Backed by $30 million gift, MU unveils master facility plan

By Dave Matter

On Sunday, Missouri officially becomes a member of the Southeastern Conference. Yesterday, the athletic department began stockpiling for the most competitive arms race in college sports.

Minutes after the University of Missouri Board of Curators unanimously approved a $72 million project to renovate Memorial Stadium and other athletic structures, MU announced a $30 million private donation that will help bankroll a facility facelift to coincide with joining the SEC.

For Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden, the announcements made a "statement to the country, and not just to the SEC and the state of Missouri ... that Mizzou is an institution that's serious, completely serious, about stepping up in a big way."

Missouri expects to finance the $72 million debt through increased revenue from the sales of additional premium seating at football games. The $30 million donation, the biggest gift the school's athletics program has ever received, came from the Kansas City Sports Trust, a fund administered by Kansas City law firm Stinson, Morrison and Hecker.

It added up to Missouri football's first victory in the SEC.

"For Mizzou athletics," football Coach Gary Pinkel added, "it's a great day because what you're seeing is a commitment to become a great team in a great league, and that means becoming a national team as we continue to build our programs. ... I couldn't be more excited about it."

The plans were described as the initial phase in a $200 million vision that MU hopes to deliver over the next decade. For now, the renovations will focus on Memorial Stadium, plus facility upgrades for softball, baseball, tennis and golf.

But if the athletic department is indeed the front porch of the university, as Alden often says, Pinkel's football program is the plush and colorful welcome mat. As Missouri prepares to join a conference whose members annually spend more than a quarter-billion dollars on their football programs, the MU brass pledged to spruce up its centerpiece team, starting with a series of changes for their 86-year-old stadium.
In time for the 2015 season, MU will add an upper bowl on the east side of the stadium with more than 5,000 general admission seats and a club level with more than 1,000 seats, along with restrooms, concessions, lounge spaces, kitchen, support and circulation spaces. The east-side addition will cost an estimated a $46.05 million, of which $45.44 million will come from revenue bonds and $500,000 from MU Campus Facilities Utility Reserves.

The upper bowl construction will eliminate about 1,000 current seats that take up the top eight to 10 rows on the east side of the stands. But with 6,000 additional seats on the way, Alden said the stadium capacity will increase from 71,004 to around 75,000. For the second phase of renovations, MU could expand capacity further with changes to south end-zone seating, putting capacity at 80,000, Alden said.

Memorial Stadium's current capacity would rank 10th in the newly expanded 14-member SEC, ahead of only Kentucky (67,942), Mississippi (60,580), Mississippi State (55,082) and Vanderbilt (39,790). Arkansas' Razorback Stadium (72,000) would be next on the list to surpass.

For now, though, the stadium will also undergo a $9.75 million renovation of the press box on the west side, all funded through revenue bonds. The project will relocate a portion of the press area to the upper deck, while the vacated press areas will be converted to suites. The west-side construction is expected to be finished in August 2013.

Also for the 2013 season, MU will move the Rock M and berm on the north end of the stadium closer to the end zone to expand the north concourse for improved seating.

Among other additions will be a 100-yard indoor football practice facility planned for the area behind the Mizzou Athletics Training Complex and an additional weight room inside the Devine Pavilion.

MU could eventually move all of its football operations — offices, meeting rooms, locker room — across Providence Road and house them in a new structure attached to the south side of the stadium with offices overlooking the field.

"We haven't fully vetted out what we're doing, but that's one possibility, to move all the football operations there," senior associate athletic director Tim Hickman said.

Since Missouri announced the SEC move in November, Pinkel has talked about enhancing the look of Missouri's home stadium and football facilities, mostly for recruiting purposes.

"Aesthetically, it's really important," he said. "Eighteen-year-old kids want the pop. They want to look good. ... My big thing is be able to sell it out."

MU has sold out just three home games since the stadium's capacity was reconfigured in 1995 — each of the last three homecoming games — but MU figures to match that number this fall with visits from Georgia, Alabama and Kentucky.
Even with enhanced revenue from ticket sales and more premium seating, Missouri will likely never outspend the top programs in the SEC — as seven schools spent more than $20 million on football expenses in 2010, according to the U.S. Department of Education Equity in Athletics Disclosure report. Missouri spent $14,983,805, which would rank 12th among SEC teams, ahead of only Kentucky and Mississippi State. In 2010, SEC teams spent an aggregate of more than $266 million on their football programs.

Still, as he joins a league that spends money as prodigiously as it wins national championships — six in a row and counting — Pinkel is confident the latest commitments will give the Tigers a chance to compete in their new territory.

"When it's all said and done, we'll be up there in the top half" of the SEC, he said. "And the top half in that league is compared probably to the top 10 in college football. We're doing the right things."
MU's embarrassing football spending spree

Yael T. Abouhalkah

The University of Missouri certainly is not the only school in the nation to go totally overboard in spending to expand its football stadium and football program.

But at a time when the state legislature is grossly underfunding educational programs at MU, school officials have announced a grand building program for the sports department.

With the help of the anonymous donors on Kansas City Sports Trust, MU is going to expand its football stadium by a few thousand seats, build a new weight room for the Tiger players and spend tens of millions of dollars doing it.

(UPDATE: See my blog post on what do the donors for KC Sports Trust really want?)

Sure, private donors are supposed to pay for all of these these sports-related improvements, not taxpayers.

But that doesn’t let MU off the hook. Or other football-crazy schools, either.

The dollars spent on football can’t be spent on education.

Wow, what irony: The MU system is in an educational bind, having to cut tens of millions of dollars from its core function for the coming year.

And for all MU fans, this KU alum doesn’t much support this spending either in Lawrence.

The MU development shows the misplaced priorities of groups such as the Kansas City Sports Trust, a mysterious organization that reportedly gave $30 million to these improvements.

Seriously: If you are a member of that group, why would you want to remain anonymous?

Embarrassed?
(To understand how the system's budget is different from the Columbia school's budget, and to read about what some say is an overlap in administrative duties, click here.)

At the Tuesday meeting, the Post-Dispatch's Stu Durando reports, "the curators spent considerable time discussing the university's $1.4 billion in outstanding debt and whether they were willing to risk a lower credit rating with the addition of expensive projects.

"But the only question (athletics director Mike) Alden faced was how the cost would be covered. Assured that increased ticket revenue from additional seating and price increases would be sufficient, the master plan was passed quickly and unanimously."

At the meeting, Alden also announced a $30 million gift for sports. The only bigger gift in Mizzou's history was the $31 million one for the journalism school.

Unfortunately, most journalism students and college football players are unlikely to be trained for careers that will be as profitable as the business track that today's universities are on.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Questions surround anonymous donation to Missouri athletics

By Nate Atkins
June 27, 2012 | 8:10 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Before MU Athletics Director Mike Alden had even reached the microphone, questions had begun to circulate: Who is the Kansas City Sports Trust, and how could its members — or anyone — come up with $30 million to give away?

On Tuesday, Alden delivered headline news about a $102 million athletics facility renovation plan, then he increased the buzz with word of the second largest private donation in MU history. Trust lawyer Mark Foster said he has been questioned about the group's anonymity. Foster, a partner in the trust's legal consultant Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP, is the lone public voice for the trust.

He declined to reveal personal details about the members of the trust, including its size, but tried to provide some clarity as to why the trust prefers to remain in the shadows.

Who is the Kansas City Sports Trust?

The group has no shortage of passion for MU athletics. Tuesday's $30 million gift is the second publicized donation the trust has given to the Tigers, the other being the $10 million donation it sent MU in 2004.

The 2004 donation came shortly after the founding of the trust, which consists entirely of MU alumni. The members are spread throughout multiple states and none currently work for the university, Foster said.

"The purpose of the trust right now is directed at the University of Missouri and the athletic department," Foster said. "That's not to say it couldn't be changed, but that's been the direction to date."

Why does the trust want to remain anonymous?
When the group was formed in 2004, its members reached an agreement to remain anonymous in all facets, a decision that would encompass their quantities, ages, occupations and other personal details, Foster said. He described the anonymity as a good-faith agreement to avoid recognition or scrutiny.

"They want to make contributions they think are beneficial without being second-guessed or scrutinized about it," Foster said.

**What is the relevance of the Kansas City location?**

Foster said the name is as straight-forward as it sounds: It is a sports trust in Kansas City, and its name merely represents its physical location.

Although Foster said the Tigers' move to the Southeastern Conference was the catalyst behind the trust's decision to donate the $30 million, he said the donation made no statement about ending the Border Showdown rivalry between Missouri and Kansas. The 120-year rivalry, which has played its football games in Kansas City's Arrowhead Stadium since 2006, closed its doors this past season with MU's decision to leave the Big 12 Conference.

Many think the rivalry should continue despite the switch to a new conference, and there is discussion about how much support will remain in Kansas City for Missouri sports.

At Tuesday's press conference announcing the donation, Alden made sure to emphasize the "Kansas City" half of the name, a quip that was greeted by laughter. Although it seemed to go over well with many in the audience, Alden declined to expound on his joke afterward.

"But I do think that it's noted, at least by us, that coming straight out of Kansas City is the second largest gift ever given in the history of the entire University of Missouri, and there was an awful lot of enthusiasm because of the move to the SEC," he said.

**How did the trust settle on $30 million?**

Foster said the donation was discussed over the course of the past few months but there were no organized meetings.

Foster said his role is only to receive and deposit funds, emphasizing that he was not a part of the discussion process. He said he did not know how the $30 million figure was determined.

"People often times want to make gifts and be generous without sticking their heads out in the public realm," Foster said. "They're not looking for recognition, they just want to be helpful."
MU notebook: More about Tuesday's big athletics announcement

By TEREZ A. PAYLOR

COLUMBIA | Long before Missouri made the decision to join the Southeastern Conference last fall, Gary Pinkel was adamant that if his program was going to play with the big boys, his school had better be ready to spend.

“I’ve often expressed that if you’re not going to be committed to excellence and invest, then you should never go into this league,” Pinkel said.

So understand, for Pinkel, Tuesday’s $200 million master plan announcement was significant. Dressed in a black Missouri t-shirt and wearing a relaxed look on his face – “I’m on vacation,” he said while grinning – Pinkel spoke about what the facility renovations would mean to the rising football program he’s spent almost 12 years building.

“It’s a great day because what you’re seeing is a commitment to become a great team in a great league, and that means becoming a national team as we continue to build our program,” Pinkel said. “I couldn’t be more excited about it, and I know our players are.”

With good reason. Football stands the most to gain from the planned multi-million dollar renovations, which is no surprise, considering the overwhelming competitiveness of the SEC, which has won the last six national championships in the sport.

So the importance of the announcements were not lost on Pinkel or athletic director Mike Alden, the latter of which got slightly emotional during the press conference as he stopped to think about how far the school has come during his 14-year tenure.

“I didn’t see (this) coming,” Alden admitted. “I got a little emotional up there, and I was really looking at Gary, because Coach and I, we’ve worked together for a long time now and I think all of us knew what we hoped could happen by working together, but you never really know if those things will take place.

“To see those things transpire over the course of the last 14 years – but really over the last five, six, seven years at a higher level – I’m not sure you could have ever imagined that.”

Even Pinkel offered a moment of reflection when asked if he saw all this coming when he took over several years ago.

“Hmm, I don’t know,” Pinkel said, followed by a brief pause. “Shoot, three of my first four years, we had losing seasons. People forget about that. But I feel proud we’ve made our contribution (to all this). I know
football has played a part in it.

"The most important thing is, what are we going to do with it now? What are we going to do with this great opportunity?"

The goal, obviously, is to have continued success on the field, where Missouri has reached seven straight bowl games and Pinkel has accumulated a 76-40 record over the past nine season. A key to keeping that going, he said, is keeping up with the trends in regards to facilities, and he feels the planned renovations to Memorial Stadium - which are sweeping and grand and can be found here - will play a large part in that.

"It’s great for many reasons, but it’s also huge for recruiting," Pinkel said. "I think looking better aesthetically is real important. That’s the way kids are now. Eighteen-year-old kids, they want the pop, they want it to look good. The (new FieldTurf) in itself is an outstanding move in that direction."

Alden said the capacity of the stadium should increase to a little over 75,000 once the first phase of the project is done by August 2015. Sweeping changes to the east and west sides of the stadium will be completed by then, in addition to the widening of the north concourse.

Alden said the second phase of the plan, which will call for the addition of a new structure on the south end that will contain coaches’ offices, should be completed within the next 8-10 years, depending on the school’s ability to generate major gifts (like the $30 million gift recently provided by the Kansas City Sports Trust).

"It’s all going to depend on how ticket sales and fundraising go and the success of our program," Alden said. "The more you can have of that early, the sooner you will see the south end become a reality.

Alden added the final capacity of Memorial Stadium should approach 80,000 when all is said and done, and this – plus the upgrades – make Pinkel believe Missouri’s stadium will eventually be in the top half of the SEC in terms of grandeur.

"It’s a great place to play," Pinkel said, "and now it’s going to be better."

**Few doubting SEC move now**

In no uncertain terms, Alden admitted the scope of the upgrades announced Tuesday had a direct correlation with Mizzou’s move to the SEC.

"We already had a plan in place to continue to improve our facilities and grow," Alden said. "But the speed and scope changed dramatically when he joined the SEC."

MU chancellor Brady Deaton said he’s been receiving positive feedback from alums, most of whom are excited about the move to a new conference.

"It’s a good time for the University of Missouri," said Deaton, who has been speaking to alums in several states recently due to a busy travel schedule. "There’s a lot of enthusiasm about the move."

That said, Alden was hopeful the school could send the renderings and plans to the SEC sometime Tuesday night, just so the league’s head honchos could see how committed they are to stepping up.

"They absolutely are very excited to have us as a part of the group, but I’m sure they’re probably thinking ‘do these guys understand what it takes to step up?’" Alden said. "But when they see this kind of work
coming out of the chute, I would hope that would tell them "Yeah, Mizzou is serious.""

More on the Kansas City Sports Trust
When Alden announced the school had received a $30 million "major private gift" from the Kansas City Sports Trust on Tuesday, many wondered who the individuals were behind it.

Alden was asked about it several times, refusing to name and only offering the following:

"It's been set up by a family in Kansas City, and they've donated money before -- this is not their first gift -- they've given another gift of over $10 million to us for our athletic training complex and other gifts to Mizzou for a total of a little over $49 million," Alden said.

Alden later clarified his statement, saying it came from a group of individuals rather than a family. The Kansas City Sports Trust, which is administered by the law firm of Stinson Morrison Hecker, previously gave a $10 million gift to the MU athletic department in 2004. That matched the third-largest gift in MU history at the time.

"It was a trust formed by people who wish to remain anonymous but were interested then, and continue to be interested in, supporting the athletic programs at the University of Missouri," said Mark Foster, the trustee of the Kansas City Sports Trust and former managing partner at Stinson Morrison Hecker.

"We've never disclosed information about our donations one way or the other."

But while the people behind the Kansas City Sports Trust wish to remain anonymous -- a noble gesture, indeed -- Alden was quick to praise the group for a donation that figures to play a massive role in the school's planned facilities upgrades.

"I thought that was pretty special to know that coming right out of Kansas City was the second-biggest gift ever given in the history of Missouri," Alden said.

But just how will the money be used? Alden explained:

"It was not designated by the Sports Trust to go to any particular project," Alden said. "The Sports Trust is saying 'Look, we know that you're going to have to really ramp up your facilities going into the SEC, we want to be able to donate $30 million toward your effort.' We were then able to comfortably say we could also borrow $72 million for a total of $102 million. But the Sports Trust knows it's going to also help tennis and baseball and golf and softball, as well as football."

Basically, Alden said, with the donation of $30 million and the borrowing of $72 million they can "go ahead and come out of the chutes with $102 million worth of work."

The $72 million the school is borrowing for the first phase of the project will initially be paid for with revenue bonds and will ultimately be paid back with revenue generated from additional premium seating at Memorial Stadium.

When asked whether he was confident Missouri will be able to sell out the additional seats that are currently being planned, Alden said he was, citing a study done by a national company that's done market studies for the university in the past.

"In their study, what they predicted for us made us very confident in our ability to be able to generate support in premium seating and additional seating," Alden said.
He also cited the fact that season ticket sales for this upcoming season are far ahead of where they were last season.

"We're a little over 95 percent of last year's season ticket sales renewed, which is a big number," Alden said. "I think we're ahead somewhere between 16 to 18 percent of where we last year (in terms of) season ticket sales. So if that plays out, I believe we'll be at 20 percent more than last year."
Gordon: New era dawns for Mizzou sports

BY JEFF GORDON | Posted: Wednesday, June 27, 2012 11:46 am | (3) comments.

Players model the new design for the Missouri football uniforms to the crowd as they walk on the Faurot Field during halftime of their NCAA college football scrimmage game Saturday, April 14, 2012, in Columbia, Mo. (AP Photo/L.G. Patterson)

The planned University of Missouri stadium renovations may not dazzle the average Southeastern Conference football fan.

Memorial Stadium is currently the 10th-largest stadium in the SEC. An upper deck on the stadium’s east side will add general admission and club seating, pushing the capacity to 77,000.

Congratulations MU! When completed, the expanded stadium would rank ninth among SEC schools in seating capacity.

It will still seem cozy compared to Bryant-Denny Stadium at Alabama and Neyland Stadium at Tennessee. Those gridiron monoliths accommodate six-figure crowds on Saturdays.

But this progress IS a big deal for Mizzou. The $102 million sports facilities upgrade announced Tuesday — Stage One of a plan that could spawn $200 million in improvements over the next decade — will move the athletic department forward into the SEC mainstream.

And the SEC sets the standard for all of college sports, not just football.
All of the major MU sports will benefit from the improvements to come, but football will get the most help. One of the near-term goals is building a new indoor football practice facility and an additional weight training facility.

Down the road, a second stage stadium expansion could push seating past 80,000. The goal is to start growing now and keep growing as the school adapts to its daunting new environment.

The process is underway. If you support the SEC shift and want to buy tickets or make donations, Mizzou would love to hear from you.
Univ. of Mo. leaders back decision to close press

University of Missouri leaders stood behind the school's cost-cutting decision to shutter its academic press on Wednesday, saying they looked forward to remodeling the 54-year-old publishing house to emphasize digital distribution.

The Board of Curators didn't seem swayed after dozens of supporters of the University of Missouri Press attended the campus governing board's meeting a day earlier in Columbia. Few of those supporters showed up for Wednesday's meeting since the board generally doesn't carve out time for public comment.

Curators did not publicly discuss the recent decision by new University System President Tim Wolfe to shutter the press, though Wolfe and the board's chairman, David Bradley, said the university hopes to soon unveil a new model for the publishing house.

"We are looking for a new model for the press that takes into account the latest and greatest technologies, perpetuates what's good about the press relative to the assets that we have in our library, and leveraging those as best possible," Wolfe said. "We look forward to a press that brings vibrancy and affordability to the publishing of scholarly work."

The university plans to honor its publishing agreements with authors who are under contract, Wolfe added. He declined to specify the timing of the shift. The press' official last day is Saturday, the end of the university's current fiscal year.

The move has generated significant criticism from faculty authors, scholars and literature lovers across the country—particularly as Missouri simultaneously announced a $200 million long-term plan to expand its 71,004-seat football stadium and boost its spending on athletics as part of a move to the Southeastern Conference.

The SEC is known for its on-field prowess, particularly in football, but Missouri will now carry the distinction of being one of just three schools in the 14-member conference without an academic press. And its two companions on that list—Auburn and Mississippi State—are in states where the larger flagship universities (Alabama and Mississippi) continue to operate publishing houses.
"This new university is ready to discard the great traditions that have emerged over centuries and resulted in an enduring body of knowledge and systematic support of the arts and sciences," said Dan Jaffe, a retired professor at the University of Missouri-Kansas City who was among the protesters.

The university system provides a $400,000 annual subsidy to the press, which in recent years has also had yearly deficits of $50,000 to $100,000. But press supporters note that the operation has been hindered by the absence of a permanent director for several years and had expected to nearly break even in the current fiscal year after a series of austerity measures were implemented several years ago.

The press was started in 1958 and is known for its works on presidential politics, regional history and 19th Century western expansion. Its 2,000 publications have included collections by Missouri native Langston Hughes and more than 20 volumes on the legacy of native son Mark Twain.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Chairman says curators would be open to forum on UM Press

By Alli Inglebright, Jessica Salmond
June 27, 2012 | 6:44 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe said Wednesday a new model for the University of Missouri Press that uses the "latest and greatest technology" will be up and running "soon."

But Wolfe, speaking at a news conference after meeting with the UM System Board of Curators, had no specifics about the model or the timeline.

Wolfe was responding to a groundswell of support for keeping the publishing house open. On May 24, he announced that a $400,000 subsidy would stop on June 30, effectively closing the 54-year-old press.

Speaking to the curators, Wolfe said the UM System consulted with five publishing experts to assess the long-term sustainability of the press. The final call was to phase out the old model and work on an alternative one.

"We could not justify the press as it currently exists," Wolfe said. "Since the announcement, we have been very impressed to see such support expressed for the University Press."

Wolfe said that less than 10 percent of the authors published by the press were UM System faculty.

At the news conference, Wolfe said they are looking for a new model that perpetuates what is good about the press and meets contractual obligations with current authors.

Protestors of the press closing were at the board meeting Tuesday, according to the Save the University of Missouri Press Facebook page. Their intention was to share their concerns with the curators.
But the agenda for the two-day meeting was set prior to the board being aware that the protesters wanted to speak, Chairman David Bradley said at the Wednesday news conference.

Bradley went on to say he would be open to "holding a forum" to hear from the public.

Contacted Wednesday after Bradley's remarks, protester Lois Huneycutt said he thought a forum would be well attended.

"I would be open to any kind of dialogue with anyone in a position to overturn this decision," Huneycutt said. "I think there are scores of people who feel the same way."

Huneycutt, an associate professor and director of graduate studies in MU's Department of History, estimated there were about 70 protesters present Tuesday. They were not conspicuous, however, among the people attending the board meeting at Reynolds Alumni Center.

As director of graduate studies, Huneycutt collaborates with doctoral candidates of history. These candidates publish work about the history of Missouri and, therefore, want their work to be told through a university press.

"We need a vehicle to tell that story," she said.

Huneycutt also said she thinks the curators should accept comments and suggestions about a new model.

"It needs to have the input of anyone affected by the existence or nonexistence of the University of Missouri Press," she said.

On Tuesday, the curators finalized the 2013 budget for the four-campus system, approved a new residence hall for MU and major upgrades for athletic facilities at MU, and approved a preliminary request for state funding for 2014.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Bixey.
Wolfe stresses tenure-track faculty as budget wins OK

By Janese Silvey

Getting more tenure-track faculty on the University of Missouri payroll is a high priority for UM System President Tim Wolfe, he told curators yesterday.

"We have, on each of the campuses, areas where we've experienced exponential growth in terms of student numbers," he said during the Board of Curators meeting in Columbia. "The number of faculty has not kept up with that. We need to invest in hiring faculty to support the right student-to-faculty ratio."

And for research purposes, those faculty hires should be on the tenure track, he said.

MU, like many public universities dealing with decreasing state aid, has increased the number of non-tenure-track professors and has used more adjuncts and teacher aides to deal with growing enrollment. The tenured faculty population on the Columbia campus has hovered around 1,200 for a decade, and it has felt the growing pains, too.

"With growing class sizes, there's tremendous pressure on faculty to teach more classes, and sometimes the balance between teaching and research gets tipped in the wrong direction," said Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration.

Setting money aside for hiring and retaining quality faculty members is one of six priority areas Wolfe identified earlier this year. Thanks to higher-than-expected state aid this coming fiscal year, Wolfe now has $26 million to invest in those priorities.

University administrators drafted a budget around an expected $30 million cut in state aid that turned out to be a $4 million cut instead.

Along with hiring tenure-track faculty, Wolfe has identified maintenance and repair of science, technology, engineering and math facilities, more student support and economic development as high priorities.

"The success of our students — and ultimately the welfare of our state — depends on how well we carry out our mission," Wolfe said in a prepared statement. "Our campuses and the system demonstrated their leadership by making difficult decisions to ensure that our precious resources are aligned with these mission areas."
Curators yesterday signed off on a $2.7 billion spending plan for the fiscal year that starts Sunday. Of that, about $1.1 billion supports daily operations.

In addition to $30 million in cuts, including fewer positions, eliminated programs and other savings, the budget reflects a $9.7 million boost in revenue, including gifts and new fees. The budget also allows for a 2 percent increase in MU's merit-based salary pool.

At MU, budget director Tim Rooney said $2.5 million was cut across campus, of which about $2 million came from peeling vacant positions off the payroll.

In some cases, he said, part-time employees were hired to fill previously full-time jobs, and in other instances, new employees replaced predecessors at lower salaries. Administrators also expect to put $2 million from online education into the general operating budget for the first time after the program was moved from MU Extension to the newly created Mizzou Online office on campus.
Rules for revoking degrees approved

By Janese Silvey

The University of Missouri now has a more formalized process of revoking degrees, diplomas or certificates from students who cheated to get them.

The Board of Curators approved a new system rule that outlines five reasons a degree could be nullified, including academic dishonesty, lying about credit hours earned or violating the university’s honor code.

MU has revoked degrees before on a case-by-case basis, but the new policy establishes more consistent guidelines. It creates a standing committee on each campus to handle such cases and provides a process that lets individuals appeal the decision.

Situations across the country prompted UM administrators to “get ahead of it,” said Steve Graham, associate vice president of academic affairs.

“A couple of cases made us wonder about it,” Graham said, without specifying the situations. “It feels nice to have a process that came from the provosts and faculty councils. In absence of it, there was really no way to go through a proper process.”

Two cases of cheating with local ties over the past decade garnered national attention, including a Columbia woman whose family lost naming rights to an MU building. Paige Laurie surrendered her degree to the University of Southern California in 2005 after her roommate reported that Laurie had paid her $20,000 to do her homework. The scandal prompted MU to remove Laurie’s name from what’s now Mizzou Arena, a building funded through donations from Laurie’s parents, Bill and Nancy. And in 2007, an MU postdoctoral researcher, Kaushik Deb, manipulated research images to draw false conclusions.

The MU Faculty Council, along with faculty groups on the other campuses, began discussing a degree revocation policy in 2010.

“We really did want it,” said Leona Rubin, who served as the Faculty Council’s chairwoman two years ago. “It wasn’t just the faculty, but some of the administration down in the trenches didn’t feel they had a process for doing what they needed to.”

Although Rubin said she has heard about cases across the system, she said she hopes the rule doesn’t have to be used.
"I think there are cases where people have misstated their academic credentials," she said. "A degree has to mean something."
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

GEORGE KENNEDY: Tiger Town is a flawed concept

By George Kennedy
June 28, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

It’s my birthday, and I have a present for you. Just be patient for a few paragraphs.

First, I want to comment belatedly on a decision already, and unfortunately, made. That’s Tiger Town, the closed-off street of beer tents and other attractions intended to lure visiting football fans away from their tailgates and into downtown this fall.

I won’t quibble with the concept, although I doubt we’ll compete very impressively with the legendary Grove at Ole Miss or those customized railroad cars parked just outside the stadium in the other Columbia, the one in South Carolina. The less said the better about the citywide party that is Baton Rouge on game day. Still, there’s no harm trying.

The mistake I’m afraid Tiger Town promoters are making is the classic one of thinking too small. For one thing, the plan as outlined calls for just four hours of festivities that will end when the football games begin. Why so early and so short? If television dictates an 11 a.m. kickoff, as surely it will some Saturdays, the beer tents would open at 7 a.m. and be gone by the time the winners want to celebrate and the losers want to drown their sorrow.

The bigger flaw, it seems to me, is the location. Eighth Street between Elm and Broadway? Nothing against the street itself, you understand. It’s anchored on the south by my favorite morning newspaper and on the north by the institution where I bank. But those and the other businesses along what the signs insist is the Avenue of the Columns don’t exactly convey a party-time image.

Maybe the Missourian will erect a tent to peddle its tasteful T-shirts and nostalgic replica front pages. Perhaps the Boone County Bank can offer sidewalk loans or investment opportunities for winners of those bets the NCAA frowns on. But probably not.

Much as it pains me, I admit that Hank Waters had a much better idea. He argued in the Columbia Daily Tribune that we really have a Tiger Town already. Ninth Street and Broadway are its axes. If the goal is lucrative downtown frivolity, why not close the streets to cars, ease
the rules on open containers and let the good times roll before, after and even during the games?

Among other things, that would have eliminated the painful necessity of deciding who gets to supply the goodies in the tents. The broader approach would also have allowed the money that will have to be spent creating a fake Tiger Town to be used instead for extensive promotion of the existing one.

Hank's is no doubt the loudest, or at least the most pervasive, voice in our journalistic cacophony. The fact that his proposal was promptly ignored by our downtown decision makers should suggest just how limited the power of the press is.

The power of the dollar will no doubt prevail, as it usually does. If Eighth Street turns out to be crowded with free-spending Georgians on the morning of Sept. 8, I'll have been proven wrong again. At least this time I'll be in good company.

And now, about that birthday present: My gift to you is a few weeks of silence. I'm headed north in search of the cool weather that must exist somewhere. With any luck, I'll be back well before those Georgians arrive.

No need to thank me.

*George Kennedy* is a former managing editor at the *Missourian* and professor emeritus at the *Missouri School of Journalism*. Questions? Contact Opinion editor *Elizabeth Conner*. 
New residence hall is planned for MU

Construction of a new five-story residential hall on the University of Missouri campus is expected to start next summer.

The UM System Board of Curators yesterday gave the green light to the so-called Virginia Avenue South housing project. The dorm, which will have a 330-bed capacity, will be between College and Virginia avenues south of Hospital Drive.

The building project “is in response to the exploding growth in enrollment at the Columbia campus and the desire of students who want to live on campus,” said Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration.

Not only are freshmen required to live on campus, but the number of upperclassmen wanting to live in campus housing is increasing, too, she said.

Chancellor Brady Deaton said he’s concerned about a growing waiting list among students in the upper grades who want to live on campus and said he views the new residential hall “as a very conservative step.”

The budget for the construction project is $28.4 million, with the bulk coming from revenue bonds. It’s expected to be completed in April 2015.

Curators also were asked to consider whether they would be willing to see the university’s credit rating lowered slightly in exchange for a higher debt capacity. By risking a downgrade from an AA1 rating to an AA2, UM could double its debt capacity from about $300 million to $600 million, treasurer Tom Richards said.

That’s the credit rating the university previously had, and administrators said they didn’t expect a downgrade to cause problems.

Curator Don Downing said he’d be leery of doing so.

“We’ve been very conservative when it comes to borrowing and probably still are,” he said. “I don’t want to downgrade. ... I, for one, want to continue to be conservative and keep a high credit rating.”
Colleges move toward absolute bans on smoking

COLUMBUS, Ohio—As a political science major at Ohio State University, Ida Seitter says, she lit up many a cigarette to help her through the stress of exam season. Right or wrong, they were her security blanket as she toiled through college.

Seitter, now 26, was old enough by then to make her own decisions, she says. She opposes efforts by policymakers in Ohio, New York, California and other states to impose bans on tobacco use not just in buildings at public colleges, but also anywhere on the campus — even in the open air.

"Just back away from me a little bit. I won't blow it in your face and I'll try not to be rude," Seitter says. "At the same time, I think it's a little discriminatory for a practice that is considered legal."

Bans on use, advertising and sales of tobacco in all its forms are being enacted or considered at perhaps half of campuses nationwide, sometimes over the objections of student smokers, staff and faculty. The movement is driven by mounting evidence of the health risks of secondhand smoke, the reduced costs of smoke-free dorms and a drive to minimize enticements to smoke at a critical age for forming lifelong habits.

California's state system will begin to bar tobacco use in 2013. A ban on use and advertising at the City University of New York system goes into effect in September, and the University of Missouri at Columbia is going smoke-free in 2014.

Ohio higher education officials plan a vote next month urging all public campuses to ban tobacco use. That includes Ohio State, one of the nation's largest universities, which currently bans only indoor smoking.
According to the surgeon general's report for 2012, tobacco use among people ages 18 to 25 remains at epidemic proportions nationwide. The review found 90 percent of smokers started by age 18, and 99 percent by age 26. About a quarter to a third of college students smoke, studies have found.

The study found the U.S. would have 3 million fewer young smokers if success in reducing youth smoking by state tobacco-cessation programs from 1997 to 2003 had been sustained. Many of the programs have been hit by budget cuts.

Health and education officials, anti-smoking groups and a generation of students who grew up smoke-free are increasingly united on the issue, says Bronson Frick, associate director of Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights.

"There are many reasons why a college or university may choose to pursue this type of policy, whether secondhand smoke, dorm fires, or other issues," he says. "They are also questioning what the role of tobacco is in this academic setting, where we're supposed to be standing for truth and training the next generation of leaders."

According to data kept by the nonsmokers group, campus tobacco bans have risen from virtually zero a decade ago to 711 today. That includes both four-year and two-year institutions, both public and private.

One of the first campuses to ban tobacco was Ozarks Technical Community College in Springfield, Mo., which endorsed the move in 1999 and put it in place four years later. The school also established a research center that works with other colleges and hospitals pursuing similar moves, now known as the National Center for Tobacco Policy.

Ty Patterson, the center's director, says Ozarks quickly realized that its previous policy of allowing smoking in designated outdoor areas was impractical and couldn't be properly enforced.

Forbidding all tobacco use was deemed to be more effective than simply saying no to cigarette smoke, Patterson says.

"When you go smoke-free, you drive smokers to use smokeless tobacco, which is more addictive," he says.

Cigarette-size cigars containing candy and fruit flavorings, dissolvable strips and lozenges are among the smokeless tobacco products being targeted to youths, according to the surgeon general. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says studies show many smokers mix and match such products with cigarettes as they move from smoking to nonsmoking venues.

Compliance with tobacco bans is generally voluntary, and violations come with few, if any, real penalties. Repeat offenders are sometimes subjected to university disciplinary policies, which vary by school.
While precise statistics on the number of campuses curtailing tobacco are elusive, Patterson
estimates that one-third to one-half of all higher education institutions have either made the move
or are considering it.

Smoking rights advocate Audrey Silk, founder of New York Citizens Lobbying Against Smoker
Harassment, says any outdoor ban -- whether for a campus, beach or public park -- is an attack
on the rights of one segment of the population.

"This isn't a health issue anymore. It's a moral issue," she says. "There's absolutely zero reason
for a smoking ban outdoors. They use it as a tool. Harm from smoke outdoors is an excuse to
frustrate smokers into quitting because they can't find a place to light up."

Silk says it's not the place of schools to enforce health issues.

"Schools are a business," she says. "Who assigned them the role of behavior modification? It's
their responsibility to educate. What they're doing is indoctrinating."

Tobacco companies have also questioned the role of universities to take such steps. With limited
lobbying power at the college level, they have pursued legislation in some states to pre-empt
tobacco-control decisions from occurring at any but the state level.

A spokesman for Philip Morris USA Inc., the nation's largest tobacco company, deferred
comment to the company website, which states that some smoking restrictions are justified but
that all-out bans "go too far."

"Smoking should be permitted outdoors except in very particular circumstances, such as outdoor
areas primarily designed for children," it states.

Seitter, who now works as development coordinator for the Columbus Board of Realtors, says
budding college smokers often took up the habit after-hours, at venues such as bars that campus
tobacco bans don't reach.

"You find a lot of people start drinking at that age, and many people who don't consider
themselves smokers, they smoke when they drink," she says. "I would think that atmosphere has
more of an effect than somebody smoking on the corner."
WASHINGTON — Facing weekend deadlines for action, congressional leaders have tentatively agreed to deals overhauling the nation's transportation programs without a Republican provision forcing approval of the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline, and avoiding a doubling of interest rates for new student loans, congressional officials said Wednesday.

The agreements underscored the pressures both parties face to avoid angering voters and embarrassing headlines in the run-up to this November's presidential and congressional elections. Letting road-building programs grind to a halt during an economic downturn would be a blow to the image of lawmakers, while Democrats and Republicans alike seemed eager to avoid enraging millions of students and their parents by boosting the costs of college loans.

Congressional leaders were hoping to combine the highway and student loan measures into a single bill to reduce potential procedural obstacles, and hope to vote final approval this week. Lawmakers would then leave Washington for a July 4 recess.

The two-year highway bill would prevent the government's authority to spend money on highways, bridges and transit systems from lapsing on Saturday, along with its ability to collect gasoline and diesel taxes. With both parties checkmating each other's top priorities this campaign season, Democrats and Republicans say the highway measure will be Congress' top job-creation initiative until the November elections.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., chief Senate sponsor of the transportation bill, said the measure would save or create 3 million jobs.
As the price for the highway agreement, Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., said Republicans dropped a House-approved provision requiring the government to approve the proposed Keystone pipeline, which is to move oil from western Canada to Texas' Gulf Coast.

Pipeline approval — which prompted a veto threat from President Barack Obama — has been a top goal this election year for the GOP, which has pitted its claims that it would create jobs against environmental worries that it could accelerate global warming and endanger Midwestern water supplies.

Republicans also agreed to abandon language blocking the Environmental Protection Agency from regulating the toxic ash generated by coal-fired power plants, Inhofe said. The ash is used as an ingredient in some types of cement.

In return, House Republicans won Senate concessions that would halve the time allowed for environmental reviews for highway projects, and squeeze money for bike paths and pedestrian safety projects by forcing them to compete with other transportation projects, Senate aides and environmentalists said.

The bill would give states more flexibility in spending federal money, impose new safety regulations and expand a federal loan guarantee program to encourage private investments in transportation projects.

Despite the measure's short-term impact, the bill delays for two years decisions about a long-term funding scheme for highway and transit programs. Gas and diesel taxes no longer cover the cost of transportation programs and are forecast to bring in less revenue as the fuel efficiency of cars and trucks increases.

President Barack Obama spent weeks this spring touring college campuses and lambasting Republicans for not pushing a freeze on student loan rates through Congress. GOP presidential challenger Mitt Romney, looking to avoid handing Obama an issue, quickly said he favored the interest rate extension and congressional GOP leaders did too, though some Republicans think the government should not spend money to keep loan rates low.

The student loan pact would keep today's 3.4 percent interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans from doubling for new loans approved beginning Sunday, an automatic increase that Congress enacted five years ago to save money. If they did double, it would affect 7.4 million students expected to get the loans over the 12 months beginning July 1, adding $1,000 to the interest costs of the typical borrower over each loan's life.
The tentative agreement was on the same package Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., had said Tuesday that they had shaken hands on, said a congressional Republican who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the measure's status. McConnell said he expected the House to accept the agreement.

"We're moving, I think, toward an agreement on a transportation bill that would also include a one-year fix on the student loan rate increase," Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, told reporters early Wednesday after meeting privately with House Republicans.

Some GOP lawmakers at that meeting said Boehner seemed to favor the emerging deal and said it received a positive reception.

"The general sense is there's a tremendous amount of support for getting it done," said Rep. Tom Reed, R-N.Y. "That's what's going to drive it across the finish line."

The two parties spent the last several weeks dueling over how to pay for the $6 billion cost of the student loan bill.

Under the agreement, the government would raise $5 billion by changing how companies calculate the money they have to set aside for pensions. That change would make their contributions more consistent from year to year and in effect reduce their payments initially, lowering the tax deductions they receive for their pension contributions.

Another $500 million would come from increasing the fees companies pay for the government to insure their pension plans, linking those fees to inflation.

In addition, $1.2 billion would be saved by limiting federal subsidies of Stafford loans to six years for undergraduates.

Lawmakers were discussing potentially wrapping in another Senate bill to reauthorize the national flood insurance program for five years.

The program, which provides federally backed insurance for 5.6 million households and businesses, many in flood-prone areas, has gone deeply into the red from claims after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The Senate legislation would try to return the program to fiscal soundness through such steps as allowing premium increases and reducing subsidies for vacation homes.