Obama honors scientists, researchers at White House

Carolyn Kaster

*National Medals of Technology and Innovation are seen in the East Room of the White House in Washington. The awards are the highest honors bestowed by the United States Government upon scientists, engineers, and inventors.*

February 4

*By Anne-Kathrin Gerstlauer  McClatchy Newspapers*

President Barack Obama honored 23 scientists Friday at the White House.

“This is the most collection of brainpower we’ve had under this roof in a long time,” Obama said to laughter from the honorees and guests in the East Room, “maybe since the last time we gave out these medals.”

Each researcher received either the National Medal of Science or the National Medal of Technology and Innovation, called the nation’s highest honor for research and discovery.
"In America, success does not depend on where you were born or what your last name is," Obama said. "Success depends on the ideas that you can dream up; the blood, sweat and tears you’re willing to put in to make them real."

The president didn’t only highlight such discoveries as photosynthetic organisms in the ocean or the far UV electrographic camera, he also pushed his proposals to increase federal spending for teaching and education.

"Right now, only about a third of undergraduate students are graduating with degrees in science, technology, engineering and math," he said. "That’s why we’ve worked to make more affordable college opportunities, and set a goal of training 100,000 new math and science teachers over the next decade."

Obama also used the awards ceremony to promote his proposals for new immigration policies.

"One important piece of that reform is allowing more of the brightest minds from around the world to start businesses and initiate new discoveries," he said. "We need to do something about all the students who come here from around the world to study, but then we send them home once they graduate."

Among the honorees:

- Frederick Hawthorne from the University of Missouri. The director of the International Institute of Nano and Molecular Medicine has discovered the use of boron to fight cancer. Doctors will be able to label cancer cells with the chemical element and bombard them with neurons. The chemistry also may be useful elsewhere in the field of medicine and in everyday chemistry.

- Allen Bard and John Goodenough from the University of Texas at Austin. Bard, the director of the Center for Electrochemistry, has worked on developing the scanning electrochemical microscope. The tool can be used to identify new materials for technologies such as solar cells and batteries. Goodenough, a professor at the school of engineering, had worked on developing the rechargeable lithium-ion battery.

"Thanks to the sacrifices they’ve made, the chances they’ve taken, the gallons of coffee they’ve consumed, we now have batteries that power everything from cellphones to electric cars," Obama said.

- Leroy Hood, the president and co-founder of the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle. After Hood developed the automated DNA sequencer, the Human Genome Project was able to identify the 25,000 genes in human DNA. Before he started at his own institute, Hood created the University of Washington’s Department of Molecular Biotechnology with the help of a $12 million grant from Microsoft’s Bill Gates.
The National Medal of Science was created in 1959. Nominees are selected by a committee of presidential appointees. The National Medal of Technology and Innovation was created in 1980. An independent committee from the public and private sector chooses the candidates.
Obama jokes with scientists and inventors

*The Oval*
David Jackson3:54 p.m. EST February 1, 2013

(Photo: JEWEL SAMAD, AFP/Getty Images)

**MU MENTION P. 2**

Facing some of the world's greatest scientists and inventors, President Obama sought Friday to bridge the intellectual divide with humor.

"This is the most collection of brainpower we've had under this room in a long time," Obama said in presenting awards to the nation's top scientists and inventors. "Maybe since the last time we gave out these medals."
The president said, "I have no way to prove that — and I know this crowd likes proof. But I can't imagine too many people competing with those who we honor here today."

Obama awarded the National Medal of Science to 12 researchers, and the National Medal of Technology and Innovation to 11 inventors.

Accomplishments ranged from the invention of LASIK eye surgery to new theories about the evolution of the universe to something called "super-symmetry and string theory."

During the presentation, Obama joked about the news media being sometimes slow to pick up on the potential of an invention. "The New York Times once described Robert Goddard's belief that rockets could one day go to the moon as, quote, 'lacking the knowledge ladled out daily in high schools,' " the president said.

The president joshed with the military aides who read out the citations, some of which referred to complex scientific lingo.

"There are a lot of syllables in some of these things," Obama said. "All right. And I won't know the difference, but they will."

Obama also kidded the winning scientists about attending the post-ceremony reception at the White House.

"Feel free to party here -- this looks like a somewhat wild crowd," Obama said. "Just remember, there's Secret Service here if you get out of hand."

The list of recipients:

Dr. Allen Bard, University of Texas at Austin
Dr. Sallie Chisholm, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Dr. Sidney Drell, Stanford University, Calif.
Dr. Sandra Faber, University of California-Santa Cruz
Dr. Sylvester James Gates, University of Maryland
Dr. Solomon Golomb, University of Southern California
Dr. John Goodenough, University of Texas at Austin

Dr. M. Frederick Hawthorne, University of Missouri

Dr. Leroy Hood, Institute for Systems Biology, Wash.
Dr. Barry Mazur, Harvard University, Mass.

Dr. Lucy Shapiro, Stanford University School of Medicine, Calif.

Dr. Anne Treisman, Princeton University, N.J.

National Medal of Technology and Innovation

Dr. Frances Arnold, California Institute of Technology

Dr. George Carruthers, U.S. Naval Research Lab, D.C.

Dr. Robert Langer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dr. Norman McCombs, AirSep Corp., N.Y.

Dr. Gholam Peyman, Arizona Retinal Specialists,

Dr. Art Rosenfeld, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Calif.

Dr. Jan Vilcek, NYU Langone Medical Center

Team:

Dr. Samuel Blum, IBM Corp., N.Y.

Dr. Rangaswamy Srinivasan, IBM Corp., N.Y.

Dr. James Wynne, IBM Corp., N.Y.

Company:

Raytheon BBN Technologies, Mass., *Represented by CEO, Edward Campbell
Gitmo military psychologist draws MU protest

February 1    The Associated Press

The prospective hiring of a retired Army psychologist who has faced abuse accusations at the Guantanamo Bay military prison is drawing protests at the University of Missouri.

The mid-Missouri chapter of the anti-war Fellowship of Reconciliation planned a Friday afternoon protest outside Hill Hall. That's home to the College of Education, which has selected Larry James as one of two finalists for a top leadership job.

James is dean of professional psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. He previously served as chairman of the psychology department at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and led a team of psychologists assigned to interrogators at the U.S. detention center at Guantanamo Bay.

Human rights groups have accused James of violating his professional duties by allowing interrogators to mistreat military detainees.
Finalist for MU post sparks protest

Group alleges links to torture.

By Brennan David

Saturday, February 2, 2013 at 2:00 am

Protesters on the University of Missouri campus yesterday said they were "disgusted" about the selection of a College of Education job finalist whom they say is linked to torture.

About 40 activists marched from the Islamic Center in downtown Columbia to Hill Hall, where they gathered in frigid temperatures to protest the consideration of Larry James for an administrative post at the College of Education. James, one of two finalists interviewing for the position of division executive director, served as director of the behavior science division at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib while in the military.

Protesters allege a link between James and acts of torture that occurred during his time at the naval base in 2003 and again in 2007-08.

He has never been criminally charged or prohibited to practice as a psychologist, but protesters questioned why MU would consider the controversial candidate as a finalist.

"It's important we uphold the highest standards," graduate student Nabihah Maqbool said.

The activists called James a "war criminal" who should be held accountable, not awarded with a prestigious university position.

Columbia resident Muhammad Muraywid said he is concerned with the idea of welcoming him into the community, and he and Mid-Missouri Fellowship of Reconciliation coordinator Jeff Stack said they are both upset about the prospect of James' hiring.

"He has shown no remorse for what he has done," Stack said.

For the past five years, James has served as dean of the School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

He served 22 years in the military before he retired as a colonel and was a recipient of the Bronze Star Defense Superior Service Medal.
Other qualifications the committee of six College of Education faculty and staff members will consider are his appointments as past president of the American Board of Health Psychology and president-elect for the Division of Military Psychology of the American Psychological Association.

"The search committee was aware of the allegations against James and investigated those allegations thoroughly," College of Education Dean Daniel Clay said.

"He has not been sanctioned for any professional or ethical misconduct by any state or appeals court or any licensing board or accrediting body," he said.

James told the Tribune last month that the allegations against him don't come up every time he interviews for a job, but when they do, his position is to be "open and honest."

"All of those things were thoroughly investigated. ... I was found completely innocent and was not involved in any of those horrible things that occurred at any of those places like in Cuba," he said.

Protesters argued that the university should consider a candidate less controversial and more qualified, but none the Tribune spoke to knew the name of the second candidate interviewed yesterday: University of Minnesota Department of Educational Psychology faculty member Matthew Burns.

At 3 p.m. Tuesday the public will be able to attend an interview of James at the Reynolds Alumni Center, where he will field questions from the search committee and the public.

Clay will make a decision this month or in early March after a recommendation by the search committee.

Committee members are: Michael Pullis, John Lannin, James Laffey, Lisa Flores, Sarah Diem and Brenda Cook.

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Posted in Education on Saturday, February 2, 2013 2:00 am.
At MU, debate over candidate Larry James' Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib role

By John Farmer de la Torre
February 3, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — As questions continue about his involvement in interrogations at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, retired Army psychologist Larry C. James arrives this week as a finalist for a senior administrative position with the MU College of Education.

James has been accused of medical ethics violations in connection with the coercive tactics used on detainees. He was a consulting psychologist both at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay Detention Center in Cuba. Since 2008, he has been dean of the School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio.

Last month, it was announced that James had been selected as one of two finalists for the position of division executive director with the College of Education.

If hired at MU, he would lead a team of about 65 faculty. His expertise would contribute to the school's academic training programs in counseling, according to Michael Pullis, search committee chairman for the college.

Pullis said James' credentials were of such superior quality that the committee was obliged to offer him an interview as a finalist.

The other finalist is Matthew Burns, a professor of educational psychology at the University of Minnesota. Burns has already been through the interview process.

James will be in Columbia from Monday through Wednesday. On Tuesday at 3:15 p.m., he will hold a 60-minute forum for College of Education faculty, staff and students.

Daniel Clay, dean of the College of Education, reconfirmed Friday afternoon that the interviews would continue as scheduled.
"This has been, and will continue to be, an open and transparent search," Clay told a media gathering. "The search committee was aware of the allegations against James and investigated those allegations thoroughly."

Clay's statement was made to the media 15 minutes before several dozen protesters met to formally object to James' candidacy. They presented petitions to the College of Education and Chancellor Brady Deaton asking that James be removed from consideration.

James was deputy director of the behavioral science consultation team at Guantanamo Bay from January to May 2003 and served as director from June 2007 to May 2008.

He was director of a similar team from June to October 2004 at the Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center at Abu Ghraib prison, according to the curriculum vitae he provided to the College of Education search committee.

During those periods, reports surfaced about the abuse of the detainees in custody. James has said that no adjudicatory body has ever found probable cause to initiate sanctions against him because of his connections to the interrogations in Cuba and Iraq.

His critics said a thorough investigation of his possible involvement in the abuses has never taken place. They also asserted that his ethical decisions at Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib should disqualify him to practice psychology.

"There has never been any evidence whatsoever for any of these boards to have the slightest cause to investigate," James told the Missourian in early January.

After he joined Wright State, a 2010 complaint filed with the Ohio Board of Psychology alleged that he exploited detainees' psychological vulnerabilities as part of a regimen of enhanced interrogation techniques in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. The board granted James his license to practice in Ohio in 2008, and that license remains active.

The complaint to the board was filed by psychologist Trudy Bond and three other Ohio residents with the help of Deborah Popowski of the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School.

The complaint called James' role in the development and use of interrogation techniques "integral."
"Dr. James commanded the Guantanamo Behavioral Science Consultation Team (BSCT), a small but influential group of mental health professionals whose job it was to advise on and participate in the interrogations, and to help create an environment designed to break down prisoners," the complaint stated.

During interrogations, detainees were threatened with rape and death for themselves and their families, according to the complaint.

They were subjected to sexual and religious humiliation as part of an interrogation program designed to exploit the prisoners' mental and physical vulnerabilities, the complaint continued.

The complaint said James, as a board-licensed psychologist, should have avoided using his healing skills to harm or exploit anyone under his care.

The complaint also alleged that James broke board ethics rules by maintaining conflicts of interests and by misrepresenting his professional work when he obtained his license.

The Ohio State Board of Psychology dismissed the case six months after it was filed. The board said it was unable to proceed with formal action.

"We conducted an investigation, contrary to what some people might assert," said Ronald Ross, executive director of the board.

"Based on all the information given to us, which was voluminous, we conducted our standard review of the materials and we could not identify a basis to proceed against him formally," he said.

Bond and the International Human Rights Clinic later took the board to court and filed legal pleadings asking for a justification about the James decision.

The case has been in Franklin County Court of Appeals since September 2011.

The complaint points to James' memoir, "Fixing Hell: An Army Psychologist Confronts Abu Ghraib," as a chronicle of the events there and at Guantanamo. Declassified government documents were included in the complaint about the development and use of enhanced interrogation techniques by psychologists that James supervised at both sites.

The history of enhanced interrogations against alleged terrorists began under George W. Bush after 9/11. In early 2002, his administration pushed for more aggressive interrogations
to produce actionable intelligence, but the Pentagon needed legal clearance and new techniques to stay within the limits imposed by international law.

Once that clearance was achieved, the interrogations stepped up, which critics said amounted to torture. The military recruited psychologists at the same time to consult on the development of enhanced interrogation techniques.

The use of enhanced interrogation techniques had been reported in Cuba by the time James arrived at Guantanamo as chief psychologist in 2003 to head the behavioral science consultation team. According to his book, he was dispatched to "clean up."

By fall 2003, the techniques had migrated to Afghanistan and then to Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. By early 2004, reports had circulated about abuses in the prison. James said he was sent to Abu Ghraib in July 2004, again to "clean up."

Two ethical situations in his book are cited by critics as key reasons to investigate his role in the interrogations.

One involved James traveling to Afghanistan to retrieve juvenile detainees whom he later interrogated.

"I was responsible for putting together a team to handle the three juvenile enemy combatants," he wrote in the book. James also wrote that he tended to the boys' health and then focused on their interrogation.

The second incident involved James witnessing a questionable interrogation and failing to stop it. According to his book, four men were holding an agitated prisoner down and trying to dress him in a wig, pink nightgown and lipstick.

He said his first instinct was to stop what he saw but did not.

"I managed to quell that urge and wait," he wrote. "I opened my thermos, poured a cup of coffee, and watched the episode play out, hoping it would take a better turn and not wanting to interfere without good reason, even if this was a terrible scene."

He has also written that his true focus was following the military mission. "It was a requirement of Maj. Gen. Miller that in order for any interrogations to be conducted, I had to be present the entire time."
According to bioethicist Steven Miles of the University of Minnesota, who researches medical ethics during wartime, "medical ethics went off the rail" during the terrorist interrogations in the mid-2000s.

Miles also serves as an adjunct faculty member with the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and has testified against physicians accused and convicted of war crimes.

Documents related to the Ohio complaint and enhanced interrogation techniques that were initially classified are becoming publicly available and might shed more light on the activities of the interrogators.

More information might be forthcoming. The U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has seen and approved a classified 6,000-page report that was critical of the enhanced interrogation techniques, according to The New York Times.

Democrat Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California, the committee chairwoman, issued a statement in December that the report “uncovers startling details about the C.I.A. detention and interrogation program and raises critical questions about intelligence operations and oversight.”

Clay told the media Friday that James would be given "the opportunity first-hand to respond to these concerns."

James has three days of interviews scheduled next week with education administrators and other university officials.

In addition to his military and academic service, James is past president of the American Board of Health Psychology and president-elect for the division of military psychology of the American Psychological Association.

*Supervising editor is Jeanne Abbott*
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Columbia residents protest Larry James' candidacy for MU job

By Caroline Bauman, GH Lindsey, Katie Yaeger
February 1, 2013 | 8:38 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — At 1:45 p.m. Friday, members of the Columbia community gathered next to the Islamic Center of Central Missouri with signs protesting Larry James' candidacy for an MU College of Education position.

Meanwhile, a few blocks away at Hill Hall, the college held a news conference to say James will continue to be a finalist for the position.

"The committee and I felt strongly that we have to have high levels of respect, responsibility, transparency and fairness in this process for Dr. James and give him the opportunity first-hand to respond to these concerns," education Dean Daniel Clay said.

The 40 or so protesters marched first to Hill Hall, where the College of Education is based, and then to Jesse Hall to present an anti-James petition to administrators.

The petition, which had about 65 signatures gathered in about one hour Friday, asked for the removal of James as a candidate for the position of division executive director of the college.

One of two finalists, James has been the dean of the School of Professional Psychology at Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio, since 2008. Before that, he was in charge of behavioral science consultation teams at Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

"Does the University of Missouri want to be bringing onto their campus, in a leadership role, an individual who was on the center stage of the Guantánamo debacle?" Jeff Stack, coordinator for the Mid-Missouri Fellowship of Reconciliation, said to Ann McGruder, executive assistant to Chancellor Brady Deaton, during the group's stop at Jesse Hall.

McGruder met the protesters in the lobby of Jesse Hall outside Deaton's office and said she would relay messages to him.
The Division Executive Director Search Committee has thoroughly investigated the multiple allegations made against James, Clay said at the news conference. The committee found that James has not been sanctioned a single time by a state licensing agency, ethics board or court, he said.

"Only after coming to that determination did they choose to include Dr. James in this final pool of candidates," Clay said. "I have read every available document that's public with respect to Dr. James' situation, and I support the committee's decision to bring him in as a candidate, given the lack of substantive finding relating to any of those allegations by a court, ethics board or state licensing agency."

James is scheduled to interview at MU on Tuesday and Wednesday. The other candidate, Matthew Burns of the University of Minnesota, has completed his interview.

The most important thing in moving forward is fairness and transparency in the selection process, Clay said.

James should be treated "in the same way I expect to treat those protesters, who have a difference of opinion and an important voice in this process," Clay said. "I'm sure they deserve the same level of respect and fairness."

Clay, who came out to meet the protesters when they congregated outside Hill Hall, told them he would listen to their concerns.

A common theme among the protesters was that even though James has never been indicted, hiring him would damage MU's image.

"The behavior that Dr. James allowed violates the core values of this university," MU student Mahir Khan said.

The MU Muslim Student Organization passed a resolution Thursday stating it is against the hiring of James.

"These people should be held accountable, not rewarded with jobs at prestigious universities," MSO Vice President Aamer Trambu said.

MU School of Medicine student Nabihah Maqbool, who will have received four degrees from MU in 10 years by 2016, said MU should not be condoning human rights abuses or a man who allowed them to happen.
"It's important that we (at MU) make sure that we uphold the highest moral standards, and as a student here, I don't want my institution to be smoked by this single individual," Maqbool said. "I am a student, and I will be an alumna for the rest of my life, and this is not the type of person that I want representing my school of education."

Stack said the protest began to form late Wednesday after he heard about James' candidacy.

"The short turnaround time is not an acceptable excuse for inaction," he said. "If we have to expand this campaign, we will."

A public forum with James will be held at 3 p.m. Tuesday in the Reynolds Alumni Center. The first portion will consist of a presentation, and the second portion will allow for the public to ask James questions.

After the interview process is complete, faculty and staff will have time to provide feedback to the committee, Clay said. The committee will then make a recommendation, and Clay said he will make additional reference checks before finalizing a decision. The candidate will likely be selected in early March.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
MU fundraising campaign forges ahead

Public phase has not started yet.

By Rudi Keller

Saturday, February 2, 2013 at 2:00 am

KANSAS CITY — The second effort in less than a decade to raise at least $1 billion to endow the University of Missouri's Columbia campus is almost one-quarter of the way to its goal, the UM Board of Curators was told yesterday.

Near the close of their two-day meeting on the UM-Kansas City campus, board members heard a discussion of initiatives on each campus designed to strengthen the system financially to compensate for fluctuating state funding and other uncertainties. The Columbia campus has received gifts and pledges of $232.1 million since the latest effort was launched, including major gifts of $30 million each to the journalism school and the athletic department, Vice Chancellor Tom Hiles told the curators.

The fundraising campaign is still in its "quiet phase," which means the public push to complete it has not begun, said Hiles, who is in charge of development and alumni relations. And although the numbers seem large, all but 4 percent is dedicated to specific initiatives and is unavailable for general operations.

"Donors want to see impact," Hiles said. "We have been going around talking about the big elements of our campaign. ... We are in the process now of focusing on two or three key areas."

One area being emphasized, Hiles said, is identifying people able to donate $1,000 to $10,000 every year to provide stable support for the campus.

Gov. Jay Nixon announced this week that he was recommending the first increase in funding for higher education since he took office in 2009. If approved by lawmakers, the $411 million appropriation would be $40 million less than the allocation lawmakers made for the system in the spring of 2008.

UM System President Tim Wolfe thanked Nixon publicly for the support. State support, however, is the smallest share of the system's total budget in modern history. Tuition now provides the majority of university operational funding, a position that state aid held in the past.
Board of Curators Chairman Wayne Goode, who as a freshman state lawmaker in 1962 sponsored the bill that created the UM-St. Louis campus, said he doesn't see the state support returning to its once-dominant share.

"That happened over a lot of years," Goode said at a news conference yesterday after the curators' meeting. "You look back at it and I would have hoped that the state would have been able to provide more money for higher education."

The failure of a tobacco tax increase in November ended hopes for a quick infusion of new state cash. It is unlikely, however, that state support will erode further, he said.

"We are a low-tax state," he said. "The money is spread pretty thinly, but I don't see how we can go below where we are."

Nixon was able to offer an increase because a rebounding economy is helping increase state revenue at a modest pace. But this year's funding increase, and any increase for future years, is tied to performance measures adopted for all state colleges and universities by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education. A plan to write a higher education funding formula that uses various factors to determine appropriate levels of state aid also is under way.

That might add additional uncertainty for university finances, Wolfe said.

The funding formula, which is being written by the legislative Joint Committee on Education, is still in draft form. It gives greater weight to more costly programs such as engineering and professional schools in allocating funds.

"I am encouraged by the work they are doing but a bit skeptical because we haven't seen the details to understand it if really is appropriate," Wolfe said.

When he was a new lawmaker, Goode said, state aid was based on the number of full-time students, or the equivalent, on each campus. "That was modified because we saw that wasn't getting the job done and" there was a "more important basis for the money than just head count."

Goode, who sat in the House and Senate for more than 40 years, said he hopes a good formula can be crafted. "I think what the legislature is looking at has merit."

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Posted in Education on Saturday, February 2, 2013 2:00 am.
UM President Tim Wolfe focuses on rising enrollment in speech

By Dan Burley
February 1, 2013 | 5:11 p.m. CST

KANSAS CITY — UM System President Tim Wolfe said he considers the University of Missouri System's continued enrollment growth to be the dominant theme of his first year as president.

Wolfe delivered his first State of the University on Friday, speaking before the UM System Board of Curators at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Since 2001, the system has seen a 34 percent jump in enrollment, adding 19,000 students — enough to create another four-year institution, Wolfe said.

"The lead story for the University of Missouri System in 2012 was our continued record growth," Wolfe said.

The system's total enrollment grew 2 percent in 2012, according to board documents, and now stands at more than 75,000 students overall.

In the context of a rising student population, Wolfe revisited the strategic priorities he outlined in 2012 to assess the system's progress in his first year and potential for the future.

He mentioned advances in online learning, including the development of more than 125 online courses and 12 certificate or degree programs in the past two years that were funded by the system's Office of Academic Affairs.

Wolfe touched on his priority of communicating the system's value to Missourians. He said he's noticed a growing skepticism about higher education.

"Some people will tell you that a college education doesn't pay off like it used to, that students graduate with debt they'll never get out under," he said. "I'm here to tell you they're wrong."
Wolfe said another of his priorities, strategic planning, will provide the framework and focus for the system’s future.

Under his plan, each campus will draft a strategy statement that must describe how each institution will define itself within the system, compete with other universities nationally and achieve specified goals over the next five years.

"People think of strategic planning as a check-the-box exercise that produces reports that never see the light of day," he said. "But the strategy for each campus and the system will drive tradeoffs — what we will do and by implication what we will not do. It influences our budget, who we hire and what kind of students we bring to campus."

In December, each campus presented a rough draft of its strategy statement to the Board of Curators. UM System spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said the campuses’ finalized strategy statements will be unveiled at the curators’ June meeting.

At that time, the board will see a version of the system budget that’s largely shaped by the state appropriations the General Assembly provides in its fiscal year 2014 budget, which is finalized in May.

State funding to the UM System has decreased by more than 10 percent since 2001, putting Missouri 44th in the nation in overall state higher education funding in 2012, according to system documents.

Wayne Goode, chairman of the Board of Curators, said in a post-meeting news conference Friday that Missouri is a low-tax state whose finances are "spread thin."

On Monday, Gov. Jay Nixon called for additional funding for higher education in his annual State of the State address.

Nixon’s budget plan suggested an increase of $34 million to public colleges and universities in the state, or an average increase of 4 percent for each school.

Under Nixon’s plan, a list of performance measures — such as increased graduation rates, increased student retention and improved learning — would determine how much of the $34 million pot each school receives in fiscal year 2014.
Last year, the UM System met all of the proposed performance measures and would receive a 4.3 percent increase in funding, $16.9 million, under Nixon’s plan, according to the document listing the governor’s proposed budget increases.

Meanwhile, tuition has been raised by an average 2.3 percent annually for in-state undergraduate students over the past five years, according to a statement released earlier by Wolfe.

On Thursday, the curators approved increasing tuition and fees by the inflation rate, 1.7 percent, for in-state undergraduates beginning in summer 2013.

The hike lifts MU’s annual in-state undergraduate average tuition by $158, to $9,343 per year.

Also at Friday's meeting, the board adopted a change to its existing bylaws that requires all committee members be present to vote on business at special committee meetings. Previously, it was possible for two members of a three-member committee, such as the board’s executive committee, to constitute a quorum and vote on committee business with no one else present.

This week marked the first meetings for curators Ann Covington, of Columbia, and John Phillips, of Kansas City. Both were appointed by Nixon in January and approved by the state Senate on Thursday.

The board meets next on April 11 and 12 at the Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla.

Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.
MU ready for next BIG thing

By Jake Halliday

Saturday, February 2, 2013 at 2:00 am

It is going to be BIG! Really. When Jerry Parker, associate dean of the University of Missouri School of Medicine, proposed an initiative to stimulate dialogue between MU's medical practitioners and engineers to surface and solve clinical needs, he turned to a group of colleagues to help with planning. Once there was agreement an initiative would have value, the group turned to the big challenge — coming up with a name.

If you have ever done a naming exercise, you know it is important to check whether the name works as an acronym. For once, luck was on our side. One of the first names proposed was Biomedical Innovators Group, yielding the acronym BIG for an initiative about big ideas and potentially the next big thing in health care and medicine.

There is a certain level of spontaneous collaboration between clinicians and engineers at MU through translational research, which attempts to translate university research into benefits for patients, health care and society. The BIG initiative tests an interesting theory that the number and quality of such collaborations can be increased by processes and events to encourage doctors and nurses to surface clinical needs and then matching the clinicians with engineers capable of designing solutions. Stating it differently: Can we do better than leaving biomedical innovation to chance?

At MU, we already know the answer is "yes" in a couple of programs that have been in place for several years. The Biodesign Innovation Program teams a surgical resident with a biomedical engineer and an MBA business fellow. The team spends a year looking at clinical practice, identifying needs for improvement, selecting those that can be addressed by engineering innovation, choosing the best candidates to be developed into working prototypes and elaborating a business plan to advance the innovations toward commercialization.

A second successful program is the Comparative Orthopaedic Laboratory, which teams veterinary and orthopaedic surgeons and biomedical engineers to perfect research-based innovations. However, both of these programs engage a very limited number of the total clinicians and engineers at MU. The BIG initiative intends to extend these approaches much more broadly.

Job One is to make sure all clinicians know engineers are ready to listen and apply their ingenuity to come up with solutions. With that achieved, we can connect research teams to the
expertise needed to commercialize their innovations. This is the focus of a Feb. 11 kick-off event for BIG.

BIG creates a novel networking opportunity for clinicians and innovators to meet, share ideas and collaborate. A process of submitting clinical ideas or technical innovations, early-stage vetting, discussion through a network of experts and matchmaking for project progress is implemented and provided to all MU clinicians and technical thinkers.

BIG is moving forward thanks to a grant from Mizzou Advantage, a program geared to elevate MU’s prowess and national standing in selected strategic fields. The goal is more collaboration and biomedical innovation as BIG gains momentum.

Jake Halliday is CEO of the Missouri Innovation Center, operator of the MU Life Science Business Incubator at Monsanto Place.

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Posted in Saturday Business on Saturday, February 2, 2013 2:00 am.
Lawmakers confirm two UM curators

Friday, February 1, 2013 at 2:00 pm

JEFFERSON CITY (AP) — The Missouri Senate has confirmed two new appointees to the University of Missouri System Board of Curators.

Senators yesterday approved the appointments of former Missouri Supreme Court Judge Ann Covington and Kansas City attorney John Phillips to the nine-member board.


Covington, of Columbia, served on the Supreme Court from 1989-2001 and was the first woman on the high court. Phillips is a partner at the law firm of Husch Blackwell LLP.

The Board of Curators was meeting today in Kansas City.

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Posted in News, Wire on Friday, February 1, 2013 2:00 pm.
Power infrastructure

Allowing a surcharge

By Henry J. Waters III

Sunday, February 3, 2013 at 2:00 am

Back in 2003, Missouri lawmakers passed a law allowing water and gas utilities to request a surcharge to upgrade infrastructure deficiencies. This year electric utilities are asking for the same opportunity.

The bill would enable electric utilities to seek and receive expedited approval from the Public Service Commission for a simple surcharge to upgrade power poles and other elements of the power grid without having to gain approval in more complex time consuming rate case.

Ameren Missouri, Kansas City Power & Light and The Empire District Electric Co. are asking for the simplified process, which they say could enhance chances for Missouri to receive a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to build highly coveted small modular nuclear reactors.

The department awarded a grant to Tennessee but is expected to issue another. A plan developed by Ameren and Westinghouse relies on the existing Callaway nuclear site and collaboration with the University of Missouri. The infrastructure improvement plan sought in today's legislation would improve the state's chances, proponents say.

Even before the small nuclear generator option became popular as the best way to expand nuclear power generation, worry about the power grid existed. Utilities argue it makes no sense to bog down infrastructure maintenance in full blown rates cases involving fuel costs and other larger factors. An infrastructure case would have to be acted on by state regulators within 120 days and could only be levied on ratepayers for three years without an extension in a regular rate case.

Cybersecurity upgrades also could be funded in the accelerated process.

A surcharge would have to be approved by the regulatory commission after a public hearing.

Easier approval of funding for infrastructure projects would lead to increased employment and maintenance of all-important infrastructure. There is no reason the new process would result in higher costs overall.
Consumer protection lobbyists will argue against any rate increase as a matter of general principle, but a well-considered surcharge for this purpose makes sense. The new legislation does not authorize a rate increase. It merely allows a process for considering an expedited limited surcharge.

HJW III

A false friend and a shadow stay around only while the sun shines.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

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Small fire put out in MU campus lab

Saturday, February 2, 2013 at 2:00 am

A fire in a lab in Lafferre Hall on the University of Missouri campus Thursday night caused minimal damage.

Battalion Chief James Weaver said firefighters were dispatched at 10:24 p.m. and arrived five minutes later.

He said there was a fire in a trash can inside a third-floor laboratory. He said someone had been conducting experiments and it was possible hot debris got into the trash can. No one was in the lab at the time of the fire.

The fire was quickly extinguished, but firefighters damaged the door when opening the lab. Weaver estimated that damage at $500.

Firefighters stayed at the scene for a while to ventilate the room, he said.

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Nonprofit online university expands to Missouri

February 2  By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER  The Associated Press

Terry Eftink had the battered knees of a 20-year U.S. Postal Service carrier, five kids who are 12 or younger and hopes of finally finishing college after leaving Southeast Missouri State University more than two decades ago with plenty of time in the classroom but no degree.

When the 45-year-old Oran resident learned that the school in nearby Cape Girardeau only offered daytime accounting classes – little use for a working parent – those plans came to a halt.

Six months later, he's instead enrolled at Western Governors University, a nonprofit virtual school that Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon and chief executives in other states are increasingly embracing as a low-cost solution to the dilemma of working adults who began college but didn't graduate.

"We'll be helping Missourians who never finished college, who are underemployed and who need degrees to move up, reach their full potential," Nixon said in his late January State of the State address, announcing the partnership between Missouri and the Salt Lake City-based virtual school.

That same night in Nashville, Gov. Bill Haslam unveiled similar plans to help the estimated 800,000 adult Tennesseans who have some college credit finish what they started. His plan requires legislative approval, while Nixon expects to issue an executive order to form Western Governors University Missouri.

The governors of Indiana, Texas and Washington have established similar alliances in recent years.

"It's a workforce and economic development issue, almost more than an education issue," said Bob Mendenhall, a one-time Utah technology maven who has been WGU president since 1999, two years after the 19 members of the Western Governors Association created the school.

The school charges about $6,000 for annual tuition, rates far cheaper than those of its for-profit competitors and even at many public four-year universities, including the University of Missouri.
The average student is 37 and two-thirds of its students work full-time. They can receive more than 50 types of bachelor's or master's degrees in four core fields: business, health professions, information technology and a teachers college.

Students advance through classes at their own pace, rather than rely on academic semesters of fixed length, in a process is known as competency-based education. Faculty members are called student mentors, not professors.

"You pass courses based on the mastery of the content as opposed to 'I've sat in a class for 16 weeks,'" said Leroy Wade, an assistant commissioner with the Missouri Department of Higher Education. "So if I can pass the test in two weeks, I can move on. If I need more time, I can take it."

In Eftink's case, that meant completing self-directed courses in organizational behavior, leadership and college algebra in about four to six weeks in the fall. He needed six months, though, to complete a particularly rigorous course in business law.

For now, between 400 and 500 Missouri residents are enrolled at Western Governors University, a fraction of the school's 40,000 students nationwide. Missouri enrollment will likely increase dramatically, as the university not only seeks learners but also hires a chancellor, opens a physical office and hires between 60 and 80 employees, according to Mendenhall.

In Indiana, the two-year-old WGU branch boasts 3,000 students. Former Gov. Mitch Daniels, who is now president of Purdue University, called the online college the state's "eighth university" and appeared on highway billboards and in its TV ads.

The Missouri campus won't receive state money, Mendenhall said, but expects to tap up to $4 million in federal Community Development Block Grants. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is donating another $750,000. The university also hopes to provide eligible students with state financial aid, Wade said.

Mendenhall stressed that Western Governors University won't be competing for recent high school graduates with "bricks-and-mortar" colleges.

"It's clearly a supplement to the state higher education system," he said. "We don't really serve the same student."

For Eftink, earning a college degree would fulfill a promise he made to himself, his wife and his children, as well as a chance to get off his feet in a job that means walking eight to 12 miles daily.

"I always wanted to go back," he said. "I felt like I had left something undone."
ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Lawyer offered $36,000 to man to marry foreign lover, St. Louis feds say

February 02, 2013 12:05 am • By Robert Patrick rpatrick@post-dispatch.com 314-621-5154

ST. LOUIS • It’s a complicated love tale whose twists led to a federal criminal charge.

A married man meets a new woman, from Ukraine, and fears she must leave when her student visa runs out. So he offers another man, already engaged to someone else, money to marry the Ukrainian and give her grounds to stay.

Then the new groom’s old fiancée brings the deal crashing down.

That’s the story, according to federal officials in St. Louis who have charged the Ukrainian, Dar’ya Chernova, 38, with attempting to falsely procure naturalization and lying to an immigration official.

In court documents and testimony, federal prosecutors and agents say that James Douglas Barding, a lawyer in Jefferson City, offered $36,000 to a high school teacher from the same area, Timothy Dunville, to marry Chernova. It was not stated whether the money was paid.

Barding was, they say, “intimately involved” with Chernova. She attended Lincoln University in Jefferson City on a tennis scholarship, her lawyer said, and would later graduate from the University of Missouri with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in mechanical and aerospace engineering.

Chernova and Dunville were married by a municipal judge in Jackson, Mo., on March 13, 2005 — with Barding as a witness — and later filed paperwork with immigration officials so she could stay, prosecutors said.

But Dunville’s former fiancée, with whom he has a child, tipped off officials.

Chernova was named on an indictment June 21 that was sealed until her arrest in November.

At that time, Chernova was an engineer working in Arizona, court records show. She also has worked on research for the Department of Defense, according to online resumes, specializing in micro-air vehicles: drones the size of birds and insects.
Barding has handled civil and criminal cases in federal court, primarily in Jefferson City. He represented Dunville in a Chapter 7 bankruptcy filed on March 17, 2005. He also represented him in a child custody case in Cole County in October of 2005, involving the former fiancée.

In a 2010 interview with immigration officials, Chernova lied when she said Dunville was the father of her second child, according to claims in court documents. DNA tests proved that Barding was the father of both her first and second, prosecutors say.

In accented English, Chernova pleaded not guilty Monday to the charges. Her attorney, Brocca Smith, declined to comment on case specifics but said it was likely to go to trial.

Smith said she believed that Chernova and Dunville remain married and that Chernova's citizenship application was still pending.

Neither Dunville nor Barding was present at the hearing. They have not been charged, according to available court records.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Larry Ferrell, who is handling the case, declined to comment, citing an ongoing investigation.

Reached by phone, Barding said, “The fact that my name has been bandied about as a participant in some of this is interesting, at best.” He declined further comment, referring questions to his lawyer, Chris Slusher, who had no comment.

Dunville also would not comment.

The allegations have a familiar ring at the federal courthouse here.

In 2007, the head of the St. Louis office of Missouri's public defender system was sentenced to a year of probation for marriage fraud and had his law license suspended for two years. Eric Affholter had arranged to have his boyfriend, who was from Peru, marry a friend who also was a work subordinate, in order to stay in the country.

That arrangement resulted in criminal charges against Affholter and his lover, Pedro Cerna-Rojas, who was never arrested and left the country. Affholter, his subordinate and her live-in boyfriend, a St. Louis prosecutor, all resigned.