House completes $24 billion budget plan

By RUDI KELLER

JEFFERSON CITY — Next year's state budget will go to the House floor with steady funding for higher education, very little health care money for the blind and a price tag that's $1 billion bigger than when Gov. Jay Nixon proposed it.

Funding state government will cost $24 billion next year. While that number is $1 billion larger than Nixon's figure, House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, said it is a more realistic figure. The committee set firm spending amounts in 444 places where estimated figures had been used in the past.

The committee's actions yesterday were a mix of fine-tuning the bills, enforcing past decisions and making political statements. Silvey ruled in favor of keeping some items that would generate additional controversy when he could have easily called a voice vote another way.

Lawmakers will debate the spending plan when they return from their annual break. Highlights of yesterday's committee action on the plan include:

- A $397.9 million allocation for the University of Missouri System, an amount that would restore funding to levels Nixon initially proposed for the current year. Nixon took an extra bite out of UM's funding when it angered him by hiking tuition too much, leaving funding this year at $393.5 million.

- Full funding for the Department of Conservation. The committee restored $49.35 million cut from the agency's budget when Rep. John Cauthorn, R-Mexico, became upset with Director Bob Ziehmer. Cauthorn said the issues had been resolved.

- A $172,421 cut from the 11 agencies funding the salaries of three state employees working as part of Nixon's staff but paid through the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration. Silvey also cut three staff positions.

- Basic aid to public schools through the Foundation Formula that is $1 more than Nixon proposed in January. The program received $3.004 billion this year, and Nixon wanted to give it $3.009 billion next year.

Silvey has made restricting Nixon or thwarting his rhetoric a personal mission in his two years as committee chairman. "I put it in with a dollar because now he can't claim that he proposed the most ever in history," Silvey said. "I just wasn't going to let him have that stunt."
After endorsing a cut of $28 million that funded health care services for 2,858 blind Missourians, the budget will go to the floor with $6 million for what Silvey described to reporters as a "transitional program."

The current program has an asset test but no income test. All the recipients also receive payments from the Blind Pension Fund, which will provide a maximum benefit of about $710 per month next year.

"There's been some concerns about providing some kind of transitional benefit for those who maybe just barely have too much money" for Medicaid, "but we don't know who those are right now because we don't means-test them," Silvey said.

For most adults, Medicaid is available only to those with incomes below $290 a month. For the disabled, the limits are higher, but the blind medical care program has no income test. Recipients of the medical program can have up to $20,000 in assets while Medicaid recipients are limited to a total of $1,000 in personal assets.

Nixon, who generally has resisted engaging lawmakers publicly on specific issues under debate, has become vocal in his opposition to the cut to services for the blind.

And after the committee vote, Nixon again attacked the proposed cut. Nixon said he had worked hard to balance the budget, making tough choices during the lengthy recession. "But slashing health care from more than 2,000 needy blind Missourians simply isn't an option," he said.

The money for Silvey's transitional program will come from two sources. Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, cut $2 million from the Department of Economic Development. Silvey inserted $4 million gained from repealing a tax break for newspapers, a bill he has proposed but which has not yet had a public hearing.

"The newspaper industry has been particularly vocal about the need to end corporate welfare or end corporate giveaways, and I figured they should be the first in line," he said.
JEFFERSON CITY — Columbia's House delegation will have a difficult vote during debate on the House Budget Committee spending plan for next year if members are forced to choose between the University of Missouri and health care for the blind.

No attempt was made in the committee to reverse the $28 million cut that diverted money from a longstanding program to state colleges and universities. In the committee, Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, cut $2 million from the Department of Economic Development to begin replacing the lost funding, then voted against the bill that spends it.

Most Democrats on the committee opposed the cuts in that bill, for the Department of Social Services and in the Department of Health and Senior Services, where other cuts were imposed to shift money to higher education. The cut to health care for the blind is the largest single cut and one of the few that eliminate an entire program. "I think we went way, way too far with the blind fund," Kelly said during the meeting.

Under the budget plan, the University of Missouri would have stable state funding at $397.9 million in the coming year after two years of cuts.

Budget amendments opposed by the committee chairman rarely succeed on the House floor.

State Reps. Stephen Webber and Mary Still between them represent the MU campus. Still criticized the cuts as a dilemma majority Republicans have brought on themselves. Last year, the GOP pushed through a phased repeal of the corporate franchise tax, which cut an estimated $42.2 million from the revenue available for the coming fiscal year. "I very often vote against the higher education budget bill because it is not enough," she said.

If an amendment to cut the university to restore medical care for the blind is offered, Still said, the vote will be a hard one. "I don't think it is the right way to be funding higher education," she said.

While Kelly made cuts to agency budgets to find money, Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, inserted a spending line to use $4 million from a proposed repeal of a tax break for newspapers.

Silvey has criticized Gov. Jay Nixon for doing the same thing — spending money raised by bills he is proposing, Webber said. "Common-sense legislation has a problem in this building," he said.
If an amendment to cut higher education in favor of health care for the blind is offered, Webber said, it won't be by him. "I am not going to offer an amendment that takes money out of higher education," he said.

During the budget committee meeting, Kelly criticized Nixon, a fellow Democrat, for calling the cuts "just plain wrong."

"It is not just plain wrong, or no more just plain wrong than the attack on higher education," Kelly said.

When he cut $2 million to shift money to health care for the blind, Kelly said he wanted to find a compromise. "I would hope we would find other ways to approach it, but I am hoping to get full engagement from the executive."
MSA and ASUM lobby against higher education funding cuts

The campaign held meetings with several senators to discuss Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposed cuts to higher education.

By Molly Duffy

Published March 9, 2012

Steven Dickherber, Missouri Students Association Chief of Staff, joined other MSA Senators, cabinet members, volunteers and the Associated Students of the University of Missouri on a trip to the Capitol building Tuesday. The More for Less campaign spoke directly with several senators and representatives about the higher education budget.

Since More for Less began, Gov. Jay Nixon's budget cuts to higher education have been reduced. The budget originally cut 12.5 percent of funds for higher education, but the proposal now stands at a 7.5 percent cut. More for Less is still looking for more permanent funds.

"Next year, they're going to be starting at that 12.5 percent level because this $40 million is for this year," Dickherber said. "Next year, where are they going to get that $40 million?"

Rep. Ryan Silvey, R-District 38, has proposed a balanced budget that would allow higher education more funding than the governor has allocated. Sen. Kurt Schafer, R-District 19, who met with the campaign, said the governor won't sign the budget even if the General Assembly approves it, effectively withholding available funds to higher education.

Schafer said constitutionally, Nixon does not have the authority to withhold funds.

"Somebody needs to ask him, 'Why the hell do you think you have the ability to do this?" Schafer said.

The student outrage about cuts and the $40 million that was found for education was no coincidence, Schafer said.

"They had no intention of doing that," he said. "I am convinced that it's the pressure that came mostly from students. He came up with those cuts because he's been cutting higher education (in previous years). But the thing is, it's never been a liability for him."

More for Less is simply looking to pass the General Assembly's budget right now, Dickherber said. Dickherber is a former Maneater staff member.
"Our goal isn't so much to stop legislators, senators or representatives," he said. "It's our goal to say, 'Gov. Nixon, you need to sign this. Withholding's not legal.' I mean really, it's unconstitutional. Our goal is to kind of put pressure on him."

Nixon has also made it difficult for schools to make up federal funding. Raising tuition above the consumer price index requires a waiver from the Commissioner of Higher Education, Schafer said. Last year, the Commissioner granted schools that waiver, but Nixon didn't approve of it. This year, tuition was not raised above CPI, and the governor is still threatening to withhold funds.

"They raised it, and Nixon said, 'I told you not to raise tuition,'" Schafer said. "He doesn't have that authority. I think the question is, and I think that the question for students should be, 'If the General Assembly finds extra money for higher (education), are you going to let higher (education) keep it? And if not, why not?'"

Silvey's flat budget for higher education cuts from various health services, including the blind. His bill has yet to be voted on.

Rep. Chris Kelly, D-District 24, who is against the cuts to higher education, said he doesn't expect Silvey's bill to last.

"Even I, who would be comfortable robbing a stagecoach, am uncomfortable cutting the blind," he said.

Kelly said there is still time to tweak the budget, though.

"We're still alive," he said.

Although higher education is facing cuts this year and is likely to in the future, Schafer said students have been affecting legislators' decisions, even Nixon's.

Schafer said Nixon's decision to restore some funds to education is an indication of More for Less' progress.

"Once he makes his mind up on something, he does not back up, hardly ever," he said.
MU Faculty Council reacts to chancellor's move in Engel case

COLUMBIA — MU Faculty Council members said they were disappointed and, in some cases, upset that Chancellor Brady Deaton decided to send the case of Greg Engel, a suspended MU engineering professor, back to a committee to be heard again.

At a meeting Thursday, three members of the council denounced the chancellor's decision in a written statement.

The Campus Committee on Faculty Responsibility, which heard Engel's case, decided that there was not "clear and convincing" evidence to support charges of faculty irresponsibility against him.

At its Feb. 23 meeting, the Faculty Council voted to send a letter to Deaton asking him not to send the case back to the committee, as Provost Brian Foster had suggested he do. The next week, Deaton wrote to the Faculty Council saying that he asked the committee to hear Engel's case again under a lower standard, "preponderance of evidence." That standard requires only that evidence show accusations are more likely to be true than not.

Engel's case has provoked a debate about how difficult it should be to remove a tenured professor.

"I'll be honest — I was a little disappointed," said Faculty Council Vice Chairman Joe Parcell, who wrote the letter the council sent to Deaton. "A little confused here by the chancellor's letter."

The MU faculty bylaws do not specify what standard of evidence the Campus Committee on Faculty Responsibility should use. Deaton wrote in his letter that he saw the lower standard as appropriate.
"A higher standard might serve to deter faculty who are genuinely concerned about the conduct of their colleagues from bringing charges," he wrote.

Deaton's move to send Engel's case back "has the appearance of a prejudicial action against Professor Engel and a violation of fair play," professors Gordon Christiansen, Sudarshan Loyalka and Eddie Adelstein wrote in the statement.

"We count on (the administration) to be fair, and it's never fair, at least in my opinion," Adelstein said at the meeting, adding that he thinks Deaton's move was a "cheap legal trick" that will put pressure on the committee to not act in Engel's favor.

Christiansen said he thinks it's the Faculty Council's job to guard the process used in faculty hearings, and that in Engel's case, there had been too much interference and back-and-forth to call the process legitimate.

"In my opinion, we've effectively shredded the bylaws," he said. "They mean nothing."

Parcell said the administration had ample opportunity to discuss the standard for evidence before the hearing took place, especially since both general counsel and Deputy Provost Ken Dean, a licensed attorney, were on hand.

Some faculty members took issue with the statement denouncing Deaton's move, particularly its declaration that "the Chancellor's directive effectively amends the Faculty Bylaws," going around the process to formally amend the bylaws through a vote of all MU faculty.

Douglas Wakefield, a professor in the Department of Health Management and Informatics, asked whether Deaton had really violated the bylaws or whether the council was just unhappy with his decision. He asked if the standard of evidence had initially been low and Deaton had moved to make it higher, would the Faculty Council's reaction have been the same?

Johannes Schul, an associate professor of biological sciences, said that if the case was heard again with a lower standard for evidence, a lower level of faculty irresponsibility might be found, and there could be outcomes less severe than dismissal.

Christiansen asked council members to bring the issue to faculty in their departments for further discussion.
Fast-forward degrees get Nixon's seal of approval

BY TIM BARKER tbarker@post-dispatch.com | Posted: Friday, March 9, 2012 12:00 am | (4) Comments

Just as Gov. Jay Nixon was telling the state's colleges of his plans to slash their budgets, he took the time to offer an example of a project he says is on the right track to keeping college costs down.

Now, the governor is waving $10 million in front of the state's higher education community to encourage copycats.

During his annual State of the State address, Nixon first bragged about the University of Central Missouri and its planned Innovation Campus partnership with Kansas City-area high schools and businesses.

The program seeks to help students graduate faster and cheaper, with much of the work completed in high school and with degrees that will lead directly to jobs.

This, Nixon said then and repeatedly since, is what everyone else should be doing.

Just last week he offered new details on the $10 million carrot — in the form of grant money — to persuade other state schools to follow the example set by the Warrensburg-based college.

Nixon's push has drawn a range of reactions, with many schools still waiting for more details and direction before moving toward a May 15 deadline. But some are looking to the University of Central Missouri program as a solid starting point.

"You don't have to be a genius to figure out that's at least a model," said Jim Baker, vice president for research and economic development at Missouri State University, where he's coordinating grant efforts.

Even so, some wonder at the attention being showered upon the Innovation Campus, given that it hasn't even been launched. Nor is the concept — which is based on ideas many colleges and universities are already using — exactly turning the education world on its head.

But it is taking some existing ideas like dual credit courses further than they have gone in the past, some education experts say.
They want to put high school students squarely on the path to specific degrees in various applied sciences fields, including technology and engineering. One far-reaching goal has students graduating with a degree in engineering six years after entering the ninth grade.

It's the sort of thing that appeals to people at a time of rapidly rising college costs, said Charles M. Ambrose, president of the University of Central Missouri.

"It may be overstating it to say that higher education is broken," Ambrose said. "But with a trillion dollars in student loan debt, it's close."

The project will be a partnership that includes the university, Metropolitan Community College in Kansas City and the Lee's Summit School District, with support from private companies that will offer internships, job opportunities and guidance on the region's employment needs.

They hope to start this fall with 30 students. But that number is expected to grow into the hundreds or even thousands as they pull in students from 10 surrounding school districts. Soon, they'll have their own campus in Lee's Summit, with 150,000 square feet of teaching space, on land donated by the city.

other programs

The idea of getting high school students involved in college-level coursework is hardly new. Most, if not all, of the state's colleges offer some form of dual-credit system in which students gain college credits for work they are doing prior to graduating from high school.

Jobs for the Future, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, has been operating a nationwide program for a decade, with an emphasis on exposing underserved populations to college. The organization's Early College High School Initiative has a network of 270 colleges, including several in Missouri, that have dual-credit relationships with local school districts. They generally target kids who might not be thinking beyond high school.

"They begin to see themselves as college students," said Cecilia Le, who develops publications for the organization.

But these types of dual-credit programs haven't necessarily helped students graduate any faster, or cheaper, said Kevin Corcoran, a program director with the Lumina Foundation, an education organization dedicated to increasing degree attainment.

"What the research has shown is that (students) still tend to stay the full four years," Corcoran said.

But where the Innovation Campus model may vary is in its more narrowly defined pathways. Students won't simply be earning college credits. They'll be earning credits with an eye on specific degrees and fields of study.

"There could be some real advantages to that," Corcoran said, noting that students often do better in college when given fewer choices.
Some, however, worry about the long-term implications of essentially melding the final years of high school with the early years of college.

"I'm a little concerned about saying the last year of high school doesn't count," said Linda Serra Hagedorn, a professor in Iowa State University's Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies.

She also questions the desire to rush students through college, instead of giving them time to explore their interests to find the right careers for themselves.

But others say there are plenty of students who are ready to get started on their professional careers as soon as possible. And that the state should do everything it can to help them do it.

Mike Nietzel, Nixon's senior adviser on education, agreed that college campuses are populated by many students who simply aren't ready to make career decisions. But many does not mean all.

"About half of your freshmen change their majors," Nietzel said. "The other half don't. They have a pretty clear path in mind."

**deadline coming**

The next step in the creation of additional Innovation Campuses is a March 21 grant workshop in Jefferson City, where most of the state's four-year schools are expected to show up to learn more about how the $10 million will be handed out.

One potential complication is the requirement that any proposal must actually be led by a local government or nonprofit economic development organization. The schools themselves can only be partners. That's because the money is coming from Missouri Community Development Block Grant funds — something universities are not eligible for.

This early in the process, it's unclear what form the eventual partnerships will take by the time applications are due in May.

Both the University of Missouri-Columbia and University of Missouri-St. Louis said they are still evaluating the grant process and have started exploring options. A spokesman for UMSL pointed out the school already has numerous partnerships involving high school students and area companies.

It's a sentiment echoed by other schools.

Kenneth Dobbins, president of Southeast Missouri State University, said his university works with more than 600 area high school students receiving dual credit through courses both on his campus and at their own schools.

Many already are getting a jump start on their college careers, arriving on campus with up to a full year's worth of college credits on their résumés.
But in the end, he said, much of the responsibility for graduating quickly falls on the students and the choices they make.

"The problem we all face is that students don't always know what they want to do," Dobbins said. "If you want to get done in three years, you better know where you want to be."
MU students lobby against Limbaugh honor

By RUDI KELLER

JEFFERSON CITY — A delegation of about a dozen female University of Missouri students on Thursday was unable to persuade House Speaker Steve Tilley to drop his plan to enshrine Rush Limbaugh in the Hall of Famous Missourians.

“He stood his ground pretty strongly,” said Nicole Silvestri, a junior Women & Gender Studies student from St. Louis. “He doesn’t believe that by putting him in the hall of fame that we are condoning his actions.”

The controversy has dogged Tilley all week, since blogger Dave Drebes found the photos of Limbaugh and fellow inductee Dred Scott on the website of the sculptor preparing the busts. News of the planned induction broke at the same time Limbaugh was under fire nationally for calling Sandra Fluke, a Georgetown University law student, a “slut” and a “prostitute” after she spoke out in favor of including contraceptive coverage in health care plans. Since that time, many national advertisers have dropped Limbaugh.

“I listened to what their concerns were, and I explained to them why I nominated him,” Tilley said of his visit with the MU students. “And we just may disagree about it, but I certainly made time for them and brought them into the office and listened to them and I respect their opinion and I hope they respect mine.”

House Democrats have called on Tilley to reconsider the honor. They also have called on Gov. Jay Nixon to block the installation of the bust on the third floor of the Capitol Building.

Tilley, who like Limbaugh is from Southeast Missouri, called Limbaugh an “entertainer,” adding that he doesn’t agree with everything Limbaugh says on his conservative talk show.

Limbaugh is a member of one of the most prominent families in Cape Girardeau. His grandfather practiced law until he was past 100, is considered responsible for the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan and has his name on a Federal Courthouse. An uncle and a cousin of Limbaugh’s have been federal judges, and one of those two was a Missouri Supreme Court judge.

“The gentleman has come from humble means in Cape Girardeau to be the most recognizable radio personality in the world, and I thought that deserved recognition.” Tilley said.

The women who met with Tilley said they were unable to budge him.

“He apologized if it offends us but does not beleove he needs to change,” said Lindsey Wehking of Edwardsville, Ill., a sophomore strategic communications major.
MU students look at the Hall of Famous Missourians Thursday at the Missouri State Capitol in Jefferson City. The students gathered to talk to representatives and senators, and protest Rush Limbaugh's induction into the Missouri Hall of Fame. The Hall houses 39 busts of famous Missourians who have been recognized throughout history. Pictured here, George Caleb Bingham, inducted Feb. 15, 2010, among others such as Mark Twain, George Washington Carver, Stanley Frank Musial, Dale Carnegie and Sacajawea.

The Missouri Speaker of the House, Steven Tilley, R-Perryville, confirmed that he plans to induct conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh, originally from Cape Girardeau, into the Hall of Famous Missourians this year.

The hall contains busts of famous and historical figures such as Walt Disney, Mark Twain, Walter Cronkite and George Washington Carver.

After a group of House Democrats wrote to Tilley asking he remove Limbaugh from the list, a group of students from the University of Missouri traveled to the Capitol to voice their objections.
MU students talk with U.S. Sen. Kurt Schaefer on Thursday at the Missouri State Capitol. Though the induction of Rush Limbaugh is out of the senator's jurisdiction, the students hoped he would be willing to voice a public opinion denouncing the induction. Schaefer denied the request saying he did not believe that type of rhetoric would do any good.

MU students, from left, Nicole Silvestri, Megan Pearl, Matthew Dahlberg and Lauren Bale give Barb Shimmens, Constituent Service Director, a signed letter voicing their opinions on why Rush Limbaugh should not be inducted into the Hall of Famous Missourians on Thursday at the state Capitol. The students made it to the office of Gov. Jay Nixon and talked with Reps. Steven Tilley and Mary Still, and Sen. Kurt Schaefer in just a few hours.
Tilley not backing down on Limbaugh bust

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. • House Speaker Steven Tilley's plan to honor controversial talk radio host Rush Limbaugh sparked an outcry this week, but Tilley is standing his ground.

A bronze bust of Limbaugh is supposed to be added to the Capitol's Hall of Famous Missourians, where it will stand alongside Sacajawea, Mark Twain, Walt Disney and Bob Barker (famous faces still missing from the hall include Dick Van Dyke, Maya Angelou, Chuck Berry and T.S. Eliot).

Pointing to Limbaugh's latest scandal in which he called a Georgetown law student who publicly advocated access to contraceptives a "slut" and a "prostitute," Democratic leaders and other groups have said the Cape Girardeau-native should not be included among the honorees.

On Thursday, Tilley met with about a dozen University of Missouri students who are part of a group known as Students for a Better Missouri.

"This induction would turn our hall of fame into nothing but a hall of shame," said Nicole Silvestri, president of the group. "We should be honoring people who better society, not people who outwardly and purposely offend the citizens of this country,"

But Tilley wasn't swayed.

"I listened to what their concerns were," he said. "I respect their opinions, and I hope they respect mine."

Some have questioned whether Limbaugh meets the test of being a Missourian who has "made outstanding contributions to the state, the nation and the world." That's the language used in a 2002 outline of the Famous Missourians program.

Tilley said he thinks Limbaugh is worthy of the honor because he is a notable entertainer. His radio show reaches more than 15 million listeners each week.

"Obviously, a lot of people enjoy and listen to him," Tilley said. "I don't necessarily agree with everything he says (but) achieving the success he's had — I think it's something that's noteworthy."

Critics of the plan are now looking for ways around the speaker, though.

House Democrats have urged the Office of Administration to refuse placement of the Limbaugh bust.
"There is no state law creating it and, therefore, no legal requirement that busts of inductees selected by the House speaker be granted space in the rotunda," reads a letter signed by more than 40 Democrats.

Tilley said he does not think OA will be able to override his decision. The House speaker decides the inductees and control of the rotunda falls to the House leadership. The House even handles the reservation of the rotunda for special events.

On Thursday, House Minority Leader Mike Talboy of Kansas City said he thinks that honoring Limbaugh would set a bad precedent.

"With the way Mr. Limbaugh operates it’s very likely that he is going to say something demeaning and arrogant and hurtful in the next two weeks," he said.

Assistant House Minority Leader Tishaura Jones of St. Louis said she finds Limbaugh’s views on race and gender offensive and she disagrees that he should be inducted strictly on notoriety.

“It’s not the Hall of Infamous Missourians,” she said.
The SEC guide to Missouri's home turf

March, 8, 2012

By Edward Aschoff

Well, you guys had no problem bombarding our mailbag with all the riches to be found in Columbia, Mo., and College Station, Texas.

Today, we'll focus on what you guys said about Columbia, and there really appear to be some gems that all SEC fans will love to check out when they head into new territory. Friday, we'll check out what everyone said about Texas A&M's home town, so there's still time for Aggies fans to add some last-minute suggestions.

We start things off with two people who are very familiar with what Columbia has to offer:

David Ubben, Big 12 blogger/Mizzou alum, wrote: Glad to see you boys on the SEC blog are following in the Big 12's footsteps. When I saw you were calling out recommendations for Columbia, though, I had to chime in. As a recent alum, I felt a responsibility to introduce these SEC ruffians to their new Midwestern oasis.

First off, the place you'll hear most often is Shakespeare's. It's worth it. Be prepared to wait, but you can get a huge slice for lunch, or get a group of friends and buy a whole pie for dinner.

Shakespeare's is great, but the place I absolutely, positively have to go every time I come to Columbia is Booche's. They're tiny burgers, but some of the best you'll find in this fair land we call America. I can put down 3-4 pretty easily, but bring cash. They don't take cards. By my count, the only burger I've ever had that's better is at the Shake Shack in Madison Square Park in New York City.

Flat Branch is another Columbia staple well worth the trip. It's a nice bridge between a nice dinner and a casual dinner. They brew their own beer, so have a taste. If you're adventurous enough, try the green chili beer; it has some spice. I'm personally not a fan, but some swear by it. If you're looking for something a touch nicer, try Murry's in south Columbia. Nice atmosphere and delicious food.

If you want something other than a taste of the Midwest, I can't recommend Bangkok Gardens strongly
enough. It's right in the heart of downtown on Cherry St., and you'll have a hard time finding better Thai food anywhere.

As for the nightlife, you'll hear a ton about Harpo's. Me personally, I like The Heidelberg. It's a great place to hang out with friends and on a game weekend, you never know who you'll run into. I'm not crazy about the food, but the rooftop on a nice night is one of the best spots in the entire city.

If you can swing it, try to pay a visit to the rec center on campus. It's absurd. I spent many a day and night playing hoops on the 7,000 courts, and if you've never seen a 40-person hot tub, that's your chance. (Only one of those is an exaggeration.)

Another nice spot? It's probably not great for a game weekend, but if you're in Columbia for more than a night or two, pay Ragtag Cinema a visit.

Hope this helps, and hey, be nice to Mizzou, y'all.

My take: That's a lot, but with my appetite, I'm sure I can squeeze it all in. Growin' boy and all.

James Franklin, Mizzou QB, said: If you like barbeque, there's two places. There's Buckingham's Bar-B-Q and Bandana's Bar-B-Q. I think Bandana's is the best. If you like pulled pork, they have really good pulled pork.

My take: I'm from the South. Barbeque is a must, but I'm picky when it comes to it. James, you will feel the wrath of the SEC blog if you're wrong about these places!

Juan in Papillion, Neb., wrote: Don't let the Nebraska address fool you -- I'm a proud Mizzou grad coming to you with a restaurant recommendation. Whenever my wife and I return to Columbia, The Pasta Factory on Broadway is a mandatory stop. Great food, a beautiful decor, and close proximity to all the watering holes and shops make it a slam dunk. Enjoy yourself and welcome to "the other" Columbia! M-I-Z ...

Matt in Raleigh, N.C., wrote: I'm a proud Mizzou grad. BoCoMo recommendations: Booche's -- best hamburger on Earth. Shakespeare's -- good pizza; outstanding pepperoni. Flat Branch -- fun brewpub. Ask if William Least Heat Moon still hangs out there. Harpo's -- not my kind of place (fratty) but very popular with the older alums. Ask to see the hacksaws beneath the bar that are used for cutting up the goalposts. Broadway Diner -- after covering a night game, this is where you absolutely must eat. Ask for a Super Stretch. Ernie's: best place for breakfast.

My take: Any place that is going to serve me after a night game is music to my ears. Count me in!

Chris in St. Louis, Mo., wrote: I can tell you that many SEC fans will be very impressed with what Columbia, Mo., has to offer. First of all, you can grab some pizza at Shakespeare's pizza, which I am sure
most people will recommend. Aside from that, I would suggest getting some wings or a Willie Phillie at Willie’s Pub & Pool. Willie’s is also attached to the Fieldhouse, these two places were where I spent the majority of my time while in Columbia. After a game, Fieldhouse/Willie’s is one of the best places to go to check out the COEDs and hopefully celebrate victories. I would also suggest checking out Shiloh, this is a Columbia staple. Usually very exciting on game days. After a long night of drinking, the one place everyone must go is The Diner to sample a Stretch, the best late-night meal you’ll ever have. It is a mess of eggs, hash browns, chili, onions, peppers and more. Anyway, I hope you and the rest of the SEC faithful enjoy your time in Columbia, we look forward to hosting you all very soon.

Jack in Columbia, Mo., wrote: When you’re in Columbia, Mo., you definitely need to make it to Booches on 9th Street. A pool hall that serves the best burgers I’ve ever tasted. Cash only. Notable for the sign in the front that says “Closed Sunday, see you in church.” Harpo’s at 10th and Cherry is the most iconic bar in town. After big wins, students take the goalposts down and carry them to Harpo’s. Shakespeare’s Pizza is another must-see. Great pizza, a huge yellow sign that says LIQUOR GUNS AND AMMO, right in the middle of downtown Columbia.

My take: I’m definitely a fan of funny signs. Good food that goes with them is just a plus.

Steve in Kansas City, Mo., wrote: You’ll hear from everyone about the main popular spots: Harpos, Shakespear’s Pizza, etc. As an alumni, the main places you have to go to are as follows: Broadway Diner, Booches, Gumby’s Pizza, and El Rancho.

P. Yarns in St. Louis, Mo., wrote: You’re going to hear common answers about where to go in Columbia. Shakespeare’s Pizza is probably the most well-known spot (the original location near campus, not the newer locations), and the pizza is fantastic. For burgers, there isn’t a better spot in Missouri than Booche’s. It’s a pool hall where the burgers are served on wax paper and women weren’t allowed entry until the late 70s. For chicken wings, go to CJ’s. The downtown microbrew is Flatbranch, where the food is good, too. For a bit nicer sit-down meal, look to Addison’s, Sycamore, or Bleu (which is changing locations, but I think will be open again by the fall). And if visiting fans can venture to the south part of town, Murray’s will deliver an outstanding meal at a great price, and you’ll probably get to hear a good jazz trio, as well. Also keep in mind that Columbia is developing a plan for visiting fans which should include a designated tailgate area. Columbia, like Mizzou and it’s alums/fans, is very excited about the new home in the SEC!

D.W. in St. Louis Mo., wrote: Homecoming is a very special football tradition at Mizzou for 101 years! It is one of MU’s largest events, as well as in the nation. Recently, the University of Missouri’s Homecoming celebration was named the best Homecoming in the nation -- the only school to hold such an honor -- and has been named a model Homecoming program, by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. Many schools claim to have the first Homecoming celebration in the nation, but Mizzou can claim it was the first Homecoming centered around a football game and has been celebrated for over 100 consecutive years. Kentucky fans will get to experience Mizzou’s Homecoming celebration on Oct 26-27th: the largest Homecoming parade in the nation.
Luke in Quincy, Ill., wrote: As an alum of MIZZOU, this would be my recommendation for a perfect football weekend in Columbia to SEC fans. If you get in Friday night for dinner, I would say hit up Flat Branch Pub and Brewing. Their Katy Trail Pale Ale home brew pairs nicely with the burgers and brick oven pizzas. For entertainment that night I’d hit up Penguin Piano Bar, a lot of time the MIZZOU band will come in to play for a bit the night before game day. If game time allows for it on Sat. I’d grab a pizza from Shakespeares (its a Columbia landmark). As for that night I’d grab dinner at Addisons, and the Nachos Bianco are a must. I think they’ve won appetizer of the year for five years running according to Columbia Magazine. I usually just order them as my meal, they are ridiculously good. After tailgating, the game, and dinner you’ve got to hit up Harpos and Shiloh for later night drinks. Lastly, before leaving on Sunday Ernie’s Café is an absolute must. It’s the best breakfast I’ve ever had, especially the french toast (trust me it’s worth the wait, and there will be one).

Daniel in Columbia, Mo., wrote: If you’re not hungry or thirsty I still recommend going on walk around downtown and campus. Aside from the numerous parks and local shops, Downtown has a lively progressive feel to it. Columbia is a very accepting and friendly community, as long as you’re not a Jayhawk. If you decide to go out chances are someone will buy you a drink and welcome you to our city, win or lose. The whole community has really embraced the move to the SEC and is sure to offer a great experience to visiting fans.
Whose town is it anyway?
Tigers right at home in KC

By JOE WALLJASPER

KANSAS CITY — On Monday, Kansas Coach Bill Self tried to gerrymander the Sprint Center into the Sunflower State. He suggested that since Kansas City is predominantly a Kansas and Kansas State town anyhow, there's no sense moving the Big 12 Tournament out of his backyard after Missouri leaves the conference.

Maybe so, but the Sprint Center sure feels like home to the Tigers.

Last night in a Big 12 Tournament quarterfinal that was a bucket of confetti away from a Globetrotters vs Generals exhibition, Missouri dispatched Oklahoma State 88-70. It wasn't nearly as close as the score indicated.

In three games in the Sprint Center this season, the Tigers have outscored Notre Dame, Cal and OSU by an average of almost 29 points. Unless the semifinals are relocated, Missouri should feel confident in tonight's semifinal against Texas and its handful of fans.

Haith reminded the Tigers before the game how well they played here while winning the CBE Classic in November. The Tigers have five players from the Kansas City area — all from the Missouri side of the border — and last night Kim English declared himself an adopted son. “This is Kansas City, Missouri,” said Marcus Denmon, one of the natives.

Oklahoma State got run over by the welcome wagon. The whole thing was over in a matter of minutes Phil Pressey kept taking the ball from the groggy guys in orange and giving it to the energetic guys in white. Pressey had five steals and eight assists in the first half. He finished with 12 assists despite playing just 23 minutes.

With the freewheeling point guard handling the ball in the open court, offensive possessions were like a buffet. The Tigers could get what they wanted when they wanted. It was just a matter of deciding what sounded best. English gorged in the first half with 21 points, on his way to a game-high 27. Denmon was quiet until he was called for a questionable blocking foul early in the second half. That visibly agitated him, and he went on a personal 13-point run. The highlight was a three-point play in which Denmon started screaming before he even landed on the court after drawing a foul. He finished with 24 points.
Missouri's lead grew to as much as 29, until — similar to the teams' meeting in Columbia — the injury-depleted but scrappy Cowboys scored a flurry of points late in the game to make the score more respectable.

From Missouri's perspective, it was almost a perfect game. It got out of hand so early, Haith could rest his frontline players. Andrew Jones and Jared Sutton got some minutes in both halves. Denmon played the most, and he only logged 31 minutes.

That minimal physical and mental drain could pay off tonight and potentially tomorrow in the championship game.

If the hoped-for third matchup with Kansas comes to pass, Missouri fans figure to show up in numbers. Self's comments were a bit reminiscent of former KU Athletic Director Lew Perkins, who predicted the crowd at the 2007 Border War football game would be 70 percent Kansas fans. The actual split was more like 50-50.

"I don't care what anybody else says," said Jones, a Smithville native. "I don't care if there's billboards that say, 'This is Kansas' — with bold letters — 'City.' We're still in Missouri."
KANSAS CITY — With a dismantling of Oklahoma State on Thursday that was far more thorough than the 88-70 final margin suggests, fifth-ranked Mizzou this season at the Sprint Center has crushed Notre Dame, California and OSU by a cumulative score of 267-181.

In the eye of the right beholder, that’s evidence of MU’s case in the gathering debate over just who’s town this is, sparked earlier this week courtesy of mischievous Kansas coach Bill Self.


"So, this is our city."

Whether that question will be framed against one last Ultimate Game between MU, Kansas on Saturday remains a step away, but each team moved a notch closer with Big 12 tournament quarterfinal wins.

Earlier in the day, top-seeded KU beat Texas A&M 83-66 and will play Baylor at 6:30 p.m. today in the semifinal.

Up next for No. 2 seed Mizzou at approximately 9 p.m. is the winner of the late game between No. 3 seed Iowa State (21-9) and No. 6 Texas (19-12) on Thursday night — each of which MU swept in the regular season.

Meanwhile, seventh-seeded OSU (15-18) had split its regular-season series with Mizzou, baffling to consider by game’s end — though OSU played without two key players from that 79-72 win, injured Le’Bryan Nash and Philip Jurick,

This time, though, MU’s victory seemed assured early before a decidedly pro-MU crowd of 18,972.

In their last Big 12 tournament before heading to the Southeastern Conference, the Tigers pounced with a 17-0 run to take a 23-6 lead and built a 49-24 halftime advantage sparked by English’s 21 first-half points and Phil Pressey’s eight assists and five steals before the break.

Pressey finished with 12 assists, five steals, five rebounds and four points.
"When he's into that mode of getting guys involved and play-making, he's awfully good, which makes us awfully good," MU coach Frank Haith said.

The 17-0 deluge began with an English 3-pointer and then a hypnotic sequence triggered by Pressey, who in succession off his steals or rebounds hit Marcus Denmon, English and English again for layups.

"It was a track meet from there," English said.

In fact, it then was more or less name your score for Mizzou, which led by 29 before breaking from its regularly scheduled seven-man programming to keep legs fresh for today.

In fact, Haith made the rare move in Big 12 play of going to subs Andrew Jones and Jarrett Sutton with several minutes left in the first half.

"Hoping that we're playing three days," Haith said.

The last time MU played on back-to-back days was at the Sprint Center, where the Tigers blasted Notre Dame 87-58 on Nov. 21 and thrashed Cal 92-53 the next day to win the CBE Classic.

After MU shot 59.3 percent from the field (35 of 59) and held OSU to 46 percent Thursday, MU is hitting 58.8 percent in the three games here while holding opponents to 37.7.

But it was more than just the shooting-percentage differential at play in the game Thursday, not to mention the other two here.

"We got back to guarding the ball the way we were guarding the ball earlier in the year," Haith said. "I thought our intensity level was very good."

MU also moved the ball as fluidly as it had in a long time.

"We were defending and the ball wasn't sticking; we had tremendous ball movement," English said. "Good ball movement relieves the tension of the offense. That's (former Princeton coach) Pete Carril. And that's the truth."

Mizzou outrebounded the Cowboys 40-20 and outscored them 52-22 in the paint.

English led MU with 27, and Denmon added 24, including 17 in the second half. Also in double figures were Michael Dixon with 13 and Ricardo Ratliffe with 11, while Denmon hauled in a team-high eight rebounds and Dixon dished out seven assists.
A University of Missouri professor is in the process of developing a new car battery that he believes will be the breakthrough needed to put more electric cars on the highway.

"This probably is the important technology that will allow vehicles to pull into a station and recharge in a reasonable amount of time," said Galen Suppes, a professor of chemical engineering. "This has the potential to be game-changing."

The key to his "convection" battery is a pump that helps reactant flow faster between the two sides of the battery, rather than relying on natural movement, he said. That produces more power output.

Think of it like ingredients in a mixing bowl. Leave them alone, and they'll eventually settle together, but stirring makes the process happen faster. The pump "is doing the equivalent of stirring," Suppes said.

In studies, the battery provided about six times as much power output as traditional batteries without the pump.

Electrical energy is relatively inexpensive and abundant in the United States, but the high cost of batteries has limited the ability to use it for transportation Suppes said his battery design could cut the cost by at least half.

"Basically, it can lower battery costs — both materials costs and manufacturing costs — while at the same time increasing performance," said Michael Gordon, a graduate student who's working alongside Suppes. "So you have a lighter, cheaper and better battery."

Suppes and his research team have been working on the convection battery since 2008 and have received funding from the National Science Foundation and the California Energy Commission. Definitive data have been collected that validate the battery's increased power output and recharge capabilities. he said.

Patents are pending on the invention, and Suppes said the battery could be commercialized by as early as the end of 2014.

The news comes alongside a call from President Barack Obama to provide more funding for fuel-efficient technologies. Yesterday, during a visit to North Carolina, he called on Congress to provide $1 billion in grants for such studies, with the goal of making electric vehicles affordable and convenient by 2020, The Associated Press reported.
"We need to invest in the technology that will help us use less oil in our cars and our trucks, and our buildings, and our factories," Obama said. "That's the only solution to the challenge. Because as we start to use less" gas, "that lowers the demand, prices come down."

And that technology will be batteries, Suppes said.

"There is nothing that is more important than battery technology to get our country where it needs to be," he said. "Between battery technology" and "natural gas, our energy future in the U.S. looks better than it has in decades."

This isn't the first eco-friendly invention Suppes has developed. In 2006, he received the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award, one of the Environmental Protection Agency's top honors, for developing a way to transform a byproduct of biodiesel into antifreeze that has useful applications.
NSSE survey aims to improve life at MU

MU freshmen and seniors are being asked to take the survey.

By Hanna Jacunski

Published March 9, 2012

In an attempt to better understand undergraduate students’ experiences at MU, the inbox of every first-year college student and college senior at MU received an email from Chancellor Brady Deaton. The email urged students to fill out a survey about their lives on MU campus and during college in general.

“Completing the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) will provide me and others with valuable first-hand information from students that can help us improve our curriculum and campus life,” Deaton said in the email.

NSSE is a staffed online institution focused on bettering educational practices in the United States. The idea for mass collecting data about college students, faculty and other involved members was created in 1998 and piloted in 1999, according to the NSSE website.

Senior Ryan Bueckendorf said he is not opposed to taking the survey.

“I think, given the current financial limitations facing all types of education but most specifically those facing higher education institutions such as MU, that it is more important than ever to track the types of programs our students are most taking advantage of,” he said. “This enables our faculty, staff and other stakeholders to streamline what is available to students and to divert available funding to the areas and programs where they will be most effective and reach the greatest number of students.”

Buckendorf also said he thinks the survey helps prepare MU for the future.

“I think having incoming students and departing seniors take the survey effectively demonstrates any changes in these figures over time, which will have the added benefit of enabling MU to prepare for future trends in student engagement and programming,” he said.

According to the NSSE website, through the student survey, The College Student Report, NSSE annually collects information at hundreds of four-year colleges and universities about student participation in programs and activities that institutions provide for students’ learning and personal development.

“NSSE will collect the information about student participation in programs and activities that Missouri provides for their learning and personal development and come up with an estimate of
how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending Mizzou," stated an Office of Undergraduate Studies press release. "The results will point to areas in which Missouri is performing well and aspects of the undergraduate experience that could be improved."

Students are urged to find and take the survey as soon as possible in order to aid MU in fixing any problems they might have regarding students.

"The final reminder to students will be sent from NSSE on April 4," senior information specialist Josh Murray said. "However, the survey will be available to students until early June when NSSE closes it in order to compile results. We are encouraging students to fill it out before the end of the semester."

This NSSE survey is important for students to take because of the amount that it gives back to both the student body and the university as a whole.

"The NSSE survey is a needed resource for universities like the University of Missouri as they evaluate what they can improve here on our campus," MSA President Xavier Billingsley said in a news release regarding the survey. "I urge all Mizzou students to fulfill their civil duties and let our university know our needs."
Concerts school students on jazz
By CATHARINE MARTIN

Energy filled the auditorium at Hickman High School this morning as rows of children raised their hands up in the air and moved them back and forth to the beat of the song "Sweet Georgia Peach" performed by the MU Concert Jazz Band and Grammy-nominated guitarist Russell Malone.

The Children's Concert, a part of the "We Always Swing" Jazz Series, aims to expose kids to a genre of music they might not often hear.

"This gets it into their ears and their eyes," said Deborah Jacobs, Columbia Public Schools' fine arts coordinator.

The concert even added an extra show this year because of the large number of schools that wanted to participate, Jacobs said. A total of about 1,550 children saw the two shows.

Jazz is part of the Columbia Public Schools music curriculum, said Pam Sisson, a district music teacher, and the show gave the students a chance to hear and see what they've learned about firsthand.

"I think it's important for everybody to be aware of various styles of music. A lot of times kids only want to listen to their type of music. ... It's good to expose them to all types," Sisson said.

Malone expressed similar thoughts and said it's important for kids to hear jazz.

"It develops their interest and requires more than just their superficial attention," he said. "A lot of music is disposable. That's not so with jazz. If they want to play, they have to learn."

The benefits of the program are twofold for Malone, who said he loves spending time with children and likes to share his knowledge with them.

Malone's music already had an impact on one young musician in the audience, sixth-grader William Swartz of Christian Fellowship School, who said he has been playing guitar for about a year. "I was really inspired by the jazz guitarist. He was excellent," William said of Malone. "In high school and college, I want to study jazz and guitar."

Malone and the MU Concert Jazz Band will play another show at 7 tonight at Hickman Auditorium.