1990s, but repeated studies since then have confirmed the results.

Roza and Miller found more than 2 percent of total education spending in 13 states _ Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, Ohio and South Carolina, plus Washington and Nebraska, where the dollars topped 3 percent _ went to masters degree bonuses.

The American Federation of Teachers, the nation's second largest teachers union doesn't oppose changes in the way teachers are paid and is willing to talk about just about any reform idea, said Rob Weil, deputy director of educational issues.

"We're not opposed to looking at compensation systems and making sure our compensation moves forward and changes with the times," he said. But, he adds, "Change for change's sake isn't what we ought to be doing."
Weil said the problem is that most school districts don't know what they want to do instead of the traditional salary schedule that gives teachers more money for years of service and additional education.

"I go into school districts all the time and say, 'What do you want to pay for?' and that's when nobody's home," he said.

The National Education Association, which is the nation's largest teacher's union, has floated the idea of paying higher starting salaries for teachers to attract more and better teachers to the profession. Others have suggested rewarding teachers for student achievement gains.

American teacher pay has been structured the same way in every state since before World War II. Before then, high school teachers were paid more than primary school instructors. Establishing one pay rate was a feminist issue since teachers in the younger grades used to be mostly women and most high school teachers were men.

Even in states where teacher pay is set by the school district according to market factors, the pay schedule has been the same way for many decades, Podgursky said.

Debating a change could be more controversial and unpopular than cutting chocolate milk from the school cafeteria menu.

But education economists believe this idea can't be ignored forever, because teacher pay is the biggest part of education budgets and the salary schedule drives that spending.

Erick Hanushek, senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, said this kind of contract change would be difficult but not impossible, despite teachers unions being among the most influential lobbies in many state capitols.

School districts won't save much money because they won't be able to cut teacher pay overall, but they could start redirecting cash to the most effective teachers, as measured in ways other than what degrees they have earned, he said.

Teachers may need to accept a two-tiered system at first to grandfather in those getting the bonuses. The biggest losers will be university education schools, because they make a lot of money on master's degrees, Hanushek said.

"There's a relationship between education schools and teachers that is not particularly healthy," he said.

Hanushek said the University of Washington estimate of the $8.6 billion annual cost of master's degree money is low.

"It's what you would call free money, but not from a political standpoint," he said.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia officials question proposals to limit runoff in Hinkson Creek

By Pavan Vangipuram
November 22, 2010 | 12:01 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — The latest government proposal to limit the runoff flowing into Hinkson Creek is meeting with stiff resistance from the city.

This is the third such proposal submitted to the city of Columbia by the Environmental Protection Agency and Missouri Department of Natural Resources. The city rejected the previous two as too costly.

The EPA has issued a public notice and is accepting comments from the public on the current draft until Dec. 1.

Boone County Commissioner Karen Miller said the city, Boone County government and MU plan to respond to the EPA by the comment deadline. Leaders of the three agencies had a closed meeting on Nov. 12 to decide what their comments would be.

Miller said they had not decided whether to pursue legal action against the EPA.

The latest proposal would require Columbia to reduce its stormwater runoff into Hinkson Creek by 39.6 percent. The two previous proposals, released in September 2009 and April, would have required Columbia to reduce its stormwater runoff by two-thirds and 50.1 percent, respectively.

"We think it's the wrong approach," Don Stamper of the Central Missouri Development Council said of the new proposal. "We've had great concerns about the draft before."

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources placed the segment of Hinkson Creek that runs through Columbia on its impaired stream list in September 2004, meaning
pollution in the stream is too high for swimming, drinking and maintaining aquatic life, among other things.

The EPA was charged with establishing total maximum daily loads for a number of bodies of water, including Hinkson Creek, in the 2001 case American Canoe Association v. The United States Environmental Protection Agency. A total maximum daily load is a document which states the maximum flow into a river that a city can have. Under the ruling, the deadline for the EPA to implement a TMDL under this decision is Dec. 31.

Ken Midkiff, conservation chairman for the Osage Group of the Sierra Club, said he supports the proposed restrictions on stormwater runoff. Midkiff represented the Sierra Club in the 2001 case.

Midkiff said that while it would be much easier if a specific pollutant or pollutants were identified, the EPA is right to use stormwater runoff as a measure of pollution because the pollutants are unknown.

"I think it's entirely appropriate that the EPA and DNR are using stormwater runoff as a surrogate," Midkiff said. "It's legal and appropriate. There's no doubt in my mind that stormwater runoff does carry contaminants that cause impairment in Hinkson Creek."

Midkiff said various studies of Hinkson Creek have shown it is impaired.

"The last study was done two summers ago, maybe three summers ago," Midkiff said. "It identified a lot of problems. Hinkson Creek is little more than an open sewer."

The latest draft from the EPA describes numerous pollutants entering Hinkson Creek via stormwater runoff, including insecticides and herbicides, chloride, heavy metals and waste oil.

"The EPA took responsibility for the TMDL because we are the party to the 2001 consent decree related to the American Canoe Association, and we are responsible to ensure it is completed by Dec. 31," EPA spokesman Kris Lancaster said. "We performed modeling to be consistent with other TMDLs of this type that we are establishing in Missouri."

The EPA does not identify a specific pollutant in its TMDL, instead focusing on stormwater runoff as a source of several pollutants. Stamper identified this as a problem.
"They can't go after specific pollutants because they haven't identified them," Stamper said. "We think that research into the creek is important now."

The current draft prescribes a lower target for runoff reduction, but Steve Hunt, environmental engineer for the city, said the drafts were "fundamentally pretty similar."

"They both use the surrogate method that ties pollutants into stormwater flow, and both are asking for a reduction in peak flows in the creek," Hunt said.

The proposals from the Department of Natural Resources, he said, "had an implementation schedule, and the city proposed an implementation portion to include that the creek be studied — similar to what was done as background information to prepare the TMDL. The EPA version doesn't have that implementation piece in it."

Second Ward Councilman Jason Thornhill, whose ward includes Hinkson Creek, warned that the costs of implementing the EPA proposal could run into the hundreds of millions of dollars. He noted that the city's stormwater utility is in considerable disrepair, and the EPA's requirements would render it an "unusable utility."

City Manager Bill Watkins questioned the scientific basis for the latest proposal.

"It's certainly not current science," Watkins said. "Personally I don't believe the science that's gone into the TMDL is worth basing multi-multi-multi-million dollar implementation on."

Watkins advocated further study of the creek, saying that "spending just a few dollars now and really understanding what the issues are, not just having some policy wonk from D.C. come to mid-Missouri and tell us what to do" would be preferred.

"I think what they're asking for is crazy," Watkins said.
Missouri curators meet in special session

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - The University of Missouri Board of Curators is meeting Monday in a special session to discuss financing for about $325 million in building projects.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reported that among the projects under consideration are $18.6 million in revenue bonds for Mark Twain residential hall in Columbia. The university says the residential hall needs immediate attention because of deteriorating conditions.

Curators are also expected to review requests to finance academic buildings on the system's other three campuses.

University of Missouri-Kansas City wants $18 million for a library addition, Missouri S&T wants $43 million for a new chemical and biological engineering building and renovations to the chemistry and biological sciences building, and University of Missouri-St. Louis is seeking $27 million to improve a science complex.
MU baseball coach named manager of USA Baseball Collegiate National Team

By Kelly Moffitt
November 19, 2010 | 2:10 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — USA Baseball announced Thursday that MU's head baseball coach, Tim Jamieson, will manage the 2011 USA Baseball Collegiate National Team.

This will be Jamieson's second time on the four-person coaching staff, following his 2005 debut as assistant coach for the team. Their record was 16-4 his first year.

"I think he'll bring an aura of calm and confidence to the team," said Evan Pratte, the director of baseball operations for MU. "He's been through it before and knows the ins and outs of Team USA. He'll run the team well. He'll do the same thing he does here."

The Collegiate National Team, which is a part of USA Baseball, is comprised of the best collegiate baseball players from across the country. Each summer, the team travels around the globe to compete against countries including Japan, Taiwan and the Netherlands. The selection process will start in December and Jamieson will be integral in choosing the 22-man roster.

"Tim was with us in 2005 and he immediately went into our pool of coaches we'd love to have in a managerial position," said Eric Campbell, the General Manager of National Teams for USA Baseball. "You know at the end of a season if a coach fits with USA Baseball and believes in us. He loves USA Baseball as much as anybody I've ever had."

Jamieson, a native of Columbia who attended University of New Orleans, has been on the coaching staff at MU for 17 years. He has a career record of 544 victories and 382 losses. He has the second-most wins in school history.
Campbell also cites Jamieson's experience understanding how to compete against the best players in Japan, who will be a formidable opponent for the Collegiate National Team this summer.

Jamieson was effectual in finding other coaches to fit into the coaching staff.

"Through his help he reached out to Rob Walton of Oral Roberts University, who he coached with in 2005 and he agreed to be our pitching coach," Campbell said.

His influence also brought Dave Van Horn of Arkansas and Scott Stricklin of Kent State on as assistant coaches.

"These people will help what we think of as the best players at the college level get another perspective and help them obtain a lifetime baseball experience," Campbell said. "Are we going to teach someone to hit a two-out double or a new pitch? No. But our coaching staff will help the players understand the game better."
MU junior a finalist for $123,000 scholarship from Dr. Pepper

By Regina Wang
November 19, 2010 | 4:55 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — MU junior Alison Schwartz will join Missouri Tigers quarterbacks Blaine Gahbert, James Franklin and Jimmy Costello on Monday for throwing practice. It’s the latest in a series of unexpected events for Schwartz, who, because of luck and timing, is a finalist for a $123,000 scholarship from Dr. Pepper.

During ESPN’s "College GameDay," the MU junior, her face painted like a tiger, was spotted by a representative from the soft drink company to film a 30-second video about why she deserved the scholarship. She was then chosen as one of five finalists from 10,000 video entries nationally.

On Dec. 3, Schwartz will have the opportunity to throw 10 footballs into an 8-foot-high Dr. Pepper can at the Big 12 Championship game in Dallas. If she comes in at least No. 2 in the preliminary competition, she can compete at halftime. The winner will walk away with $123,000, the runner-up with $23,000. But she is guaranteed $5,000 for being a finalist.

"Right now, I’m pretty calm. But when I get there, I probably will be overwhelmed," said Schwartz, who is majoring in English and biochemistry and minoring in women’s and gender studies.

A soccer player, Schwartz said she has been practicing throwing a football every day under her boyfriend’s tutelage.

"I can attribute all my luck to my boyfriend," Schwartz, of Lee’s Summit, said.

On Oct. 22, the night before the Homecoming game against Oklahoma and the staging of "GameDay" at MU, junior N. Keith Myers told Schwartz, "Let’s paint our faces and go
out there." Schwartz used her Walmart-bought kit to paint a fierce tiger on her face. Myers blackened his chest and arms and tied an MU flag around his neck as a cape.

At 3 a.m., the couple headed to Francis Quadrangle. They stood on the stone plaque by the columns and were immediately four feet above the crowd. For eight hours, they screamed through a megaphone in the on-and-off rain. Myers lost his voice. He was tired and suggested to Schwartz that they leave the quadrangle.

On their way out, a Dr. Pepper representative stopped them and asked them to enter the soft drink company's video contest. On the spot, digging deep despite how tired they were, Schwartz and Myers each gave their reasons for wanting to win the scholarship.

On Nov. 3, Schwartz got several calls from a number she didn't recognize. Because the area code was out of the state, she thought it was a solicitor and didn't answer. But she searched online for the number and discovered it belonged to the Dr. Pepper headquarters in Texas.

"I was just so elated," Schwartz said. "I couldn't even believe it. I seriously was going to cry."

This is still all pretty overwhelming for Schwartz, who supports herself through teaching piano, refereeing soccer and working as a lab assistant and who has plans to go to medical school.

"I didn't even go to the game," she said, "because I couldn't afford the ticket."