Lottery funds help UM add scholarships

By Janese Silvey

The University of Missouri System is using an unexpected boost in state aid to set up dozens of scholarships for needy students.

This month, Gov. Jay Nixon released $1.1 million to the system, money that came from lottery proceeds that exceeded the state's expectations. The four UM campuses will pitch in another $1.1 million in donations to create endowed scholarships. The goal is to have 56 endowments worth $40,000 each, which would allow scholarships to initially provide $2,000 to students.

System administrators are determining how the scholarships will be divvied up among the four campuses, but it will depend, in part, on the level of student need, said Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration.

Opting to use the released state funds for scholarships aligns with Nixon's goal to make college more affordable. For the first two years of his term, Nixon struck a deal with college presidents to keep tuition flat.

Last year, when the UM Board of Curators raised tuition by more than he requested, he punished the university by withholding $4.4 million.

Nixon did not instruct UM administrators to use the newly released money for financial aid, but Krawitz said the system wanted to support his efforts.

"Our budget was already in place this year, so this was funding that we could use in a strategic way to work toward our goal of access and affordability and really to support the governor's goal of access and affordability," she said.

In a statement, UM President Tim Wolfe said additional state appropriations allow the university to "do even more to make the college dream a reality."

"We understand the economic hardships many families face, especially when deciding to send their children to college," he said. "These scholarships can help make access to college more affordable for high-need students."

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Mizzou finds a home in SEC

BY VAHE GREGORIAN • vgregorian@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8199 | Posted: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 12:15 am | (0) comments.

SEC Commissioner Mike Slive (left) and University of Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton, at the formal announcement in Columbia, Mo., that Mizzou was joining the Southeastern Conference. (AP Photo/Columbia Daily Tribune, Parker Eshelman)

KANSAS CITY — Mizzou fans here have been widely portrayed as distressed over MU's decision to leave the Big 12 for the Southeastern Conference, and that's no doubt true among some.

But another voice resounded Tuesday at the Tiger Club of Kansas City's meeting at the Westport Flea Market Bar & Grill, where SEC commissioner Mike Slive could do no wrong as he addressed a sardined-in crowd of about 300 that greeted him with a standing ovation.

"The energy in this room is phenomenal," said Slive, adding that if Mizzou fans treat all events with such energy he'd have to warn the rest of the SEC.
But perhaps the greatest testimony to both the enthusiasm of the audience and Slive's hypnotic charm came when Slive was asked if he would explain how MU ended up in the SEC East and Texas A&M in the West.

Slive simply said, "No," and smiled.

And the crowd laughed. And laughed. And laughed.

That was one of its strongest reactions — along with big cheers when Slive noted the SEC doesn't permit members to have their own networks.

Slive's response evoked thoughts of the Longhorn Network, which even as it was being reeled in came to symbolize for MU and its fans ongoing chaos in the Big 12 hierarchy.

Mizzou's long-term financial future appears more promising in the SEC, and Slive joked that likely renegotiation of the SEC's TV football contract will make (Mizzou athletics director) "Mike Alden very happy."

But Slive perceived MU's interest in his league to be more about compatibility than bottom line.

"I think what Missouri was looking for was a home that was stable and a home where they felt comfortable, with people they could enjoy being with," he said, adding, "It's about culture. It's about psychology. It's about history. It's about sociology. It's about family. It's about competition."

"And I think it's fair to say that Mizzou was looking for that kind of a home."

A home known for many things but one above all others.

"You don't schedule your wedding (or) your Bar Mitzvah in the south until you find out what the football schedule is," he said, laughing.

Not that SEC football, which has produced the past six national champions, is its only point of distinction.

Among other ways to frame it: Slive said 159 current and former SEC athletes competed in the 2008 Beijing Olympics and won 51 medals.

"Now, if the SEC were a nation, we would have finished fourth in the world (in medal count)," he said.

SEC Nation is amid radical change with Mizzou and Texas A&M on July 1 set to become just the third and fourth schools to join the conference since it was established in December 1932.

"The enthusiasm and the energy in this room today is symbolic of how we feel and how they feel," Slive said, "but there's an adjustment for everybody."
Some things likely will change ahead.

For instance, the addition of MU has made viable the possibilities of Kansas City and St. Louis hosting the SEC basketball tournament — an event the SEC has demonstrated it likes to move around.

Each has indicated interest, with St. Louis Sports Commission president Frank Viverito expressing it emphatically in his trip to New Orleans for this season's SEC tournament.

"If you know Frank, he's very serious," Slive said, smiling. "He made it very clear that St. Louis has a strong interest ..."

The next available tournament is 2017. The SEC hasn't requested proposals, but Slive said the league likes to 'stay five years ahead' on the scheduling and thus likely will seek bids soon.

Other things, such as playing the football title game in Atlanta, won't change in the foreseeable future.

With annual sellouts there and what Slive said was a 20,000-person waiting list for tickets, "It's a formula that one (should) be very careful about tinkering with."

Slive also said he senses no appetite for a move from an eight- to a nine-game conference football schedule.

Other matters remain unclear.

Slive was non-committal on future expansion, and the logical notion that Mizzou and Arkansas will become cross-divisional football rivals apparently isn't set.

"We have to decide how we're going to schedule, and if we're going to have (permanent cross-division games), how they're going to work," he said.

As for the future divisional alignments, Slive said, "People are free to bring their own views and see if they can convince the league to make changes, but I don't anticipate a change right now."

On a wider national matter, Slive said meetings in Dallas on Monday among the 11 conference commissioners of the BCS and Notre Dame were "getting down close to where the rubber meets the road" on the future of how college football resolves its championship.

Slive has been a proponent of the so-called "plus-one" model, essentially a four-team playoff that has been gaining traction and momentum.

He referred to a BCS press release issued Monday: "For example, if we change the current format, would we play some games on campus or all games on neutral sites? If some games are on campus, is that too much of a competitive advantage?"
"If all games are at neutral sites, would fans be able to travel to two games in a row? How would teams be selected? ..."

Summing that up, Slive said, "I characterize this as a marathon, not a sprint. ... But the conversation was much more specific, trying to get our arms around all of the advantages and disadvantages of the whole matrix full of options."

Much like MU and the SEC did last fall before announcing Mizzou's move Nov. 6.

"It was a monumental event, for both of us," Slive said.

No one was arguing otherwise Tuesday.
SEC Commissioner Slive speaks to Missouri fans in Kansas City

Tuesday, March 27, 2012 | 7:27 p.m. CDT
BY James Ayello

KANSAS CITY — For Missouri fans eager to learn more about Missouri’s upcoming move to the Southeastern Conference, Westport Flea Market Bar & Grill in Kansas City was the place to be Tuesday afternoon.

SEC Commissioner Mike Slive was on hand to address the Tiger Club of Kansas City, giving Tigers fans a chance to get a feel for their new conference’s leader and for Slive himself to find out what kind of fans his league just adopted.

In the back of the sports-themed restaurant, Slive spoke and answered questions for almost 40 minutes in front of an jam-packed crowd of more than 300 people that included Kansas City Mayor Sly James, Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden and UM System President Tim Wolfe.

After a rousing 30-second round of applause following Alden’s introduction of Slive, sporting a black tie striped in gold, gave a standard welcome speech complete with a glorified history of both the university and the conference it is joining that most in attendance unabashedly appreciated. Slive even led the gathering in a spirited cheer, loudly pronouncing “M-I-Z” to which the crowd passionately responded “Z-O-U.”

But after the ritual glad-handing and excitement had ended, Slive provided some interesting insight into his conference’s and Missouri’s motivations for teaming up and some of the expectations he has for the SEC in the future.

On why Missouri moved to the SEC

"I think what Missouri was looking for was a home that was stable and a home where it felt comfortable," Slive said, alluding the uncertainties surrounding the rebuilding Big 12 Conference.

On the financial situation Missouri is entering

Slive told the crowd that the SEC has “landmark deals” with ESPN and CBS. ESPN alone has committed for the next 15 years to broadcast on average, about one SEC event per day. As far as Missouri’s incorporation into these deals, Slive said the SEC has begun negotiations with its
television partners and that he is “optimistic that we can make Mike Alden very happy,” to which the crowd responded with roaring laughter.

**On further expansion of the SEC**

"We weren't looking to expand before," Slive said. "We were content with our 12 teams. What made us consider expansion was the quality of institutions" that were available. Slive added that the SEC is not looking to add more teams now and that they are focused on the 14 teams currently in its conference.

**On the chance that sports (such as wrestling) will be added to the SEC**

"Not much," Slive said.

**On potential nonconference opponents for Missouri next season**

"That will be a decision that institutions make," Slive said. "In other words, Mizzou plays the schedule it wants to play. That's not a conference decision."

**On rumors of Arkansas becoming Missouri's cross-division rivals from the SEC West Division**

Slive didn't budge much on this question. In a post-speech interview, Slive commented that future football schedules will be finalized in May during SEC meetings. He also would not comment on how it was decided Missouri would join the East Division of the SEC. In 2012, Missouri is scheduled to play football games against SEC West Division members Alabama and Texas A&M.

**On whether SEC conference championships games will be played in Kansas City**

Slive said there is a chance that could happen, but it won't be anytime soon. The men's conference basketball tournament is booked all the way until 2016-17. Cities such as Kansas City can apply to host for the next season. As far as football, Slive made it clear he thinks the conference championship game won't be played anywhere but Atlanta for the foreseeable future. Atlanta has successfully hosted this game since 1994.

**On a nine-game conference football schedule**

"It is an interesting discussion ... but as of now, there has been no interest in our league to go to nine." Slive said.

**On individual television networks for SEC schools**

"Our institutions cannot go ahead and have their own networks," Slive said, addressing a question about the Longhorn Network that the University of Texas recently created.
By the end of Slive's speech, it felt very much like the Missouri faithful had become ardent fans of the commissioner. His references to Missouri's long-standing traditions like the whisper walk and declaring his affection for Shakespeare's Pizza certainly helped.

As long as Missouri's transition continues to progress smoothly and the university prospers from its newly formed bond, Slive and his conference appear to have at least 300 new fans.
SEC's Slive visits Mizzou boosters in KC

BY VAHE GREGORIAN | Posted: Tuesday, March 27, 2012 3:38 pm | (1) comments.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — In a visit with several hundred Mizzou boosters in Kansas City on Tuesday, Southeastern Conference commissioner Mike Slive reiterated the SEC's welcome to a standing ovation.

“The energy in this room is phenomenal,” said Slive, adding that if Mizzou fans treat all events with such energy he'd have to warn the rest of the SEC.

In a 45-minute talk and Q-and-A with fans and another 15-minute session with media members, Slive said the SEC is likely to stay with an eight-game league schedule and that the cross-divisional rivalry question for Mizzou has yet to be finalized.

While noting that the football championship game is likely to remain in Atlanta, where there is a 20,000-plus waiting list for tickets, he emphasized that the SEC has and will continue to rotate sites for the basketball tournament.

Kansas City and St. Louis have indicated interest, he said, with St. Louis Sports Commission president Frank Viverito expressing it emphatically in his trip to New Orleans for this season's SEC tournament.

“If you know Frank, he's very serious,” Slive said, smiling. “He made it very clear that St. Louis has a strong interest in having every opportunity.”

The next tournament open is 2017. The SEC has yet to ask for bids.
Increasing number of MU international students brings both benefits, challenges

By Xiaonan Wang
March 27, 2012 | 4:13 p.m. CDT

More international students are coming to MU. For the fall 2011 semester, the most popular degree programs included economics, journalism, computer science and business administration. The number of international undergraduates for nondegree programs rose to 124 in 2011 from 56 in 2010.

COLUMBIA — Early this semester, Charles Davis, an associate professor at the Missouri School of Journalism, passed his cell phone around and "built in" each student as a video clip.
Davis did this for a class that includes six international students, one-third of the total students. It helps him remember each student's name and face within two weeks, he said.

After that, he can more easily prompt answers from his international students. He has found in his years of teaching that international students are more reserved about speaking up at the start of the semester.

"They are intimidated, but after a couple of times, I rarely need to do it again," Davis said. "Once you come to a comfort zone, everybody likes to share."

MU has more international students now than it has had since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which led to a decline lasting several years. This past fall, total international student enrollment increased by about 14 percent over fall 2010, for a total of 1,917 international students, according the University Registrar.

Almost 900 of them come from China. Next are South Korea with 208 students and India with 195.

Faculty members say having more international students comes with benefits such as richer classroom experiences, but it also presents challenges in fully communicating the curriculum.

This academic year, the most popular degree programs for international undergraduates are economics, journalism and engineering. Economics and journalism programs continue to see steady growth in numbers of international students:

- The number of journalism majors was 33 in the fall, up from 13 in 2008.
- The number of economics majors was 50 in the fall, up from 32 in 2008.

The fall bump is in nondegree undergraduate programs, in which the number of international undergraduates rose to 124 from 56 a year earlier.

The rise came mostly from a new transfer program in the College of Engineering, which accepted 44 undergraduates from China when it started in the fall, said Rebecca Brandt, associate director of admissions for MU.

Davis said he wouldn't mind if, one day, half or even two-thirds of his students come from foreign countries because they enrich his classes.

"It's incredibly helpful to a bunch of middle-class, suburban Midwesterners to surround them with people with different backgrounds," Davis said. "The world is becoming more interconnected out there."

Peter Mueser, who teaches capstone courses in economics, said international students sometimes bring more depth to his economics lectures.
"Chinese students are more aware of the China's economic development and trade patterns," he said.

Mueser said he is not feeling the presence of more international students in his classes, but regardless, the curriculum should not be changed to accommodate them.

"The international students are here because of the kind of education we are providing," he said.

Markita Price teaches a large beginning programming class in the Department of Computer Science, and Karon Speckman teaches fundamental news writing class in the School of Journalism. Both said that some international students have difficulty meeting academic requirements and that it's hard for professors to make changes without support from the administration.

Price said many transfer students studying engineering are not fully informed about the language proficiency requirements of classes needed to earn a major. They usually have to take two or three more semesters for language training before they are qualified to take fundamental major courses.

Price said she sometimes has trouble communicating with international students. Her biggest concern is that she doesn't know whether the students fully comprehend what she is talking about.

"It's very difficult to know whether the comprehension is there," Price said. "In some cases, the student doesn't want to reveal that there is some misunderstanding."

Price said she posts her slides and notes more often than in the past, and she is going to record lectures. She already maintains more than eight office hours per week.

If MU could test students' verbal communication ability before admission, it would give the school a better idea of the students' qualifications, Price said.

"Online chatting is a wonderful idea," she said. Price noted that colleges and universities across the country do this.

Speckman said that international students are generally not ready to learn deadline writing when they arrive at MU and that the school administration needs to do something about it.

"The administration doesn't tell us we should treat international students any differently," Speckman said. "They tell us we need to bring them up to the same level. That's easy for them to say. They are not teaching the class."

"That puts the international students in a very bad position,"

Speckman suggested the administration add a prewriting course into international students' curriculum that has a slower pace and smaller settings.
The school administrators really need to think about how to balance the needs of maintaining traditional values of accuracy and speed and the needs of international students, Speckman said.

"We are not going to bring students in, take their money, but not give them what they need to get out of here," Speckman said. "It's unethical."

The Journalism School recently set up the minimum requirements of TOEFL and IELTS speaking test scores. Applicants who do not meet these criteria are not considered. In the past, the school set criteria only for the total scores of these tests.

This spring, the College of Engineering started a seminar meant to help international students feel more comfortable communicating with U.S. students, Jill Ford, international program director of the college, said. More than 35 American students were invited to the workshop, joining the international students in small groups for better conversation and interactivity, Ford said.

"This welcoming event is a positive move we've done to help international students," Ford said. "This also gives American students opportunities to get involved in this effort."
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI > System names new chief of staff • Robert Schwartz, current interim provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs at Missouri University of Science and Technology, has been named chief of staff for the University of Missouri System, UM President Tim Wolfe has announced.

Schwartz also will serve as the custodian of records for the UM system, coordinate with the Office of Strategic Communications and serve as a liaison with general officers and the board of curators. He will begin his duties Monday. Schwartz joined Missouri S&T in May 2002 as professor of ceramic engineering and later became the associate chair of the department and served as faculty senate president.
Iraqi Universities Reach a Crossroads

Ambitious plans for reform could be thwarted by sectarian politics.

Jamal Penjweny, Novus Select, for The Chronicle

The U. of Baghdad and other Iraqi universities are benefiting from bigger budgets and the return of refugee academics. But Sunnis and secular Shiites worry that academic standards and freedoms are still threatened by sectarianism and religious and political ideology.

By Ursula Lindsey

MU MENTION P. 3

Eight years after the U.S. invasion of Iraq and a few months after the withdrawal of the military forces from the country, Iraq's universities, devastated by years of dictatorship, sanctions, and war, are still struggling to recover. The security situation has improved since the deadly, dark days of 2006 and 2007, when the country teetered on the brink of sectarian war, hundreds of professors were assassinated, and thousands more fled the country.

Today some of those refugee scholars have returned. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has a bigger budget and new, ambitious plans. Iraqi universities are looking to the outside world, hoping that international partnerships will help them reform their curricula.
and retrain their staffs. The government is investing more in public scholarship programs to send thousands of graduate students to study abroad and make up the country's new teaching cadres.

On the other hand, Iraqi universities remain highly centralized, politicized, and in need of systemic reform. The country is ruled by parties representing Iraq's Shiite majority, which was discriminated against under Saddam Hussein. But today, Sunnis and secular Shiites worry that academic standards and freedoms are still threatened by sectarianism and religious and political ideology—just in reverse. They complain of discrimination and say that university appointments are being made on the basis of religious affiliation and political connections rather than academic qualifications.

"Before, the Baath Party was controlling all universities, and you had to be a high party official to be university president or dean," says Nadje Al-Ali, a professor of gender studies at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, who has worked on several efforts to connect Iraqi academics with their counterparts in the region. "Now each political party controls a university—the only pluralism is the plurality of dictatorial parties that are using the same methods to exert control."

For many, a climate of fear persists. In recent months, two female academics have reportedly received anonymous threats for not wearing the hijab, or headscarf. The higher-education ministry has replaced presidents and deans at many universities, and fired hundreds of university employees for having ties to Hussein's disbanded Baath Party. Nearly every Iraqi academic interviewed for this article asked to remain anonymous, citing fears of physical harm or of retaliation from their superiors.

Political and Academics

Political and sectarian fault lines, in fact, dominate every aspect of the country's public life today.

Ali al-Adeeb, the higher-education minister, is a polarizing figure among both Sunnis and secular Shiites. He is a high-ranking member of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki's Islamic Dawa (or Islamic Call) Party, which has a religious, pro-Shiite ethos.

Since coming into office in 2011, Mr. al-Adeeb has made a number of controversial decisions, including recognizing the degrees of graduates of Iranian religious universities as equivalent to those of Iraqi universities and firing hundreds of ministry and university employees for having ties to the Baath Party.

Some say that such de-Baathification efforts, eight years after Saddam's ouster, are just politically motivated personnel changes. Last October, after 144 employees of Tikrit University were fired, President Ali Saleh Hussein resigned in protest. "Those affected by this decision have professional qualification that are difficult to replace: removing such a large number of employees prevents the university from carrying out its basic mission," Mr. Hussein said in an interview with the pan-Arab Al-Hayat newspaper in October. The president complained of
constant pressure and interference from the higher-education ministry, and of implied sectarian quotas that "cast their shadows over every institution in the country, including the university."

The ministry has also overseen major changes in administrative personnel, replacing deans and presidents with people who, critics say, have links to the parties in the ruling Shiite coalition.

But during a recent visit to Washington, Mr. al-Adeeb defended his ministry's actions, saying it had removed administrators "who abused their authority," were connected to the former regime, or were no longer effective. The allegation that the ministry is pushing a political agenda "is only propaganda," said Mr. al-Adeeb. "Because I belong to the Dawa party they think I only bring people from the Dawa party. This is not true."

Zuhair Humadi, executive director of the Iraq Education Initiative, which sends Iraqi students to pursue graduate degrees abroad, says the complaints are just sour grapes: "Unfortunately, changes occur, and people who are at the losing end of it will make all sorts of accusations that they are discriminated against."

A professor who asked to be identified by the pseudonym Amir teaches engineering at a university in Baghdad that has recently seen widespread personnel changes. "The deans who were replaced were outstanding scientists," he says, "who served the university for many years. Instead of being tenured they were replaced by people who are not qualified."

"The Ministry of Education has to be independent and not be with any political party in Iraq," says Mr. Amir. "It has to be secular. There are many Iraqis who want to get the wheel spinning: political interference slows us down. Give us an independent university, and you'll see what Iraqi scientists can do."

Mr. al-Adeeb says making universities more autonomous is one of his priorities. In 2011, he says, he instituted changes giving institutions greater control over their budgets, international agreements, and admission procedures.

Several professors and administrators The Chronicle spoke with defended the higher-education ministry, saying it was working to improve conditions at universities and that it was less politicized than other parts of the government. In fact, opinions on the situation at Iraqi universities tend to be starkly divided, and not just along sectarian lines, although often so.

Hayder Touran Assafli and Ahmad, two Iraqi graduate students studying abroad, have diametrically opposed views of the state of higher education in their home country. Mr. Assafli is pursuing a master's degree in electrical engineering at the University of Missouri on a full scholarship from the Iraqi Education Initiative. He thinks that at universities back home "everything is falling into place... every year something gets resolved."

Mr. Assafli, who belongs to Iraq's Turkmen minority, graduated at the top of his class from a technical university in Baghdad. But he believes that under Saddam Hussein he would never have had the necessary connections to apply for a government scholarship. "I never expected I could apply for a scholarship online and be accepted," he says.
Ahmad, who asked to go by a pseudonym, is pursuing a doctoral degree abroad and has a much gloomier view. Family and friends tell him, "It's not good to come back. It's getting worse day after day," he says. Specifically, it's getting worse for Sunni Muslims—like Ahmad—Iraq's once-ruling religious minority. "They are trying to push out of the Iraqi education system and all other public sectors," he says.

Ahmad says when he worked at his university he was asked to fill out extensive bibliographical forms that were designed, he believes, to ascertain his religious sect.

_A Lost Generation in Academe_

Politics, though, is just one stumbling block in Iraq's pursuit of higher-education reform. After Saddam Hussein's Baathist regime took power in 1968, it poured huge amounts of the country's oil revenue into higher education. Iraqi professors and scientists pursued degrees abroad, and the country's university system—despite political repression—acquired a reputation as one of the region's most modern and dynamic.

But during the 1990s an estimated 10,000 Iraqi academics left the country as salaries plummeted and universities were crippled by sanctions imposed on Hussein's regime. After the 2003 invasion many universities were looted—some lost their entire libraries—and in the years that followed, universities were able to function only intermittently. Several thousand more professors went into exile to escape political and sectarian violence. It was often the most senior, visible academics who were threatened.

The recent improvement in security conditions, wrote Mr. al-Adeeb in an e-mail to The Chronicle, has allowed Iraqi universities to regain "their capacity to grow and develop." Approximately 100,000 undergraduate students and 4,500 graduate students are enrolled in 25 public universities today (and another 100,000 students in the semiautonomous Kurdish region).

The Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund estimates that about a third of the threatened academics whom it helped leave the country in recent years have returned.

Another Iraqi professor who asked to use only a fictitious first name, Ali, is back at his old university in Baghdad. He had fled the country several years ago after receiving threatening letters from a militia group.

"Nowadays they are trying to supply the colleges with what they need," he says. "They are starting real rebuilding." His department asked for several million dollars worth of new equipment last year, he says, and received more funds than it had requested. And his university has set up quality-assurance and international-accreditation units.

Yet Ali requested anonymity because of his fear that any sort of public profile could attract unwanted attention.

"The problem is not related to academia," he says. "It's a pure security problem. The country is not calm until now. There are people thinking in a twisted way. All the people who want to
speak, want to keep their names secret. Famous people are afraid of being kidnapped. Nobody wants to attract any attention."

Others complain that the general shift toward social conservatism and religious militancy that has swept Iraqi society has overtaken universities.

"There is a struggle between religious and liberal thought on campuses," says a young female Iraqi academic who asked not to be identified. "Islamists think they have the upper hand and the right to monitor and control others, which makes it hard for liberals to present their ideas without fear."

Although violence has receded from university campuses, in recent months suicide bombers have targeted pilgrims and police cadets in devastating attacks. Still, says Ali, when he left Iraq, "you were at risk 80 percent of the time and safe 20 percent." Now it's the opposite. "Sometimes I feel professors outside Iraq have no idea what's going on here," he says. "It's not very quiet, it's not very calm. But it's going well. We are graduating students. Our system is OK. I see Iraqi [expatriate] professors talking on TV and I think they are too negative. If they return, I think they can help."

Despite the return of professors like Ali, Iraq has lost a generation of academics. Many of those who left are elderly now and are unlikely to come back. Some say that—despite official entreaties to return—their posts have been filled and they aren't really welcome anymore. And those who stayed, cut off for decades from the outside world, teach using antiquated materials and methods. They are often unable or unwilling to embrace reform.

"My challenge was with the staff. They didn't like to change," says Abdul Razak al-Essa, who served as president of the University of Kufa until 2010. He says the hardest part of his job was convincing faculty members that they needed to do more than deliver a few lectures—that they should have office hours, carry out research, and teach through seminars and workshops rather than "just by writing on the blackboard and reading to the students."

Lecturers' salaries have risen at least 200 percent to as much as $3,000 a month. And since 2003, the number of Iraqi faculty members has increased from 13,000 to over 36,000, says Yahya al-Kubaisi, an Iraqi researcher who now works with an education think tank in Jordan.

But this increase in quantity does not necessarily entail one in quality, argues Mr. al-Kubaisi, who has written several research papers critical of Iraq's higher-education-reconstruction strategies. "Most of faculty are inexperienced master's-degree holders who graduated inside Iraq," he says. Some reportedly have only bachelor's degrees.

Mr. al-Kubaisi also believes that the international community has neglected higher education in Iraq—committing a small fraction of the funds international groups had estimated would be necessary to rebuild the sector. He argues that the ministry of higher education spends a disproportionate amount of its budget on operational costs rather than on rebuilding the labs, libraries, and other facilities that universities desperately need.
Of the ministry's 2012 budget of $2.6-billion (2.6 percent of the national budget), he notes, 84 percent will go to operational costs and only 16 percent to capital investments.

Mr. al-Adeeb says that one of his biggest challenges is the ministry's limited budget, which "is very small in relation to what Iraqi higher education needs." One of the solutions, the minister suggested, is to encourage the private sector to invest in universities.

**Looking outward**

In its latest strategic plan, Mr. al-Adeeb's ministry announced it will create 15 specialized regional universities focused on fields like petroleum studies, applied engineering, environmental studies, agriculture, and medicine. The creation of these future universities and the reform of existing ones depends to a large degree on foreign assistance.

"We have a great knowledge gap created over the past three decades," Mr. al-Adeeb said in an e-mail, "and it is the moral mission of the developed world to help us to increase the speed of scientific development in Iraq."

Iraqi universities are being encouraged to seek out foreign partners to help them train staff and overhaul their curricula. While Mr. al-Essa headed the University of Kufa, it established a partnership with the University of Leicester, in England, to update the curriculum of the college of medicine and a link with the University of Kentucky to overhaul the departments of civil engineering, business, and English.

"Before 2003 we didn't have any links to universities outside Iraq," he says. "Now we have to depend on the people from outside Iraq. We see how they do their lectures, the books they are using." (See related article, Page A17.)

In the last year in Iraq "there has been movement forwards," says Jim Miller, executive director of the Scholar Rescue Fund. "There is more openness to other countries, more interest in training programs."

But partnerships are still dogged by security and logistical problems.

His university is exploring a number of foreign partnerships, says Mohammed Jabir Ali, president of the elite technical Al Nahrain University, in Baghdad. But they are purposely proceeding by "turtle steps."

"The president before me established so many initiatives, but it never worked out," says Mr. Ali. "The projects were not studied very well; the people in charge were not serious enough; there were timing and cultural differences, and very little follow-up."

Most partnerships remain concentrated in the semi-independent enclave of Kurdistan, which has been much safer and more stable than the rest of the country and which has seen a boom in new public and private universities.
Salahaddin University, in Kurdistan, has over 80 agreements with universities around the world, says Mohammed Aziz Saeed, director of academic relations. "We are now developing very fast in the higher-education sector," he says. "We are open to the rest of the world."

One of Salahaddin's most important partnerships is with the University of Cincinnati and includes the establishment of a career center, faculty exchanges, and reviewing the Kurdish university's English-language and economics curricula.

Public Relations?

But some argue that trying to reform higher education through foreign partnerships is a piecemeal solution.

"These programs are just a kind of public relations," says Mr. al-Kubaisi, the higher-education researcher. Sending a few dozen Iraqi academics for a few weeks' training in the United States is not enough to change the methodologies and practices of entire departments, he argues. He notes that the funds involved are often very modest and that the universities don't usually carry out impact studies.

"The main thing that needs to be done is to discuss the whole system," says Mr. al-Kubaisi. "All these actions and partnerships and talk about reform will amount to nothing if we don't talk about decentralization ... about the independence of universities, about funding. We try to make small changes in the procedures and not in the whole system, and that is the problem."

Another important thrust to Iraq's reform efforts is the plan to send thousands of Iraqi graduate students, like Mr. Assafli, to study and catch up on the latest scientific advances abroad. "The whole strategy depends on the people who will come from outside," says Mr. al-Essa, the former University of Kufa president.

Kurdish authorities have allocated $100-million and the Iraqi ones $350-million to send 10,000 students each to pursue graduate studies abroad.

For Iraqi students at American and other foreign universities, different teaching methodologies take getting used to. Mr. Assafli remembers a professor explaining to him that he should use a reference sheet of formulas during his exams, rather than memorize them. "He said it wasn't cheating. What matters is using the formulas."

"It's more of a critical thinking way of education," says Kawther Khalid Ahmed, who is studying pharmaceutics at the University of Iowa. "They are not testing you on materials they want you to memorize. Classes and applied research are integrated. In Iraq there's a fixed curriculum—here it's more of a selection."

Ms. Ahmed graduated third in her class from Baghdad's College of Pharmacy in 2004, but says that without a foreign degree she would have to wait many years to advance in Iraq's seniority-based university system.
When she returns home, she would like to see "more chances to people who really want to work regardless of who graduated first and is older," and "more advanced labs and more advanced technology. I know we might not be able to involve these technologies in our work for 10 years, but we need to at least be aware of them." At Iraqi universities, says Mr. Assafì, "the problem isn't money—but knowing what to buy for the labs, and how to use them."

The Iraqi government has repeatedly announced its intention to send thousands of students abroad, starting in 2005. But the scholarship program has run into many problems, like little assistance for students navigating the admission process, complicated bureaucracy and problems obtaining visas, and poor financial and logistical support for students once they are abroad. There are two different programs at the moment—one run by the higher-education ministry, another by the prime minister's office. So far, only about 1,500 students have traveled abroad on both programs combined.

"There is a big push to send students abroad, but the quality of applications is still very problematic," says Kate Robertson, Iraq program manager for the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics. The future of higher education in Iraq will be "a battle between those who do manage to get out and do manage to come back with good ideas and methods, and the quality that is spiraling down" in the country, adds Ms. Robertson.

Many Iraqis share Ms. Robertson's concern and a sense of urgency about putting their universities back on the right track.

"My country went from war to war, and there was no time for education," says Mr. Assafì, the Iraqi student at the University of Missouri. "Now is the time."

*Ian Wilhelm contributed to this article from Washington.*
McCarthy to build $75 million boiler on MU campus

McCarthy Building Companies Inc. is replacing a coal-fired boiler with a new $75 million biomass-fired boiler on the University of Missouri campus in Columbia, Mo.

Overland Park, Kansas-based Sega Inc. will provide the design for the project. McCarthy will build the boiler through a joint venture with CB&E Construction Group of St. Louis.

Construction on the new boiler includes structural restoration of two chimneys, demolition of the coal-fired boiler, construction of a new fuel storage facility and expansions to the existing boiler house. The upgrade will cause minimal disruptions to the existing power plant, which will remain operational during construction.

The campus power plant is responsible for supplying power to nearly 15 million square feet of space, which includes two hospitals, a research reactor and several research facilities. The project will put less emissions in the air and reduce the use of fossil fuels, the company said. McCarthy said the biomass boiler will use more than 100,000 tons of biomass fuel to reduce fossil fuel use by 25 percent.

“We feel that this is a great project for the University of Missouri and that they should be commended for their commitment to energy reduction and sustainability,” McCarthy Project Director Mark Smith, said in a statement.

The new biomass boiler should be operational in the Fall.

St. Louis-based McCarthy Building Companies Inc. is led by President and COO Derek Glanvill. The company reported revenue of $2.4 billion in 2011.
Learning drives new community garden at MU

By Elizabeth Laubach

March 26, 2012 | 4:01 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA -- At the future site of MU's first campus community garden, a ladybug slowly crawls from under Chris Murakami's leg. As he explains the benefits of ladybugs in gardens, he calls the beetle's appearance "a sign of good luck."

The Child Development Lab, a day care center near Memorial Union that is also a learning incubator for undergraduates in various degree programs from education to nutritional sciences, will be the primary user of the MU Children's Learning Garden south of the greenhouse near Curtis Hall. *The lab is part of the department of human development and family studies within the College of Human Environmental Sciences at MU.

"I think we live in an industrialized food society. That has had an impact on the way we live our lives and our relationship with food, and the way we educate our children," Murakami said.

An informal coalition of students and faculty interested in community gardens on campus, spearheaded by Murakami, gathers at 9:30 a.m. Fridays in Room 105, Gentry Hall, to cultivate interest in community gardens on campus.

"It's very easy to say we care, but too easy to not take action," Murakami said.

Members of Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture, the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will join Murakami and some children from the Child Development Lab to do some garden work* on Friday. They will be building raised beds and moving soil on a small garden plot close to the larger site.

Work on the larger garden will begin after a bit more planning and fundraising occurs to pay for the cost of building and materials, which has not been finalized.

Murakami, a doctoral student studying science education, has been working with MU students, faculty, staff and administrators to establish a community garden on campus for personal as well as academic reasons.

Murakami said he believes connecting with nature and growing food are important for students and children.
Including children in gardening is just one mission of this garden. Murakami worked for a year and a half to put his idea into a plan approved by Campus Facilities and the Office of Sustainability.

Jessie Bradley, director of the Child Development Lab, sees the importance in helping children understand the value of natural foods and where food comes from at an early age. Children ages 2 1/2 to 5 will use the garden the most. She talked about instilling sensory memories in children, like the smells and textures of plants and digging in the soil.

“There’s less and less natural smells; now people’s memories are based on plastic, like opening the wrapping of a Barbie doll,” Bradley said. “The early childhood years are the foundation for their future learning. The more you expose children to, they will have a stronger foundation to build upon.”
Guest commentary: A mandate too far

By Joshua D. Hawley | Posted: Wednesday, March 28, 2012 12:00 am | (0) comments.

Joshua D. Hawley is an associate professor at the University of Missouri School of Law and former clerk to Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.

NO MU MENTION

When Chief Justice John Marshall handed down the U.S. Supreme Court’s first decision on the Commerce Clause in 1824, he held that the federal government’s authority over interstate commerce was capacious, but not unlimited. The very fact that the Constitution’s framers chose to enumerate the powers that would belong to the federal government, he said, “presupposes something not enumerated” — some powers not given. Thus the Commerce Clause, for all its breadth, could not be a general grant of power to regulate just anything. Based on arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court this week, we will find out if that is still true.

The Supreme Court is hearing oral argument in a suit brought by a group of states (and private businesses and individuals) challenging the individual mandate in President Barack Obama’s health care reform. The states argue that the mandate is unconstitutional because it exceeds Congress’ authority to regulate interstate commerce. They can win only if John Marshall was right in 1824 regarding the scope of the Commerce power. He was. And they should.

The health insurance market in America is, of course, notoriously complex and inefficient, not to mention frequently unfair. President Obama’s Affordable Care Act may or may not be good policy, but it is surely not unconstitutional simply because it seeks to reorganize that market in some fashion.

But the act goes beyond regulating how corporate entities, like insurance companies and state governments, operate in the insurance market. It goes beyond regulating private individuals who buy insurance. The act regulates even private individuals who do not wish to participate in the insurance market by commanding them to do so or pay a fine. And that’s the problem.

Telling individuals they must purchase health insurance is not a regulation of interstate commerce. The word for commerce comes from two Latin words, "com" which means "together with," and "mercis" or "mercedis," which means something like "pay, salary, income, bribe or goods." At the time the Constitution was drafted, "commerce" meant approximately the buying and selling of merchandise, while "interstate commerce" meant buying and selling across state lines. It does not take a legal scholar to see that an individual’s decision not to purchase health insurance does not amount to the buying or selling of anything.
To be sure, since Chief Justice Marshall's 1824 decision on the scope of the Commerce Clause, the Supreme Court has interpreted the commerce power to cover a range of activity beyond mere purchase or sale of goods. Still, even at its most permissive, the court always has required that individual behavior regulated under the Commerce Clause bear at least two indicia. The behavior must be economic — related to the sale, production, or consumption of some good or service — and it must be some sort of activity that is capable, when aggregated with other similar conduct by other people, of generating market effects.

But a person's choice not to purchase health insurance is neither of those things. It is not truly economic; it doesn't involve the sale, production or consumption of anything. Nor is it, strictly speaking, activity. The decision not to purchase health insurance is non-activity. The court has never said that Congress has the power to regulate that.

And for good reason. If the Commerce Clause authorizes government to force private citizens to buy health insurance they do not want, why not tomatoes, or cars or dishwashers? More important still: If the Commerce Clause allows the government to regulate a citizen who is not participating in commerce, what may it not do? On the government's interpretation, the Commerce Clause becomes a plenary power to regulate.

And that returns us to the fundamental insight of John Marshall. As Marshall understood, ours is a government of enumerated powers, not general ones. This design was no accident. Even as the Constitution's drafters created a national government powerful enough to bind together a continental nation, they were keenly aware that such a potent state might swallow up civil society and invade citizens' rights. The framers' solution was to give the federal government only specific and limited powers.

Much has changed in the intervening years, but the need to secure the national good while protecting society and the individual has not. The best means for striking this balance, right at the heart of democratic liberty, is the one the framers designed. Marshall was right: The Commerce Clause was not written as a grant of plenary authority. It should not be converted into one now. The individual mandate must fall.
MINEOLA, N.Y. — Students taking college entrance exams this fall will have to submit photo IDs with their applications — a key security upgrade following a widespread cheating scandal at a number of high schools on New York’s Long Island, a prosecutor and testing officials announced Tuesday.

The security change is one of a number of initiatives following the arrest of 20 current or former high school students accused in a cheating scheme. Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice said some of the students were paid as much as $3,500 to stand in for other students on the SAT exam, a key barometer for many colleges determining admissions.

She said 50 students were likely involved in the scheme, but she only had evidence to arrest 20. The prosecution cases against the 20 students are still pending.

Rice complained that security procedures were too lax and was particularly incensed when she learned that one male student allegedly stood in for a female on one occasion. She said students have easy access to phony identification cards, making it difficult for administrators at testing sites to determine if a student is actually who he or she claims to be.

"These reforms close a gaping hole in standardized test security that allowed students to cheat and steal admissions offers and scholarship money from kids who play by the rules," Rice said.

During the 2010-11 school year, the SAT was administered to nearly three million students worldwide; 1.6 million students took the ACT in 2011.
The new testing requirements include making students upload a photograph of themselves when they register for the SAT or ACT. Those unable to upload a photo will be permitted to mail in a photo, which will be scanned by the testing agency.

Then, an admission ticket into the testing site, containing the scanned photo, will be mailed to the student.

The photo will not only be printed on the admission ticket but on the test site roster and can be checked against the photo ID a student provides at the test center. That photo will be attached to students' scores as they are reported to high schools and colleges.

Other changes include checking student IDs more frequently at test centers; IDs will be checked when students enter a test site, whenever they re-enter the test room after breaks and again when the answer sheets are collected.

Testing companies also may conduct "spot checks" with enhanced security at random test locations or where cheating is suspected. Proctors also will receive additional training to help them identify cheaters and high school and college officials will receive more information about reporting suspected cheating to testing companies.
SHOW ME THE RECORDS: Missouri public school dropout rates available online

Wednesday, March 28, 2012 | 12:01 a.m. CDT
BY Garrett Evans

NO MU MENTION

Each week, the Missourian highlights a government record that is available to the public. Open records help people keep government in check and help them better understand how government affects their lives.

For a complete list of Show Me the Records, go to columbia missourian.com/records.

The records: The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education dropout rates in each school district.

Why you'd want them: The data compares the dropout rate in specific school districts including student demographics and compares them to Missouri averages.

Where you get the records: Go to dese.mo.gov/planning/profile/010093.html, and then search for "Dropouts."

How much the information will cost: The information is free.