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University Of Missouri Curators Approve Boost In Salary

Saturday, June 18, 2011

(AP) - The University of Missouri Board of Curators has agreed to boost the university system's so-called salary pool by 2 percent.

The move means that university system employees could see raises by the fall, and that administrators will also have to find other ways to balance the budget for fiscal year 2012.

A newspaper in Columbia reported Friday that system administrators are working with about \$4.4 million less in state funding than they expected after Gov. Jay Nixon withheld an additional 1.1 percent from the system's allocation.

Board Chairman Warren Erdman also asked campuses to find ways to save money by looking at programs that "have outlived their usefulness."

Curators also said they would like to see a larger salary increase next year.



Salary pool boosted by 2 percent

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune Friday, June 17, 2011

The University of Missouri Board of Curators this morning unanimously agreed to increase the system's salary pool by 2 percent.

That means MU employees could see raises as early as this fall. Pay raises are doled out based on merit, and campus administration is in charge of making those decisions.

The vote means UM System administrators will have to find other ways to balance the fiscal year 2012 budget. Administrators are working with about \$4.4 million less in state funding than they expected after Gov. Jay Nixon last Friday withheld an additional 1.1 percent from the system's allocation.

Board Chairman Warren Erdman also asked campuses to find ways to save money by looking at programs that "have outlived their usefulness. We have programs that are good and well-intentioned, but in an era of declining state support, we have to set priorities."

Curators yesterday said they would like to see a larger salary increase next year.



University looks at options for more cuts

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune Friday, June 17, 2011

The University of Missouri System has put some bold options on the potential budget-cutting block, including reducing financial aid, making workers contribute more to retirement plans and cutting funds for MU Extension youth programs such as 4-H.

Administrators blame Gov. Jay Nixon. A week ago, he announced he was withholding about \$4.4 million more from the university than expected. Instead of the 7 percent cut most other colleges got, Nixon is cutting the UM budget by 8.1 percent, widely thought to be punishment for the university's decision to increase tuition by an average of 5.5 percent.

Bracing for the 7 percent cut, UM earlier this year identified \$53.2 million in savings by deferring maintenance and repairs, eliminating positions and using a portion of donations, rather than general revenues, to fund development offices.

Yesterday, the Board of Curators saw seven new options, each expected to save another \$4 million to \$6 million. One is to reduce the financial aid made available to low-income students when curators increased tuition this year. That's going to make college even less affordable for some students, warned Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration.

Another idea would be to stop using general revenues to pay for 4-H and other youth programs — a move that would affect every Missouri county. Other options are to require students to pay an additional surcharge, have employees contribute more into retirement plans or eliminate a program set up two years ago to help fund startup businesses.

"These are not pleasant things," board Chairman Warren Erdman said. "They're ugly things."

He suggested asking Nixon to release the funds to avoid any of those cuts. Asked afterward whether that would do the trick, Krawitz said yes. "If Nixon released the money, we wouldn't have to consider any of it," she said.

Nixon's office declined to comment.

Curators today gave Krawitz and interim President Steve Owens the go-ahead to finalize the 2012 budget by July 1. That means it's up to them to decide which option is most reasonable to cut.

What won't be considered without more discussion is what was presented as option No. 1: capping enrollment. That's not a solution to short-term funding plans but rather a long-term solution to curtailing a decades-long trend of dwindling state support.

In 1999, state appropriations accounted for 64 percent of the university's operating revenues. Now, it's more like 36 percent.

Meanwhile, the list of needs grows. Top faculty demand higher salaries. Record enrollments are taking their tolls on building space, and maintaining those buildings keeps getting put off.

Curator Judith Haggard said she thinks capping enrollment is a better option than cutting compensation or increasing college costs, saying UM has to protect its mission to provide a top-notch education.

Krawitz suggested the cap only apply to in-state students, allowing for more out-of-state students who pay higher tuition.

The suggestion flies in the face of Nixon's higher education agenda to boost college degree attainment in Missouri by some 20 percent in the coming decade.

But there's a breaking point, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton said. So far, the university has allowed all eligible students to attend, but without additional revenue, that has led to larger classes and higher student-faculty ratios.

Deaton said the campus is having an administrative meeting next week to talk about capacity and enrollment management.

The discussion is a "big wake-up call," Erdman said. What's needed, he said, is a stable stream of new state revenues for higher education, possibly from an increase in cigarette tax.

Until then, it's up to administrators to determine where to plug shortfalls, possibly on the backs of the neediest students.

"I hate to reduce financial aid," Erdman said. "But when tough times come, you've got to do tough things."

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UM System must decide what to cut to meet funding gap

Friday, June 17, 2011 | 6:18 p.m. CDT; updated 3:04 p.m. CDT, Saturday, June 18, 2011
BY Megan Cassidy

COLUMBIA — The UM System administration is on a tight deadline to decide what needs to be trimmed to meet new funding cuts imposed by Gov. Jay Nixon.

In addition to the anticipated 7 percent cut in state appropriations, the UM System needs to shave \$4.4 million off the 2012 budget.

The new fiscal year starts July 1, meaning decisions must be made within two weeks.

During Friday's meeting of the UM Board of Curators, interim President Steve Owens said every option is still on the table.

That could include a student surcharge, a decrease in financial aid or extra employee contributions to the retirement plan. Extension programs for youth, such as 4-H and the Enterprise Investment Program, are also targeted.

Although a unanimous vote Friday by the board raised the system's salary pool by 2 percent, the item was on the chopping block this week as well.

Board members said Friday that in light of the additional state budget withholding, the money for salary increases could still be at some risk.

Curator Warren Erdman said he hopes Nixon will reverse his stance on the \$4.4 million cut.

"One point that I favor is for the governor to release the \$4.4 million," Erdman said, adding that curators were still in talks with Nixon about the state funds. The money is being withheld largely for disaster aid to Missouri's devastated communities.

In other action, the curators voted 7-2 on Friday to close the current retirement plan to those hired after Sept. 30, 2012, and open a new "hybrid plan."

Although details of a new plan have not been finalized, Friday's vote gives the green light to developing details for approval this fall.

The new plan is expected to combine elements of defined contribution and defined benefits plans. No current employees will be affected.



Russell says tuition call was correct

Former UM staffer says UM justified need for the hike.

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune Saturday, June 18, 2011

The state commissioner of higher education stands by his decision to allow the University of Missouri System to increase tuition beyond inflation, even though it ultimately cost the university some state funding.

David Russell — the former UM chief of staff who's now at the helm of the Missouri Department of Higher Education — earlier this year approved the system's request to increase tuition and fees across the four campuses by an average of 5.5 percent.

"I thought the university has done a superb job responding to questions and explaining what they've done to keep tuition as low as they could," Russell said during a stop at the UM System Board of Curators meeting in Columbia yesterday. "At one time they were thinking about a tuition rate that would have been much higher."

Under the state law, colleges cannot increase tuition beyond the consumer price index without getting approval from the higher education commissioner or else face a potential cut in state aid.

The system got that waiver but saw a deeper state cut anyway. Gov. Jay Nixon announced he's withholding another \$4.4 million from the UM System, likely as punishment for the tuition increase that exceeded his request of no more than 5 percent.

"The university complied with Senate Bill 389," Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia said. "They jumped through all the right hoops that the law asks them to do. The commissioner and the Coordinating Board" for Higher Education "approved the tuition increase. But the governor had a political point of view which is different than that of the curators and coordinating board. He didn't get his way; therefore, he punished the university."

Kelly noted that he's not convinced the UM System is bound by Senate Bill 389 because it's deemed an independent entity in the state constitution. "The university's compliance is a matter of courtesy," he said.

The system has played by the rules outlined in that law since it was implemented four years ago, said Warren Erdman, chair of the UM Board of Curators. "I suppose it is a bit of a disappointment that the additional withholding was made," he said.

But Erdman said he knows Nixon has a constitutional responsibility to balance the budget. Still, Erdman requested several times during the public curators' meeting that he wants Nixon to release the withheld funds.

If he doesn't, the university is considering drastic budget cuts. During the meeting, administrators laid out seven options that include requiring employees to contribute more to retirement, cutting financial aid or pulling funds from popular MU Extension programs, such as 4-H.

The four-campus system also is looking at capping enrollment as a way to buffer the decades-long trend of dwindling state support.

"What we're doing is seeing the practical ramifications of the state's failure to fund higher education," Kelly said. "It's been invisible for a long time. It's been an invisible deterioration. Now, it's impossible to keep it hidden anymore."

Kelly said it's going to be a matter of values for Missouri in the coming years. He and fellow Columbia Democrat Rep. Mary Still have advocated for an increase in the state's tax on cigarettes to plug budget gaps.

"I understand the value that some people have to not raise, for instance, the cigarette tax," Kelly said. "I want the citizens of Missouri to compare that value to the value of funding higher education. Is the value of having the lowest cigarette tax in the nation worth a deterioration of higher education, not just at MU but across the state?"



UM curators agree to retirement plan switch

By Janese Silvey

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Those who begin employment at one of the four University of Missouri System campuses after Sept. 30, 2012, won't have a completely guaranteed retirement income.

But it's not clear yet what type of combined benefits plan they will be offered. The UM Board of Curators today voted to move forward with a proposal that will require future hires to save a portion of their salaries as well as have some post-employment income that's guaranteed.

UM System administrators will spend the coming months drafting the plan.

The discussion has been two years in the making, and not all curators were on board with the switch. It passed 7-2, with Curators Wayne Goode and Don Downing voting against it.

The current benefits plan guarantees retirement benefits totaling 2.2 percent of an employee's salary for every year of employment once they're eligible to retire. The university contributes 7.25 percent of a person's salary into that plan, and employees pay a 1 percent to 2 percent match based on income level.

A committee of faculty and staff recommended the university change the current plan only if curators deem it's not viable for the future.

"The board's never made that determination," Goode said during preliminary discussion yesterday. "I think this resolution embodies the assumption we have made this determination, which I don't think it has."

Downing agreed, saying there's "no compelling need to shift plans. I don't think anyone has demonstrated that our plan is not viable in the short term or long term."

Both said they fear future hires will be bearing the brunt of market risks and aren't as equipped to do that as the university as an entity. They also worried some employees won't be savvy enough to make savings decisions.

Board Chairman Warren Erdman, though, said he has studied this issue for years and determined the change is "in the institution's best interest."

Although curators didn't see this model, Vice President for Human Resources Betsy Rodriguez said the plan offered to future hires will be structured similarly to a proposed example unveiled earlier this year.

Under that model, future hires would be guaranteed 1.1 percent based on salary and years of service, and UM would contribute 3.4 percent of salary. Both are about half of what is now offered.

The university also would set up a defined contributions, or savings, plan for new hires that would require them to contribute 1 percent or 2 percent of salary, depending on income level, with a UM match. They also would have a chance to contribute more money on a voluntary basis with UM matching as much as 3 percent.

Curators plan to meet this fall to see the proposed new retirement package before they vote on it, likely at the regular October meeting. With today's action, the current plan expires Sept. 30, 2012. Current employees won't be affected.

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Curators review candidates for UM president

By Janese Silvey

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The University of Missouri Board of Curators is considering a diverse group of candidates in its search for the next system president.

Minorities and women are included in that candidate pool, said Betsy Rodriguez, vice president for human resources.

Most presidents of doctorate-granting universities nationwide are white men, according to 2006 demographics provided to curators earlier this year. Women represented 13.8 percent; minorities made up 11.3 percent.

Curators spent about four hours behind closed doors yesterday reviewing some 140 individuals who were recommended for or who have expressed interest in becoming the next president. The university is looking to fill the position vacated by Gary Forsee, who stepped down in January after his wife was diagnosed with cancer. Steve Owens, the system's general counsel, is serving as interim president.

Board Chairman Warren Erdman said the search process is going well.

"I can't tell you how enthused and optimistic I am," he said. "I am encouraged by this process. The involvement of stakeholders from across the state has been robust."

Erdman and Curator Judith Haggard are the only current board members who were on the board during the last presidential search. This time around, curators are getting more detailed background information about each nominee from consultants from Greenwood Asher & Associates, Erdman said.

"We know more about the candidates than we did last time at this stage in the game," he said. "I was impressed with the degree to which curators were probing for details about each."

Next week, individual board members will start calling and visiting with some of the candidates. The full board could start meeting with candidates later this summer, although Erdman was careful not to specify a timeline.

"This fall, I hope to have it narrowed down, but I can't promise," he said. "I don't feel we have to rush."



Tax credits boost MU business incubator

By Jacob Barker

Columbia Daily Tribune Friday, June 17, 2011

The Missouri Department of Economic Development announced yesterday it has approved \$93,000 in small business incubator tax credits for the University of Missouri Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto place.

The facility on South Providence Road opened in January 2009 and is designed to house technology startups until they mature. The Missouri Innovation Center, a not-for-profit started by the state and affiliated with MU, operates the incubator and provides business expertise to researchers working to commercialize their ideas there.

The small business incubator tax credits approved this year put the total amount received by the incubator at \$325,000 over the past four years, DED spokesman Keener Tippin said. The credits can be given to donors to cover half their contribution, and donations must be given to the incubator before the end of the year to be eligible for this round of credits.

"We will be preparing a campaign for the second half of the year in which we will be bringing the availability of these tax credits to the attention of individuals, companies and organizations that may be interested in contributing to the further development of the incubator," said Jake Halliday, president and chief executive officer of the Missouri Innovation Center.

The donations leveraged by the credits may be used only for construction and the build-out of lab space, Halliday said. Roughly one-third of the space in the incubator's tenant wing still needs to be retrofitted for use as labs and offices. The other two-thirds of the space reserved for startups is mostly occupied, Halliday said, and much of the construction has been aided by private donations and help from the state.

"We could not have built this building and opened this building debt-free without the role played by tax credits from the state government," Halliday said.

The reputation of the incubator is spreading: Five companies from outside Missouri are now housed there, and it has a "strong pipeline of prospects," Halliday said. Most recently, Tensive Controls, a startup working to commercialize a drug that treats wasting disease, relocated to the incubator in January from North Carolina's Research Triangle.

The incubator isn't always able to maximize the tax credits it receives and turn them into donations, Halliday said, but they do make it easier to solicit private funds. "They're very useful in approaching people or companies about making a donation, particularly in this economy," he said.

Dad helps son overcome steep odds

Louis Janssen says he took diagnosis as a personal test.

Ryan C. Henriksen | Buy this photo



Louis Janssen watches as his son, Andy, shops for cat food on Tuesday. Andy was born with Down syndrome, and Louis has helped home-school him. Andy recently was recognized for finished 12 years of speech therapy at the University of Missouri's School of Health Professions' Speech and Hearing Clinic. It was an early Father's Day gift for Louis.

By Janese Silvey

Columbia Daily Tribune Sunday, June 19, 2011

Louis Janssen seems to beam with pride when his son says "Thank you" to a Walmart sales assistant who's just handed him his bag of groceries.

Any father, really, would have cause to be proud of a 17-year-old son with manners. Louis has extra reason.

When Andy was born with Down syndrome, doctors told Louis and Janice not to expect much of their only son.

"Doctors said he's not going to be able to do this or that," Louis said. "They didn't know who they were messin' with."

They were messing with a very determined dad.

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Louis wasn't expecting to do much today other than perhaps mow the lawn. He got an early Father's Day gift, though, when the University of Missouri's School of Health Professions' Speech and Hearing Clinic held a special graduation ceremony to recognize Andy for completing 12 years of speech therapy.

Andy gave a public speech and did really well, Louis said. "I was really proud."

During the prepared comments, Andy said the speech program was fun — for the most part.

"Some of it was not," his speech said. "Learning smooth speech was good and made me proud. Looking up things in the phonebook was hard. But I learned that, too. I also helped with the recycling at Lewis Hall. Sometimes that was my favorite part."

Speech therapy has only been part of the educational puzzle the Janssens pieced together to make Andy the young man he is today.

After being laid off from his job in computer-aided drafting, Louis decided to work from home in order to assist in Andy's education. He currently operates a commercial lawn mowing company and supplements that income as a day trader in the stock market.

For the past dozen years or so, he has been supplementing his son's education with home-schooling, tutoring and travel. They visit state capitols and national parks, giving Andy a first-hand opportunity to learn geography, now his favorite reading topic.

■

But, back to Walmart. That's where a large chunk of Andy's schooling has taken place.

For years, Louis has taken his son there at least once a week. At one time, Andy was even helping out at the store, helping straighten items on shelves and crushing cardboard boxes.

This past Tuesday, their weekly Walmart day, Dad pretty much trailed behind and let his son do the shopping.

Andy shopped like a pro. He knew to buy the generic brand of bleach but the name brand of food for his cat, Gato. Other than a box of tulip-shaped Little Debbie treats he picked up for Mom, Andy stuck to the list — mouthwash, check; lunchmeat, check; and Softsoap, check. Oh, and he knew to check for expiration dates and buy slightly green bananas — he learned those lessons when Louis let him purchase expired goods or too-ripe bananas only to have to toss them out back at home.

In between shopping, Andy and Louis often stop to chat with the Walmart associates they've come to know. It provides good opportunities for Andy to socialize, his dad said.

"We do more jawing than shopping sometimes," Louis joked.

Andy wasn't always a chatterbox. When he started at the speech clinic on campus, the goal was to just get him to learn 40 basic word roots and follow one-step directions. Andy used to hate doing homework: Louis made him sit there until he finished it. Now, he can add and subtract three-digit numbers and write out his own shopping lists.

“Louis has been there for everything,” Janice said. “Where Andy goes, he’s right there making sure he understands how to do stuff.”

■

Louis’ hard work obviously has paid off. Andy has been involved in community theater, even starring in a play a few years ago. He plays softball and basketball with Special Olympics and goes golfing with Mom on Saturdays.

He has a part-time job cleaning the parking lot outside of Aldi, where he shops every Thursday by himself, and he has his own savings account. Next year, Andy will qualify for government assistance, money that will help him live on his own, probably in one of the rental houses next to his parent’s house in Columbia.

It hasn’t always been easy, Louis said, but it paid off.

“It’s nice to see the results,” he said. “I’d rather have this than to have tried to make a bunch of money and see him fail. Money isn’t everything in the world; it’s doing what’s right for your kid. I’m proud of how he turned out.”

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Ambition + Desire = Trouble

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

STEPHANIE ROSENBLOOM

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“I DON’T know what I was thinking.”

So said Anthony D. Weiner in a news conference moments after finally admitting that he had sent naughty photos of himself to women he had met on the Internet.

The married former congressman, who resigned on Thursday, 10 days after that confessional press conference, might not know what he had been thinking — but scientists have an idea or two.

Scholars were studying brain architecture and chemistry long before Mr. Weiner pinged photos of his unmentionables into cyberspace. And their research — some of it subject to dispute — suggests that physiology played a role in Mr. Weiner’s digital dalliances.

“Most people who get as far as he’s gotten are high-testosterone people,” said Helen Fisher, the biological anthropologist and a member of the Center for Human Evolutionary Studies in the anthropology department at Rutgers. “Along with that ambition comes a high sex drive. Testosterone’s linked with both of them.”

According to some, seeking prominence is part of an inborn survival strategy.

“Men, particularly successful men, have an evolutionary history of polygamy,” said David C. Geary, curator’s professor in the department of psychological sciences at the University of Missouri at Columbia. Men who pursue politics are also pursuing power, Dr. Geary said, and “from an evolutionary perspective the whole goal of men striving for power is to increase their access to sexual opportunities.”

But in an era of easily followed digital footprints, the chances of catting around and being caught are greater than ever. So why cheat and tweet?

One possible answer: there’s a correlation between testosterone and risk-taking.

“If you asked one of these guys ‘What are the chances of you getting caught?’ you would see an underestimation of the risks,” Dr. Geary said. “And the severity of the consequences is

underestimated.” Women, on the other hand, said Dr. Geary, “tend to focus on the potential harm of the consequences.”

Story continues...



Art and Archaeology exhibit treats viewers to visions of Taiwan through one artist's eyes

By Aarik Danielsen

Sunday, June 19, 2011

Everywhere one looks, there are beautiful collisions in the work of Ran In-Ting. Scenes from one of the globe's easternmost points meet Western artistic principles. Remnants of a glorious past experience an inevitable rendezvous with portents of a promising future.

Yet, for all the concepts contained within the watercolorist's work and the many terms that could be used to describe it, only one mattered to him. One word, which he signed each and every piece with, a mark that identified the work as his while identifying what was at the true heart of his artistic experience: Formosa.

Until modern times, that word was a proper name for the place we now call Taiwan. The term was derived from the initial impressions of Portugese explorers who surveyed the land and called it "ilha Formosa," or "beautiful island." No matter what facet or feature of his home country Ran portrayed, no matter how the landscape changed, whether weathered by political upheaval or cultivated by coming urbanization, the artist looked at his representations and called them good. All he could see was a beautiful island.

"I think it's so touching that he used the word Formosa," said Mary Pixley, associate curator at the Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri.

Pixley, thoroughly aided by graduate research assistant Sarah Horne and student assistant Christina Schappe, curated the museum's current exhibition, "Ran In-Ting's Watercolors: East and West Mix in Images of Rural Taiwan," on display through Aug. 14. Despite possessing a number of Ran's works for decades, a generous gift of the Howard Long family, the exhibit marks the first time the pieces will be seen in Columbia. Pixley believes visitors will be met with a wonderful opportunity — a chance to truly see the artist's homeland through his eyes.

"He wanted to represent everything that he saw in front of him," she said. "That included traditional and past things and then the changing present. Because he made so many watercolors showing these aspects of life around him, he basically saved aspects of the culture that disappeared with the modern suburbs and all of the development that was taking place on the island of Taiwan. So he gives this glimpse of things that you don't see anymore."

TWO FATHERS

In a very real way, Ran was fortunate to possess two incredible fathers, and, as an artist and a man, he reflected both heritages bequeathed to him. Born in 1903, he learned traditional, black-and-white ink painting from his biological father. Steeped in Chinese tradition, this artistic approach represented the origin of Taiwanese representation.

From the father of Taiwanese modern art, Ishikawa Kinichiro, Ran received an education in Western artistic modes and methods. A Japanese-born painter, Kinichiro trekked to Europe numerous times, embraced artistic aspects and assets seen there and brought them back to his students. Both within Ran's larger body of work and, at times, within individual pieces, this confluence of personalities and artistic streams comes alive — it is both his inheritance and gift to the world.

"He takes his past from his father and merges it with the present and the future of Ishikawa Kinichiro," Pixley said. "You're going to see this seesaw effect throughout the exhibition. ... It's always this mix of the past and present that is just so exciting when you look at his art."

At times, the past is clearly depicted in the artist's choice of subject matter — ancient forms of architecture or beautiful rituals and cultural expressions. Yet, in depicting markets teeming with merchants and shoppers or creating other meditations and musings on modern life, Ran showed a great awareness of the suburbanization that occurred during his lifetime. No matter what, "Formosa remained Formosa to him, as beautiful," Pixley said.

UNEXPECTED SIGHTS

In capturing one of those time-honored cultural customs, a human-operated dragon dancing its way through a festive atmosphere, Ran matched tradition with technique. The ripples in the dragon's motion are represented in the fluidity with which his brush moves across the paper. In this work, his wet techniques are so wet they threaten to wash the viewer away. Yet, in other pieces, Ran employed equally resonant and emotive dry techniques, layering dry ink upon dry ink to create deceptively complex images. Some works achieve the richness of an oil painting, even as they exist in a wholly other medium.

In a way, Ran created on canvas much like a great composer crafts works to be played by an orchestra, weaving together melodies and countermelodies, producing complex layers of almost imperceptible harmonic detail yet, almost as masterfully employing rests, leaving the work to breathe. In doing so, he subverted oft-held notions of what a watercolor can or should be, granting dimension and depth without making the work overly dense or muddied. Ran would innovate and invent brush strokes when it served the piece, Pixley said, yet he used white space to articulate ideas brush strokes never could.

Pixley praised Ran's "endless vocabulary" in representing trees and ways he distinguished textures and matter rarely seen in other works of watercolor. The bend in a piece of wood, a panoply of patterned dresses, the details of a child's countenance — all reach and receive resonance in a medium commonly associated with flowers or foliage.

"You get these feelings, these little details that are so unexpected," Pixley said. "You never know where any of these pieces is going to lead you."

Yet his landscapes and natural scenes are just as remarkable as scenes populated with people. Gazing upon one work, Pixley marveled at the artist's ability to re-create the light and light hum produced in nature.

"You can just feel the light ... flickering over all the different colors of the foliage," she said. "He places colors almost next to each other, letting the vibration take place in your eye instead of mixing the colors on the palette."

One particularly evocative work depicts a homestead situated by the water, a prized pack of water buffalo meandering about. The types of brush strokes used to portray the surrounding trees are almost too numerous to count, Pixley mentioned, and the work truly does pop and sing with life.

BACK ON THE MAP

As he represented the great beauty within Taiwan's borders, Ran's fame spread beyond them — for a time. He was rather famous in his heyday, which occurred in the 1950s and '60s, Pixley said, and even garnered China's National Art Prize. A biography on the website of the Chicago-based Scanlan Fine Arts Gallery details his celebrity further. Ran was asked to exhibit in European metropolises and at the U.S. Department of State and was "elected to membership in a number of prestigious" artistic "societies," the entry says. Also, Ran "was declared ... one of the 10 greatest watercolor painters in the world" by the European Art Critical Commentary Society.

Today, Ran, who died in 1979, is still greatly revered in Taiwan but largely unknown here in America, Pixley said. She hopes the exhibit is a first step toward changing that. Acting as something of a champion for the artistic underdog, Pixley expressed a hope that, in time, Ran would be as well-known as watercolorists such as Winslow Homer and exhibited as widely as the Matisse's of the world.

Discussing the greatness of Ran's work, Pixley said she hopes to see his work put "back on the map." Understanding just a fragment of the affection the artist possessed for his homeland, it seems he would welcome this recognition, too, equating being back on the artistic map with putting the glory of Taiwan, the fullness of Formosa, back on the map as well.