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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Money lost to Big 12 has Mizzou athletics in debt

BY VAHE GREGORIAN

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Mizzou's \$12.41 million in exit fees for leaving the Big 12 to join the Southeastern Conference on July 1 will be assessed through revenue "otherwise distributable to the university," as the Big 12 put it Tuesday.

In other words ...

"We won't write a check for \$12.4 million," said Tim Hickman, the MU associate athletics director heading Mizzou's transition to the SEC. "In essence, they just won't send us (that) money this year.

"So that will put our operating budget into a deficit this year. And then we'll just over the next few years build that back up and pay that back out of our operating costs."

Mizzou says all the money ultimately will be paid through athletics. But as it chips away at the deficit, MU athletics will be somewhat beholden to the university itself.

"I wouldn't call it an internal loan, but the university's a \$2 billion operation, so for bond ratings and things like that, they always have fund balances ...," Hickman said. "So it will just kind of be absorbed as we move forward and we'll carry a deficit in the athletic department on our books, so to speak. And then we'll just pay that back over time."

He added: "Think of it as there's this big giant company that's the University of Missouri. ... And while we as a department may run a deficit, the institution doesn't. So there's a fund balance there that's always in the checking account. ...

"It's not like KOMU-TV or the chemistry department has to chip in a little to pay for it. It's like the university is the big operation and always has a fund balance to cover debts, service and things like that.

"We're just kind of floating on that for a little bit. Nothing is taking away from anything. We're just using existing fund balances from the university to get through the next year. And over the next five years they will pay that balance back to the university."

Mizzou won't get its first payout from the SEC until June 2013; the SEC's most recent revenue distribution for members was around \$20 million.

Some of that check probably will go to the deficit, but Mizzou hopes to attack it from several angles.

"We're looking to fill that in all ways," said Hickman, referring among other notions to a letter athletics director Mike Alden recently sent that indicated ticket prices will be increasing.

Theoretically, MU could pay off the debt sooner. But Hickman figured it would take five to seven years to be back on track simply because Mizzou wants to continue to invest in its programs in other ways — including a soon-to-be-unveiled facilities improvement master plan.

"We don't want to just totally hamper the rest of the growth that we need to do as well," he said.

Missouri House plan redirects funds to higher education

NO MU Mention

By DAVID A. LIEB/The Associated Press

February 29, 2012 | 7:12 p.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — The top budget writer in the Missouri House of Representatives proposed reversing Gov. Jay Nixon's cuts to public colleges and universities — in part, by eliminating a state program that provides aid to the blind.

The new plan by House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, also would eliminate smaller sums of money Nixon had proposed for K-12 schools, the judiciary and an incentive program for science-and-technology based businesses. And it would modify Nixon's proposed pay raise for state employees — providing the money sooner, but only to people earning less than \$70,000.

Silvey outlined his budget plan Wednesday to The Associated Press in advance of distributing copies to fellow lawmakers, who are likely to see it on their desks by Thursday. Silvey also sent a letter to college and university presidents Wednesday, informing them of his plan and urging them to support it.

"We are going to value higher education — we are going to make it a priority — and we're going to balance the budget," Silvey said in an interview. In January, the Democratic governor proposed a nearly \$23 billion operating budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1 that included a recommended cut of \$106 million — or 12.5 percent — to public colleges and universities. In February, Nixon proposed to soften the cut by redirecting an anticipated \$40 million from a national settlement with mortgage lenders to go to higher education institutions.

Silvey's plan would wipe out the rest of Nixon's proposed cut to higher education, providing institutions the same amount they are getting this year.

To do that, Silvey embraced a \$28 million elimination of state aid to the blind that had been recommended by a House appropriations committee. The Supplemental Aid to the Blind program funds medical care for more than 2,800 people who earn too much to qualify for the Medicaid health care program for the poor but do already receive payments from a state blind pension fund.

Silvey said that in a tight budget the state could no longer afford to provide the blind medical aid that people who are deaf or paralyzed do not receive.

"It is completely inconsistent with how we treat any other disability in the state," Silvey said. "All we are doing is, going to do is put them on a level playing field with anyone else with a disability."

Nixon spokesman Scott Holste declined to comment Wednesday about Silvey's new budget plan. Earlier this month, Nixon said he opposed efforts to cut aid to the blind to balance the budget, adding: "It's just plain wrong."

Rep. Sara Lampe, D-Springfield, the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee, said Wednesday that cutting aid to the blind is a "big worry." But she said, "I am thrilled we are looking for money for higher education."

Lampe said she was open to considering a cut to the blind program to finance education.

"I believe with the money we have, we're going to have to make some really tough, tough decisions," said Lampe, a former school teacher and administrator. Lampe described Silvey's proposed pay plan as "spectacular." Nixon had proposed a 2 percent raise for state employees to begin halfway through the fiscal year, on Jan. 1. Silvey's plan would begin the pay raise when the new budget kicks in July 1, but would provide it only to those earning less than \$70,000.

Silvey's proposed budget would eliminate a \$5 million increase Nixon had proposed to the state's \$3 billion basic aid programs to elementary and secondary schools. Silvey said the increase was too small to be consequential.

His new budget plan also would cut \$4 million each from the judiciary and a new program granting incentives to science-based businesses. It assumes the state would generate \$10 million more in lottery revenues than Nixon had projected, and it makes some funding switches to free up money for higher education.

Gov. Nixon releases more than \$5 million in additional education funding

NO MU Mention

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

February 29, 2012 | 3:40 p.m. CST

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon is releasing more than \$5 million that had been withheld from public education because of budget concerns.

Nixon's administration cited better-than-expected lottery sales while announcing Wednesday that it was providing an additional \$3 million for transportation at K-12 schools and \$2.2 million for public colleges and universities.

The additional school bus funding restores less than half the amount that Nixon had withheld from K-12 transportation while announcing state budget cuts last summer.

Nixon's budget director, Linda Luebbering, said the additional higher education funding does not reduce the nearly \$17 million he had cut from institutions last summer, but rather is a release of the state's standard 3 percent operating reserve.



Ambassador to join Bond lecture panel

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

The Indonesian ambassador to the United States will be on the University of Missouri campus next month to participate in the inaugural lecture named after a longtime Missouri senator.

Dino Patti Djalal will join a panel to discuss food security at the first Christopher S. "Kit" Bond Distinguished Lecture. The event is at 4 p.m. March 14 in Monsanto Auditorium in the Bond Life Sciences Center.

Djalal, who also is an author and an academic, promotes collaborations between the United States and Indonesia in trade and educational exchanges. Bond, who will lead the panel discussion, oversees a consulting firm that has been coordinating trade efforts between Indonesia and the World Trade Center, St. Louis.

Former colleagues of Bond raised \$1.3 million to create an endowed fund that would pay for the series. MU officials unveiled it a year ago.

United Press International

100 YEARS OF JOURNALISTIC EXCELLENCE

Fitness in minorities lack relevance

COLUMBIA, Mo., March 1 (UPI) -- Many U.S. researchers said they are concerned about getting minority populations to exercise more, but interventions are not culturally tailored.

Vicki Conn, associate dean for research and Potter-Brinton professor in the University of Missouri's Sinclair School of Nursing, found that minority adults who received exercise interventions increased their physical activity levels, but these interventions were not culturally adjusted to best assist them in improving overall health.

Conn and colleagues conducted an analysis of more than 100 studies that tested exercise interventions in 21,151 participants from minority populations. The majority of the supervised exercise studies included short-term programs with weekly exercise sessions, lasting an average of 12 weeks.

"In reviewing the studies, we were surprised at how infrequently the researchers culturally tailored the motivational interventions," Conn said in a statement. "For example, in the majority of interventions for African-Americans, there is no evidence that African-Americans helped design the study, recruit participants or deliver the programs."

People are always interested in whether exercise is going to help people lose weight, Conn said.

"Although we found small reductions in weight among study participants, perhaps more interesting is that throughout the 12-week studies, people in the control group gained weight," Conn said. "It could be that exercise is more important to prevent weight gain more so than to help people lose weight."

The findings were published in the current issue of the Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved.



Experts expect hot summer for Missouri

By Brennan David

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

Weather forecasters are predicting Missouri will have another warmer-than-average summer with sparse precipitation.

The Midwest and Southwestern United States have experienced drought and temperatures warmer than normal for nearly a year, and those conditions are likely to continue, said Tony Lupo, chairman of the University of Missouri's Department of Atmospheric Science.

The driest, warmest conditions are predicted to take place in the southwestern part of the state, while St. Louis and northeastern Missouri will experience heavy thunderstorms and slightly cooler temperatures, he said.

A tropical storm could bring considerable rainfall to southeastern Missouri, he added.

Dry conditions early in the summer make heat worse throughout the rest of the season, Lupo said. He said the sun's rays, rather than drying out wet soil, will radiate off the dry earth, adding to the heat.

Lupo expects most precipitation to come in the form of thunderstorms. He said that during La Niña years, like this year, weather is dry for two to four weeks, followed by thunderstorms featuring heavy rain.

"Even though we'll receive rain, heavy downpours are not as valuable as rain showers," Lupo said. "The soil cannot absorb all of the water, and much of it runs off. We need prolonged periods of light rain to moisten the subsoil, where most crops' roots go for water."

Like last summer, Lupo said the warm conditions in the Midwest could lead to a "heat dome" affecting the rest of the country. This causes cooler temperatures in the northwestern and northeastern United States. In the Southeast, Lupo predicts warmer-than-normal temperatures with normal precipitation.

The National Weather Service also is forecasting above-average temperatures for Missouri and average rainfall.

"There is a slight trend for temperatures to be above the normal average," meteorologist Kris Sanders said. "It's very slight, and we are still months away. That doesn't mean it's set in stone."

For example, there was little indication this time last year that summer 2011 would be so harsh in parts of Missouri.

Sanders said the National Weather Service is more confident for now in its spring prediction than its summer forecast because of proximity.

Missouri residents can expect above-normal temperatures through March and the next couple of months with normal chances of precipitation, he said.

"I would be hard-pressed to see winter make a comeback," he said.

Rock chalk

Ryan Henriksen | Buy this photo



By Ryan Henriksen

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

University of Missouri Landscape Services workers clean up rock salt in front of the columns Wednesday morning. They said it appeared to have been applied to spell out "KU."