

Diversity, MU budget discussed at the Spring General Faculty Meeting

By Breanna Dumbacher

April 18, 2012 | 10:08 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA – MU faculty members are working to develop future plans for the university, including ones for the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative and MU's budget.

About 35 MU faculty members met at the Spring General Faculty Meeting on Wednesday.

Past and projected enrollment was the first topic of discussion. MU Chancellor Brady Deaton said that MU currently educates 25 percent of students in Missouri who receive higher education degrees and the total number of enrolled students continues to grow.

This year MU has 2,087 full-time faculty and instructors, according to the university's website. That figure excludes employees of MU Health Care and international visiting faculty.

Diversity at MU

Deaton said the enrollment of minority students has been increasing. According to the MU Division of Enrollment Management, in 2011 there was an increase of 211 African American, 45 Asian and 95 Hispanic students and 182 students of multiple races from 2010. In this same year, the total number of undergraduate students increased by 1,123.

Deputy Chancellor Michael Middleton said there have also been more reports of bullying and harassment, based on a 2009 campus climate survey. One major form of this harassment, Middleton said, was cyber-bullying. Middleton thinks the increase in such reports is the result of tension between different groups of people.

In response to the growing tension, a program is being created to address the promotion of "civility" on campus. Noel English, the director of MU Equity for the Chancellor's Diversity Initiative, will head the effort.

English said the results of the 2009 campus climate survey showed that all types of groups, not only minorities, sometimes felt discriminated against at MU.

"It's not just the minority people that are feeling harassed," she said. "It's the atheists. It's the conservatives. It's all sorts of people." The program will set out to create events and discussions at both the campus and classroom levels that address MU's goal to celebrate diversity and prevent discrimination. English hopes faculty, staff and students will work to do their parts to contribute to this plan.

"The idea is we want every unit to think about what it means to them," English said.

The MU budget

MU Budget Director Tim Rooney sees the increasing enrollment numbers as a form of revenue. Rooney also said that enrollment in online classes contributes to tuition revenue.

Faculty Council Chairman Harry Tyrer said the Faculty Council was working on definitions and budgets for these online classes, especially in light of the UM System discussions of a eLearning portal. Currently, 55 percent of revenue from online classes goes to the unit the class is under, 25 percent goes to Mizzou Online and 20 percent goes to the provost's office, Tyrer said. These percentages are being looked at, he said, to make them compatible with that of regular classes.

Tuition revenue, along with state appropriations, which Rooney said are \$13 million dollars lower than last year's funds, are helping to offset costs in next year's budget.

Some of these costs include a proposed 2 percent merit-based salary increase for MU faculty and projects including the construction of a patient care tower for MU Health Care, which will cost \$203 million, and the renovation of Gwynn Hall, which will cost \$12 million. Rooney also discussed plans for Residential Life, Athletics and Health Sciences, which will fund their own projects in order to accommodate rising enrollment.

Reductions in spending also contributed to balancing the budget, Rooney said. One cut that raised questions among faculty was that of the "managing innovation" division in the Mizzou Advantage program. This program brings faculty together to discuss topics including food of the future, media of the future, health and renewable energy. The cut saved the program \$350,000. Wilma King, director of the MU Black Studies Program, asked how this cut would affect MU and how it would be made up for. Brian Brooks, associate dean of the School of

Journalism, said that the program was not eliminated but rather it was folded into the four other facets of the program.

Other questions addressed by faculty include the future of the bus transportation system on campus and how outside funding will be defined.

Deaton said he didn't not have comprehensive answers to these questions as of Wednesday's meeting. Transportation was still being discussed, and Deaton said he would look into the definition of the funding and bring it up at a meeting on Thursday.

The meeting will be from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the Mark-Twain Ballroom of Memorial Union and is meant to discuss the strategic plan for MU.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Residency a priority for some MU students with non-Missouri origins

By Breanna Dumbacher

April 18, 2012 | 11:29 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — As a high school senior, Jennifer Birdsall had a plan: After her freshman year in college, she would travel to Africa for six weeks with a group of students to volunteer at an orphanage.

Birdsall had been thinking about the trip throughout high school. During her first year at MU, she went ahead and bought plane tickets. Everything seemed to be falling into place.

But there was a big snag.

Birdsall, now a sophomore, is from Dallas. **When she decided to attend MU, she knew she might have to gain Missouri residency after her first year. To do this, Birdsall would have to fulfill several requirements, including living in the state for 12 consecutive months, make \$2,000 in that time and work during the summer.**

Her parents had not made a final decision on the matter, though, and Birdsall hoped she would be able to go to Africa as planned. However, when her parents got the bill for her first semester, they told her she had to stay in Missouri and postpone her trip.

In the face of rising tuition, many out-of-state students at MU are glad to have the option to become Missouri residents and thus pay lower in-state tuition. There has long been a significant difference in what residents and nonresidents pay, and the gap will widen again this summer when new tuition increases take effect.

In February, the UM System Board of Curators voted to increase out-of-state tuition by 7.5 percent and in-state tuition by 3 percent at MU effective this summer.

With this increase, the financial pressure placed on out-of-state students continues to build. Administrators do not see this rise in tuition as a change that will have a large impact on MU enrollment.

Still competitive

Speaking on behalf of MU Office of Admissions, spokesman Christian Basi said the numbers of nonresident applications and admissions have been rising steadily. For the coming fall, MU has more applications from out-of-state students than from Missouri residents, according to data released in February.

Basi said that in the past, increases in tuition and application fees have not resulted in a "significant" decrease in the number of applicants and admissions, according to the MU Division of Enrollment Management. Strong academic programs, along with tuition rates that are competitive among similar flagship schools, will continue to draw students from Missouri and beyond, he said. Nikki Krawitz, vice president for finance and administration for the University of Missouri System, said its out-of-state tuition rates are still competitive, relative to other public universities in the states surrounding Missouri.

This fall, tuition for an out-of-state undergraduate at MU will be \$8,876.40 for a student taking 12 credit hours. The same course load for in-state students will cost \$3,232.80. Last fall, MU out-of-state tuition was \$8,257.20 for the same number of hours. Here's how public universities in some bordering states stacked up against MU for a student taking 12 credit hours in the spring of this school year, according to the universities' registrar websites:

- University of Illinois, \$12,623 for 2011-12
- University of Iowa, \$11,885 for 2011-12
- University of Kansas, \$8,700 for 2011-12
- University of Tennessee, \$8,421 for 2011-12
- University of Oklahoma, \$7,609.80 for 2011-12
- University of Nebraska, \$7,413 for 2011-12

"We fall in the middle of the pack," Krawitz said, "so we're still a great buy."

Personal decisions

A tuition increase can be a deciding factor on an individual level on whether to attend MU as an out-of-stater. This was the case for Birdsall's friend Micaela Rosinski.

Rosinski, also from Dallas, accompanied Birdsall on their first tour to MU. But when Rosinski saw what out-of-state tuition would cost, she decided MU was not an option for her.

"She knew she couldn't afford that," Birdsall said, "and if it was much higher, I don't know if my parents would have let me go or not."

But then there's the residency option. About 40 percent of out-of-state students who graduate from MU gain residency at some point in their college careers, according to MU's Office of Institutional Research. For Birdsall, the hardest part of the process was finding a job that would give her enough hours to earn the \$2,000 of taxable income required. She had to work full time at the MU Bookstore over winter break and two jobs over the summer to make enough money.

Birdsall said the other requirements to gain residency, including getting a Missouri driver's license and registering to vote, were easy to complete. Even so, she was disappointed that she had to delay her trip to Africa to stay in the state. Freshman Erin Burris also sees giving up a summer as a sacrifice. Burris plans to stay in Columbia this summer to gain residency.

"I think the summer after freshman year is important because after that, you start to do internships and stuff," Burris said. "It kind of felt like it was my last chance to be home and I don't get to be home, but I think it'll be worth it."

She plans to major in journalism, as do three in 10 out-of-state freshmen who attend MU, according to [the MU Division of Enrollment Management](#). Journalism is the top intended major, followed by business, "undeclared" and biological sciences.

In addition to spending her summer away from home, Burris said she had to have a discussion with her father and his lawyer about whether it was worth it to become an emancipated minor — someone younger than 21 who is not claimed as a dependent by her parents for tax purposes. Burris said she would save more money by gaining residency than her parents would save by claiming her.

Even though there are costs, Burris said there also are benefits to staying for the summer. She plans to take a class that will help her get ahead of schedule. Both Burris and Birdsall said that they didn't think the process of gaining residency was too difficult and that knowing they had that option was a factor in helping them choose which college to attend.

"I would not be here right now if I wasn't able to get residency in a year," Birdsall said.



Deadly Cat Disease: Effective Treatment for Bobcat Fever

ScienceDaily (Apr. 18, 2012) — Lone Star ticks, which are notorious carriers of many diseases including cytauxzoonosis, or "bobcat fever," have been spreading across the nation in recent years. **As a result, cats across much of the country are now exposed to the deadly disease. University of Missouri veterinarian Leah Cohn, a small animal disease expert, and Adam Birkenheuer from North Carolina State University, have found an effective treatment for the dangerous disease.**

"Previous treatment methods have only been able to save less than 25 percent of infected cats, but our method, which is now being used by veterinarians across the country, has been shown to save about 60 percent of infected cats," Cohn said. "While that number isn't as high as we'd like due to the deadly nature of the disease, our method is the first truly effective way to combat the disease."

Routinely carried by bobcats and mountain lions, Cohn and Birkenheuer also found that bobcat fever can even infect tigers. All types of cats, but only cats, can catch bobcat fever. Cohn calls the disease the "Ebola virus for cats," saying that it is a very quick and painful death for cats that succumb from the infection. Bobcat fever is easily spread between cats through tick bites, but Cohn and Birkenheuer found that the disease is not readily passed down through birth like malaria and many other protozoan diseases.

"Bobcat fever affects healthy outdoor cats the most, because they are the most likely to get bitten by ticks," Cohn said. "The disease acts very quickly and can kill a cat less than a week after it begins to show signs of being sick, so it is important to get treatment from a veterinarian as soon as the cat appears ill."

Cohn says the best way for cat owners to prevent their cats from catching bobcat fever is to keep them indoors as much as possible. Early symptoms of the disease include sluggishness and refusal to eat. Pet owners who also have dogs should use tick collars, because while dogs are not susceptible to the disease, they can bring infected ticks into contact with house cats. Cohn says tick preventatives for cats also can help, but owners should be sure to check with their veterinarians to make sure they use cat-specific products, as tick collars for dogs can be harmful to cats.

Cohn says her future research involves creating a vaccine to protect cats against bobcat fever. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*, the *Journal of Veterinary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, and the *Journal of Veterinary Parasitology*.

MU veterinarian devises drug therapy for 'bobcat fever'

By Winn Duvall

April 18, 2012 | 8:33 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — **Leah Cohn, professor of veterinary internal medicine**, and Adam Birkenheuer, of North Carolina State University, have discovered a drug combination that effectively treats cytauxzoonosis, or "bobcat fever," a fatal tick-borne disease affecting domestic cats.

Cohn, who has been working on cytauxzoonosis for nearly a decade, and Birkenheuer based their new combination therapy on the knowledge that it had been used successfully in other species with protozoan diseases. The therapy consists of two drugs, an antibiotic and an anti-protozoal drug that is similar to those used to treat malaria.

"It is a commercially available drug, but it is very expensive because it is an anti-malaria drug," Cohn said. "A full liter bottle can cost up to \$1,000, but it would treat a lot of cats."

In Cohn and Birkenheuer's study, 60 percent of infected cats survived with the treatment. Previously, the disease was treated with an anti-protozoal drug that was never investigated to determine its efficacy, Cohn said. Veterinarians also used intravenous fluids, pain-relievers, feeding tubes and blood transfusions to lessen the effects of the disease, but the survival rate was only 25 percent.

"The disease is just absolutely horrible," Cohn said. "Not only do they die and die quickly, but they die a horrible death."

The symptoms, which are vague in the early stage of infection, include lethargy and fever. However, the disease wreaks havoc internally. The protozoa affect macrophage cells, cells involved in immune system responses, causing them to expand and clog blood vessels, Cohn said. This constricts blood flow and leads to organ failure. The parasite can also change form and enter different cells, such as red blood cells. Cytauxzoonosis, a seasonal disease, is most common in the south-central United States. It is also especially prevalent in Springfield,

where three cases a week are not uncommon from April to September, when the weather is most conducive to the ticks that spread it from bobcats to house cats.

Ellen Ratcliff, veterinarian at the Fair Grove Veterinary Service, located 14 miles north of Springfield, has been dealing with cytauxzoonosis since she graduated from veterinary school 11 years ago. Ratcliff assisted Cohn and Birkenheuer with their research by using their treatment and recording the results, allowing them to see how the treatment worked in practice.

"When I first got out of veterinary school, pretty much every cat I saw (with the disease) died," Ratcliff said. "Last year, I think we treated 25 cats, and the majority of them went home." There is no way to track the disease, Cohn said. It doesn't affect humans or food animals, and it is only transmitted by ticks or blood transfusions.

"I tell people all the time that the only way to really prevent this is to keep the cats inside," Ratcliff said. "The odds of inside cats getting ticks are very, very slim."

During the next year, Cohn plans to look at more potential therapies for cytauxzoonosis to see if they will be effective in treating the disease.

"Sixty percent of cats survive, but that means 40 percent die," Cohn said. Zac March, director of eLearning for the University of Missouri System, lost two cats to the disease last year.

"We had one of our cats, one that pretty much rarely went outside, come down with very lethargic symptoms," March said. "The next day was even worse. On the third day, we took her to the veterinary school, and that's when Dr. Cohn diagnosed her with this disease and said that the prognosis wasn't good."

Cohn treated the cat, Jolene, but they just missed the window, March said. A month later, their other indoor cat, Ivan, started showing the same symptoms.

"We went through extreme measures to try to save him, but we lost him in five days," March said. "It seemed very unreal to my wife and I." Despite the tragedy of losing two cats in such a short time span to a seemingly rare disease, March has a positive attitude regarding Cohn's work.

"It's very encouraging to know that Dr. Cohn is on the verge of having good treatment for cats," March said. "It's very promising for cat owners."



Buffett's cancer catch could reignite debate over PSA testing

MU MENTION PAGE 2

By Brian Alexander

Warren Buffett's revelation that his prostate cancer was diagnosed with the help of a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test threatens to reignite controversy that the medical community hoped had been settled last year over the usefulness of the test.

In November, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force issued a draft recommendation that routine PSA testing be dropped, concluding that the benefits of finding cancers did not outweigh the risks of needless biopsies, and overtreatment that could lead to serious complications like impotence and incontinence. They gave PSA testing a "grade D" rating for healthy men of all ages.

That was controversial because, of course, some men have been saved by early detection via PSA screening. Many more men, the expert panel concluded, had unnecessary biopsies and damaging surgeries for cancers that would never have killed them, because the PSA test isn't very good at distinguishing between aggressive and non-aggressive cancers.

What wasn't controversial, however, was the idea of dropping routine PSA testing in men over 75. That 2008 recommendation reasoned that prostate cancers detected in men of such an advanced age were usually slow growing, and that given life expectancies, men that age and older would be much more likely to die of something else.

Now Warren Buffett, 81, who happens to be one of the wealthiest and most famous men in the United States, has received a PSA test that led his doctors to initiate treatment for prostate cancer. It's just the sort of scenario that leads many people to question the guidelines, which drives some experts crazy.

There are always exceptions, explained Dr. Michael Barry, president of the Informed Medical Decisions Foundation and a clinical professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. But the recommendations, especially for men over 75, are still very sound.

“It is hard for men to benefit if they have less than 10 years of life expectancy,” he said. “Now, like Lake Wobegon, we all hope we will do better than the average... But there is strong scientific consensus that harms outweigh the benefits. That does not mean you can’t find an individual who may benefit, it means the number harmed far outweigh the occasional man who does (benefit).”

Dr. Michael LeFevre, co-vice chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, professor of family and community medicine at University of Missouri Columbia, agrees with the risk/benefit argument and says that's why the panel made the recommendation it did.

He added, if an 80-year-old man who read about Buffett came to his office and demanded a PSA test, "what I am going to say to that man is 'I don't recommend screening. The chance you have prostate cancer is very high, somewhere between 25 and 50 percent of men your age have it. The problem is, I can't make you live longer or better by trying to find it. If I screen you, I may find it, but likely you'll suffer complications or even die from effects related to the treatment.'"

The issue is one that pits the individual against the collective numbers. Nobody wants to be that one guy who opted not to be tested only to find out he was the outlier who could have been saved. That’s why Barry and some other experts hedge slightly on the recommendations for younger men, arguing in a *New England Journal of Medicine* opinion piece that “evidence of a possible small but finite benefit from the largest trial would best support a grade C recommendation for men 55 to 69 years of age.”

A grade C is a recommendation against routine screening, but suggests doctors and patients consider it on a case-by-case basis.

But, Barry told msnbc.com, “at some point the chance of doing harm is so great it overwhelms the slender chance of benefitting and although this has been an area of great controversy, there is consensus that after 75, the benefits do not come anywhere close.”

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

McClellan: Campus funding 'fix' gets an 'F' in my book

Bill McClellan • bmcclellan@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8143 | Posted: Wednesday, April 18, 2012 12:00 am | [\(6\) comments.](#)

NO MU MENTION

Should universities be financially rewarded for student retention and graduation rates?

Absolutely not, I would say, unless we reward them for poor retention and graduation rates, which is, of course, the opposite of what we intend to do.

According to a story in Tuesday's newspaper, the newest fad in higher education is called "performance funding." Both Missouri and Illinois are buying into it.

The fad is being pushed by the National Conference of State Legislatures. That ought to be enough to scare anybody. Think of Missouri state Sen. Jason Crowell making flatulence noises into his microphone while opponents are trying to talk. Are these the people we want reforming higher education?

The operative theory behind performance funding is that universities are inefficient. They cost too much money for what we're getting. To fix that problem, we will tie funding to performance. Retain more students. Graduate more students and graduate them in four years.

That seems reasonable unless you think about it.

A good university should set its standards high. There ought to be programs to help kids who want and need help, but the essential fact of life should be that if students don't meet the high standards, they will not be retained. They will be booted out.

I say this as a former bootee.

I flunked out of the University of Illinois. I have never held that against the university.

The university had high standards. It was my responsibility to meet those standards, and I was not a responsible young man.

I wish I could say that wine, women and song were my undoing, but it was mostly beer. Beer and cards. I played a lot of euchre.

The university was totally indifferent to my problems. It was called the Big U, and everybody knew the Big U did not care about individuals. That was a life lesson — the world does not make allowances for people.

By the way, that is one of the things you want a university to do — teach life lessons. Most of the stuff I got in trouble for not learning is stuff I probably would not remember if I had learned.

For instance, I have a vague recollection of staring into a microscope to look at a slide of some cell. Whatever was I trying to learn was probably not vital to my future.

But to learn that the universe is indifferent — that is something worth knowing.

If funding is tied to retention rates, students will learn a false lesson. They will "learn" that the world does make allowances for people. Because, of course, for them it will. You get what you pay for, and if you pay for high retention and graduation rates, that is what you will get.

Standards will inevitably go down. We will devalue public education.

A private school can be exclusive by limiting admissions. After all, if you want to be exclusive, you have to exclude. A private school can be exclusive on the front end.

But a state school ought to be more accessible. Kids ought to have the opportunity to attend a state school. That means a state school has to achieve exclusivity by excluding people after they are admitted.

Flunking out of school is not the end of the world. I am not pretending it is pleasant. It was not. But you learn from it and move on.

That is what I did. After a stint in the military, I went to Arizona State University. I didn't drink beer and play cards. I smoked pot and played Monopoly. My friends and I played so much Monopoly that we didn't need a board. We had it memorized. Somebody would be on the imaginary St. James Place and roll a 10 and we'd all yell, "Atlantic Avenue!" At the time, it seemed like an achievement.

What if the university's funding had been tied to graduation rates? What kind of lesson would I have learned if I had been given a diploma? That memorizing a Monopoly board is a good thing?

Instead, I relearned that the universe is an indifferent place. That is worth relearning.

In those days, Arizona State was not quite as indifferent as Illinois, and I didn't flunk out. But I did poorly. Again, it was depressing. My self-esteem suffered.

Maybe I shouldn't play so much Monopoly, I thought. I cut down on Monopoly and studied a little, and my grades improved. Another lesson.

I did not study hard enough to graduate, and I give Arizona State credit for that. You should only get what you deserve.

That lesson will be lost if we start this so-called performance funding. Lowering standards will not fix higher education.

Recruitment ads by for-profit colleges targeted

Associated Press | Posted: Wednesday, April 18, 2012 10:32 pm | [\(0\) comments.](#)

NO MU MENTION

Where do for-profit colleges get the money they spend on all those highway billboards and television and radio ads?

Mostly from the government, at least indirectly. Federal money, most of it through the financial aid that students get, accounts for up to 90 percent of for-profit colleges' revenue _ even more in some cases if veterans attend the school on the GI bill.

And while figures vary, some institutions spend a quarter or more of their revenue on recruiting, far more than traditional colleges. In some cases, recruiting expenses approach what these institutions spend on instruction.

A recent Senate report on 15 large, publicly traded for-profit education companies said they got 86 percent of their revenue from taxpayers and have spent a combined \$3.7 billion annually on marketing and recruiting.

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, says the connection is clear: "Their marketing budgets are funded by taxpayers."

On Wednesday, Harkin and Kay Hagan, D-N.C., introduced a bill to try to check the flood of advertising, which has particularly targeted Iraq and Afghanistan veterans for the benefits they receive under the new GI Bill. The measure would prohibit colleges of all kinds from using dollars from federal student assistance programs, including the GI Bill, to pay for advertising and recruiting.

The bill would extend a current rule that prohibits federal dollars from being used for lobbying _ though the lobbying budgets of for-profit colleges are tiny compared to what they spend on advertising.

"Today we are sending a strong message to colleges that choose to spend federal dollars on advertising at a time that middle-class students and families are struggling to get ahead: Find the

money for marketing elsewhere, not from taxpayers," said Harkin, chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

The bill faces daunting odds in Congress. But it represents a new tactic in recent efforts by some in Washington to curb aggressive marketing tactics by for-profit schools, particularly toward veterans. Military veterans are particularly attractive recruiting targets because they come with generous federal tuition support and also don't count toward a limit called the "90/10" rule, which requires colleges to get at least 10 percent of their revenue from non-federal sources.

The proposal would forbid GI Bill dollars from being used in marketing, along with funds from other forms of federal student aid such as Pell Grants.

The rule would apply to colleges of all kinds but would mostly affect for-profits. While not-for-profit colleges do more and more advertising and recruiting, Senate backers cited a study showing such expenses typically total no more than 1 percent of revenue. Those colleges also typically get much lower proportions of their revenue from federal student aid, so they wouldn't be constrained.

However, colleges generally resist any efforts from Washington to tell them how to spend their money _ so opposition from traditional universities will make the bill even more of a longshot.

While some smaller higher education groups such as the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers expressed support for the bill, the American Council on Education _ a main group representing all of higher education _ did not. Terry W. Hartle, the senior vice president at the Council, said in a statement Wednesday that the proposal contributes to an important conversation about how to ensure students are not overwhelmed by aggressive marketing tactics but would impose a "very complex set of requirements of all institutions because of a handful of bad actors." He said it was unlikely to be enacted this year.

The Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities, which represents for-profits, called the bill misguided at a time when the country will depend on such schools to help get millions more workers college-level training.

"Legislative proposals like this only create more burdensome regulations affecting our ability to ensure that all Americans have access to a high-quality education," it said.

Another concern: definitions such as "marketing" are so slippery such a law would be hard to apply fairly, said BMO Capital Markets managing director Jeff Silber. He noted, for example, that the Ohio State University football team doesn't get counted as a marketing expense but clearly promotes the school as effectively as any advertising campaign.

Wall Street appeared to agree the bill stood little chance of passing, with stocks of leading for-profit companies such as Apollo Group (parent of the University of Phoenix), Corinthian Colleges Inc., and DeVry Inc. all closing lower but not substantially on a day when the market overall was down.

In fact, Silber said most for-profits have been cutting back in recent years on advertising and recruiting budgets. Still, the business model relies heavily on Web and broadcast ads, billboards and well-staffed call centers to drive enrollment.

"Yes, this would be an issue for everybody (in the sector)," Silber said. "Advertising and selling is a fairly sizable component of the business model," and if spending were limited, "it would limit their growth."

Figures compiled by BMO show that at the largest for-profits marketing expenses average around 22 percent of revenue but range as high as 29 percent at Bridgepoint Education. Bridgepoint's Ashford University got only about 20 percent of its revenue from non-federal sources in 2011. Roughly, a school in that position could conceivably have to reduce its advertising spending by one-third or more if the proposal became law.

So if the proposal ever became law, the company and others like it could conceivably have to reduce substantially what they spend to attract students.

Harkin emphasized the proposal would leave schools free to advertise _ just from a separate pot of money that hasn't come from taxpayers.

Even critics acknowledge that quality at for-profit colleges varies widely, and many are a good fit for students, particularly adult learners looking for flexible scheduling and specialized career training that often requires a certificate but not a degree.

But while comparing graduation rates can be misleading for those reasons, for-profit schools on average have lower success rates than traditional colleges on a variety of measures. A report from Harkin's Senate committee found that almost 2 million students withdrew from large for-profit colleges over a three year period. Among those who enrolled at 10 large chains in 2008-2009, 54 percent had withdrawn by the summer of 2010.

Meanwhile, the latest figures from the Education Department put the default rate on federal student loans for students at for-profit colleges at 15 percent, compared to 7.2 percent at public nonprofit universities and 4.6 percent at private nonprofit colleges. The industry points out that's partly because its schools tend to serve lower-income students. But difficulties transferring credits, and having credentials from for-profit colleges rewarded in the job market, also play a role.



MU invites kids for taste of science, arts

Wednesday, April 18, 2012

The University of Missouri Graduate School is hosting an event for elementary students interested in scientific and creative arts fields, including chemistry, forestry, insects, painting, foreign languages and geography.

The event will feature more than 100 MU graduate student volunteers, according to a news release. More than 25 learning booths will have hands-on activities for kids. Tiger Stripe ice cream will be free for the first 200 children, and TJ, the mascot for Women's and Children's Hospital, will be on hand.

The event, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at Jesse Hall on the MU campus, is open to families with children in kindergarten through sixth grade. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit gradschool.missouri.edu/adventures.