BIFAD meeting focuses on agriculture research in Missouri and abroad

BY ABBIE FENTRESS SWANSON

The Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) heard about University of Missouri (MU) research on Friday on subjects such as genetically-modified cassava, food contamination in the global supply chain and root biology in relation to drought. About three dozen professors, economists, students and scientists attended the public meeting at the university's Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute in Columbia, Mo.

During the first part of Friday's summit, United States Agency for International Development (USAID) representatives and agronomy professors from Purdue University and the University of Maryland discussed strategies for global integrated pest management and sustainable intensification, which is the practice of ramping up agricultural production without increasing the amount of water or land used. MU faculty presented their agriculture research in the second part of the meeting. They talked about projects they were working on in Missouri that could be applied abroad or that they were working on with agriculture departments at international campuses.

Jill Findeis, who teaches Agricultural and Applied Economics at MU, talked about how her unit's work in Mozambique on increasing bean productivity through the use of phosphorus-efficient seeds could inform policy.
"I think it’s a crime when people say … ‘We can’t get the seed,’” Findeis said. “And we know about that and we’ve heard about that over and over again. How do we get those systems? And how do we get that policy right? How do we get the regulatory framework right?"

MU Agronomy professor Bob Sharp highlighted the research his team was doing on root biology in relation to drought and why it was critical to keep funding it.

“Drought is the most important factor limiting crop productivity world-wide,” Sharp said. “It has huge economic effects both in the U.S. and globally. Obviously, it therefore also has major effects on global food security. And the situation is only going to get worse because of the growing world population.”

Nearly 100 people also watched a video of the meeting online in real time and posed questions to the board like “Does the BIFAD have a clear policy strategy for sustainably transforming and engaging young people in considering farming as a career choice?”

The board didn’t have an answer for that question, but said it would look into it going forward.

“There were several different comments from different speakers during the course of this morning which talked about the importance of youth in agriculture,” said board member Catherine Bertini. “And so perhaps we should pay more attention to that issue. And it would be a natural to try to connect to some of the agriculture-related youth groups that do exist.”

Friday’s meeting marked the first time that the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development had held one of its meetings at a land-grant university. BIFAD is a group of policy and agriculture experts appointed by President Obama that advises the United States Agency for International Development on global food security issues. MU Chancellor Brady Deaton is the chairman of the board.
Georgia chooses MU's Charles Davis as journalism dean

By KARYN SPORY

A University of Missouri journalism professor has been named dean of the University of Georgia Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication.

Charles Davis will begin work in Georgia on July 1, the University of Georgia said yesterday.

Davis has been at MU since 1999.

Davis, who received his master's degree in journalism at UGA, said he hadn't contemplated moving back to Georgia until the offer arose.

Davis, who received his master's degree in journalism at UGA, said he hadn't contemplated moving back to Georgia until the offer arose.

He said the opportunity was so intriguing not because UGA was his "ancestral home" but because of the people and programs at the university and Grady College specifically.

"This is a program that already operates at a high level," Davis said. He said the school's long history — it will celebrate its centennial in two years — dynamic staff and booming economy helped him make his decision.

"When you think about resource development and working with external partners to create collaborative projects, it is just a gold mine," Davis said.

Davis is the facilitator for MU's Media of the Future Initiative, part of the interdisciplinary Mizzou Advantage program. Provost Brian Foster said as a faculty facilitator Davis' job was to bring people together across the university and beyond to create media networks.

"He's brought people together that no one had thought of before," Foster said, pointing to MU's relationship with Hallmark that has fostered work to develop digital storytelling.

Foster said an internal search would be conducted to find Davis' replacement as a faculty facilitator. Applications will be reviewed by a search committee, but Foster will have the final say. Foster added he will receive a lot of advice from the other facilitators on his choice.

Foster said he will miss Davis because he has been a big asset for Mizzou Advantage and the journalism school.
"He's a really good person, and when you have good people, other people would like to have them, too," Foster said.
University of Missouri Health System opens new wing

BY AMANDA WESTON

University of Missouri Health System officials and UM System President Tim Wolfe officially opened the new patient care tower at the MU Hospital at a ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday morning.

The tower will provide increased space and new technology for Mid-Missouri patients, as well as a new home for the Ellis Fischel Cancer Center. The cancer center will provide up-to-date medical imaging units, 66 outpatient exam rooms, a cancer rehabilitation gym and technology allowing patients to receive chemotherapy treatments on an outpatient basis.

The center will also feature a healing garden, one of many environmentally friendly features of the tower. New features include increased natural light and insulation, recycled materials and plant-covered roofs to reduce rainwater runoff.

“All of these features are part of a construction project designed as a ‘green’ or sustainable structure,” said Dr. Paul Dale, interim medical director of the center. “This building was designed and build to foster the health and well-being of our patients and staff who will inhabit the building, but also to reduce the overall impact of the structure on our natural environment.”

UM System President Tim Wolfe emphasized the economic side of the patient center.

“At a time when many hospitals are cutting staff, deferring capital improvements and even closing, MU Health Care is creating new jobs, seeing increased patient volumes, managing its financial resources wisely and positioning itself to provide world-class healthcare to Missourians well into the future,” Wolfe said.

The new tower will provide 97 new jobs, with the majority in nursing positions. The addition will welcome its first patients next week.
Annual Checkups Are a Waste of Time

Are routine doctor visits healthy or harmful?
By Linda Marsal Tuesday, March 19, 2013

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, they say. Getting annual physical exams to check under the hood and make sure everything is working properly seems like a sensible approach that can help us live longer, healthier lives. After all, detecting serious illnesses at their earliest and most treatable stages can save lives.

But it turns out this widely held notion doesn’t stand up to scientific scrutiny: New Danish research has found no evidence that routine checkups increased longevity or reduced the risks of dying from diseases like cancer or heart disease. While the findings are counterintuitive, “the study adds to growing evidence that periodic exams in otherwise healthy adults are a waste of money and may even lead to overdiagnosis and unnecessary treatments,” says medical researcher Lasse Krogsboll of the Nordic Cochrane Centre in Copenhagen.

To investigate this idea, Krogsboll’s team pooled data from 14 previous studies involving nearly 183,000 people, comparing participants who were offered regular checkups with those who saw their doctors only when they had a complaint. In looking at both groups, researchers found no difference in the number of overall deaths, or even deaths due to cancer or heart disease. The checkups apparently made no difference.

A handful of studies also suggested that general health checks had no impact on reducing hospital admissions, disability, time off from work, or the anxieties of worried but healthy people. In fact, patients who got annual physicals were more likely to be misdiagnosed with high blood pressure or high cholesterol, making them more likely to be prescribed unnecessary drugs to treat these ailments. A few trials even indicated that large numbers of people learned they had harmless, but nevertheless alarming, medical abnormalities.

Experts suspect the reason for this unexpected result is that people who genuinely need to see a doctor regularly—the elderly, sufferers of chronic medical conditions, and people with a family history of diseases like diabetes or cancer—already do. Calling for yearly physicals for otherwise healthy people tends to draw in the “worried well,” who don’t seem to derive any added benefit from the extra attention.
“More is not always better,” says Domhnall MacAuley, a physician and editor at the *British Medical Journal* who wrote an editorial accompanying the study. “Calling for systematic assembly-line health checks consumes precious medical resources—in doctors’ time and unnecessary treatments and tests—that could be better used elsewhere.”

**But this shouldn’t be used as an excuse to skip dreaded physician’s visits, cautions Michael LeFevre, a family physician at the University of Missouri medical school and co-vice chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, a group of independent experts that evaluates the benefits of preventive measures.**

“Many adults don’t need an annual checkup, but they do need to see their doctors frequently enough to get the preventive services—mammograms, screenings for sexually transmitted diseases—that we know work,” LeFevre says.
Higher education cuts loom amid Kansas tax changes

March 19
By BRAD COOPER

TOPEKA — Kansas colleges and universities could lose millions in state funding as lawmakers struggle to balance state spending with tax cuts.

House and Senate budgets look to chop $25 million to $30 million from the state’s six major universities and its technical and community colleges.

Gov. Sam Brownback’s call to pay for tax cuts enacted last year, and for even deeper cuts in the future, looms in the talks over higher education budgeting.

“We say we pride ourselves on higher education, yet we’re cutting funding for (higher education) so that our students will have more difficulty getting to college,” said Rep. Ed Trimmer, a Winfield Democrat.

Yet Republican Sen. Ty Masterson, chairman of the budget-writing Ways and Means Committee, said lawmakers have few other places to find savings at a time when the Legislature looks to lower income taxes.

He said higher education is a better option than cutting spending on the medical services for the poor or elementary and secondary education. He said tuition increases can be an option if universities want to spend more.

“You only have a limited number of pots to go to,” Masterson said.

The cuts could mean higher tuition, larger class sizes, a limited ability to recruit top-shelf faculty and programs being curtailed or eliminated.

“A budget reduction will eventually fall on the students,” Washburn University president Jerry Farley told legislators this week.
But from a much broader view, school officials told lawmakers, cuts in higher education will stymie efforts to foster a climate for economic growth and academic achievement that would make Kansas an ideal location for business.

“This is a signal to the marketplace that the state does not see higher education as an engine of economic development, innovation and discovery,” said Steven F. Warren, vice chancellor of research and graduate studies at the University of Kansas.

The $14.5 billion House budget that won tentative approval Tuesday would make its cuts with 4 percent across-the-board reductions.

Meanwhile, the Senate is looking at $25 million in higher education cuts it finds in a 2 percent across-the-board reduction along with other, more specific spending reductions.

Among other things, the Senate has proposed eliminating $10 million for a health education building at the University of Kansas Medical Center and trimming $2.5 million from the University of Kansas Cancer Center.

The cuts proposed for higher education invoked an ongoing debate about income tax cuts enacted last year despite projections the move would blow holes in the state budget.

The Legislature is back this year looking for ways to pay for last year’s tax cut and finance even deeper cuts in the coming years.

Masterson conceded that the higher education cuts might stem from the tax cuts.

“If we had not cut taxes, yes, we could have continued to spend more money,” said Masterson, an Andover Republican. “But that puts us in a Catch-22: The higher (tax) burden you got, the slower your economy recovers.”

Consider a few examples of what the House budget might mean. The University of Kansas’ Lawrence campus would lose about $5.5 million, and the KU Medical Center would lose $4.2 million. Kansas State University would take a $6.7 million hit.

Closer to home, Johnson County Community College would lose about $886,000 while Kansas City Kansas Community College would be out about $430,000.

The House proposal is a marked departure from Brownback’s proposed budget. It would have kept funding for the regents system essentially flat with some enhancements, such as the money for the medical building at the medical center.

If the Legislature ultimately agrees to cut higher education, it will represent a continuing trend of reducing money for the state’s colleges and universities since 2008.

Overall state funding for higher education has fallen to $763.4 million this year from $829.1 million in 2008 — a reduction of about 8 percent.
The proposed 4 percent cut puts more pressure on universities to look at tuition increases, officials said.

“That 4 percent hits us right in the gut in regard to our ability to keep tuition down,” said Larry Gould, provost and chief academic officer at Fort Hays State University.

But it’s not just tuition.

Johnson County Community College president Terry Calaway said the college would need to look at eliminating some career and technical programs that tend to require more pricey equipment.

Washburn’s president predicted that his school would lose eight teaching positions, which could mean larger class sizes and the offering of some courses only every other year.

Kansas State spokesman Jeff Morris said the cuts “certainly would affect our tuition discussions and make for some difficult decisions.”

Republican Rep. Marc Rhoades of Newton, the House appropriations committee chairman, believes that the higher education spending needs to be reined in, especially in the context of rising tuition.

“Why are they increasing tuition by $48 million?” Rhoades asked. “I would submit to you that higher ed is out of control. … The system needs to change.”

Rhoades said lawmakers should ignore any warnings from colleges that they will seek tuition increases because of cuts in state funding.

“Don’t talk to me about me about the fact they’re … going to raise tuition,” Rhoades said. “They do that anyway.”

State data show that tuition has increased 37 percent at the University of Kansas from 2008 to 2013. Kansas State tuition rose about 30 percent.

But Tim Caboni, the vice chancellor for public affairs at KU, noted that spending per pupil at the university is down about 40 percent since 1999 when adjusted for inflation.

As per-student funding drops, he said, tuition increases.

And because KU’s instructional budget is made up of tuition and state tax dollars, there aren’t a lot of places to go to raise money, Caboni said.

“As one decreases, almost necessarily the other one will grow,” Caboni said. “What does that mean for people’s ability to afford a world-class higher education in the state of Kansas?”
An even higher goal for our area

March 19
By DAVE HELLING

NO MU MENTION

It’s hard to watch the thousands of people who poured into downtown for the Big 12 basketball tournament — and thousands expected here for college basketball this week — without thinking about Kansas City’s decision-making in recent decades.

Not about college hoops: Kansas City’s history with the sport is undisputed. And not about downtown: The TV pictures of a crowded Power & Light District surely warmed the hearts of politicians and civic boosters alike.

But the images of college students and alumni here are also a sad reminder that Kansas City, almost alone among major American cities, has never built a world-class university.

Now, before the howling starts at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Rockhurst, Park University, William Jewell and the community colleges, let’s stipulate that those institutions serve an important local need. They provide a high-quality, relatively low-cost post-secondary education for tens of thousands of students. Some offer post-graduate classes in law, dentistry and medicine. Local arts education is particularly strong.

The schools are important parts of the fabric of Kansas City — we would be much poorer, culturally and politically, if they went away.

Even the strongest supporters of those schools, though, would not compare them to major urban research universities like Washington University in St. Louis, or Georgetown in Washington, D.C., or UCLA, or the University of Pittsburgh in, um, Pittsburgh.

Kansas Citians know this. In a 2010 follow-up report for the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, educator James Duderstadt said Kansas City’s schools “fall short of world-class institutions.”

Some argue UMKC could become that school. Alas, the time for that may have passed.
“Kansas City’s need for a world-class comprehensive research university simply cannot be met in the foreseeable future by its existing higher education institutions,” Duderstadt wrote. “Nor can such a research university be created from scratch.”

Educators say there has been progress in linking life sciences studies at Missouri and Kansas schools with the University of Kansas Medical Center, and UMKC has been strengthened with campus improvements and stronger leadership. But if asked to name the most high-profile college in Kansas City, most of us would hesitate.

Kansas City should think about this. World-class schools bring investment and a younger, smarter workforce.

And in the next 50 years, most traditional undergraduate teaching will likely shift to the Internet, leaving intense competition for brick-and-mortar campuses where basic research is pursued.

Kansas City could still be a part of that evolution. That might give all of us something to cheer about, in addition to basketball.
STUDENT WINS COURT BATTLE OVER CHEAPER FOREIGN VERSIONS OF TEXTBOOKS

WASHINGTON • The Supreme Court ruled Tuesday that textbooks and other goods made and sold abroad can be re-sold online and in discount stores without violating U.S. copyright law.

In a 6-3 opinion, the court threw out a copyright infringement award to publisher John Wiley & Sons against Thai graduate student Supap Kirtsaeng, who used eBay to resell copies of the publisher's copyrighted books that his relatives first bought abroad at cut-rate prices.

Justice Stephen Breyer said in his opinion for the court that once goods are sold lawfully, whether in the U.S. or elsewhere, publishers and manufacturers lose the protection of U.S. copyright law.

"We hold that the 'first sale' doctrine applies to copies of a copyrighted work lawfully made abroad," Breyer said.

Had the court come out the other way, it would have crimped the sale of many goods sold online and in discount stores, and it would have complicated the tasks of museums and libraries that contain works produced outside the United States, Breyer said. Retailers told the court that more than $2.3 trillion worth of foreign goods were imported in 2011, and that many of these goods were bought after they were first sold abroad, he said.

In a dissent for herself and Justices Anthony Kennedy and Antonin Scalia, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said the court was ignoring Congress' aim of protecting "copyright owners against the unauthorized importation of low-priced, foreign-made copies of their copyrighted works."

Justice Elena Kagan, joined by Justice Samuel Alito, said in a separate opinion that Congress is free to change the law if it thinks holders of copyrights need more protection. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Clarence Thomas also were part of the court's majority.
Kirtsaeng sold $900,000 worth of books published abroad by Wiley and others and made about $100,000 in profit. The international editions of the textbooks were essentially the same as the more costly American editions. A jury in New York awarded Wiley $600,000 after deciding Kirtsaeng sold copies of eight Wiley textbooks without permission.

The high court wrestled with what protection the holder of a copyright has after a product made outside the United States is sold for the first time. In this case, the issue was whether U.S. copyright protection applies to items that are made abroad, purchased abroad and then resold in the U.S. without the permission of the manufacturer.

The court already has rejected copyright claims over U.S.-made items that were sold abroad and then brought back to the United States for resale.

The justices heard a similar case in 2010, but Kagan did not take part because she worked on it while serving in the Justice Department. The court divided 4-4 in that case, involving discount seller Costco and Swiss watch maker Omega.

The case handled Tuesday is Kirtsaeng v. John Wiley & Sons, 11-697.