College leaders retire in a money class by themselves

When University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton retires this fall he'll step away with his name on a new institute and a $200,000-a-year salary.

That kind of exit deal may not be nearly as hefty as the multimillion-dollar parachutes some corporate executives land, but only a decade ago big-money exits were virtually unheard of for heads of public colleges.

But substantial exit agreements have become more popular as more big business people landed on university governing boards and "brought their business ideas with them," said Washington lawyer Ray Cotton, nationally known for negotiating college president compensations.

Now large exit packages are "common practice," said Peter Eckel, vice president for programs and research at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

And, he said, the dollars attached to those deals keep getting bigger. More often, the exit deal comes with the hire and university governing boards feel pressured to offer a lucrative deal or lose good candidates.

In Georgia, an outgoing president will receive $2 million over five years.

Such big bucks and other perks don't always sit well with faculty, especially when some haven't seen a pay raise in years.

"At a time when faculty, for the last eight years, have not been able to keep up with the cost of living ... I find it unconscionable," said Gary Ebersole, a history professor and the Faculty Senate chairman at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. "They are bringing in the worst of the business model, rewarding top executives. It is demoralizing for people in the labs and in the classrooms doing the real work of universities."

Unlike a lot of other retiring presidents, Cotton said, Deaton will work for the university in retirement. Part time, he'll direct the Brady and Anne Deaton Institute for University Leadership in International Development on the Columbia campus. For that, he will be paid $200,000.

"In this case," said Cotton, who was not involved in the MU negotiations, "it looks like it's the university, not Deaton, who made out best."

Deaton is just the lastest example among the Kansas City area's big public university leaders who've retired over the last five years with a lucrative, post-presidential package.
Before Kansas State University President Jon Wefald retired in 2009, he was being paid $315,962 a year, which included a base salary of $255,298 in state funds and $60,664 from private sources. When he stepped down after 23 years at the helm, the Kansas Board of Regents agreed he would continue to receive his annual base salary of $255,298 for the following two years.

Wefald left the university just months before release of a scathing audit report about hundreds of thousands of dollars in undocumented payments to athletic leaders. He took a 12-month sabbatical the first year and "then returned to K-State in the part-time professor role, with the primary task of writing his book, tentatively titled "The Turnaround Years at K-State: The Years of President Jon Wefald from 1986 to 2009," said Beth Bohn, university spokeswoman. He expects to finish within the next year or so.

"One thing I did not expect is how time-consuming this would be," Wefald said about his book writing. "They are not just giving money away. I'm working seven days a week. This is important. A history of K-State."

Since 2011, K-State has continued to pay Wefald as part of a five-year plan, but at a lower rate of $157,982 a year.

That annual amount is a little more than a third the salary paid to current K-State President Kirk Schulz, who just this month got a $60,000 raise to bring his annual salary to $460,000, with $291,804 coming from state funds and $168,246, from private funds.

The Kansas Board of Regents also gave KU Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little a $60,000 raise, bringing her salary up to $492,650. About $272,000 comes from the state and $221,000 from private funds.

Robert Hemenway retired from KU the same year Wefald stepped down at K-State. He, too, took a year's sabbatical and in 2010 returned to the Lawrence campus for a year to write a book. He also taught one English class for two semesters. He was paid $340,352 for each of those two years, the same annual salary he'd gotten his final year as chancellor. But Hemenway is now fully retired and hasn't received a salary from the university since the summer of 2011.

The packages given to Wefald and Hemenway were a way to "recognize them and thank them for service to their respective campuses, for their longevity," said Christine Downey-Schmidt, a member of the regents board.

Cotton, nicknamed "the money man" by chancellors and presidents who've retained him to negotiate compensation and exit contracts, has sat on both sides of the table, sometimes representing the president doing the leaving, and other times the institution.

He said that in corporate America, a company with a multibillion dollar budget, like the big public colleges have, would never have a president making as little as $400,000, $600,000 a year.

"It would be in the millions," Cotton said.

And when they left, the parachute would be comparable. Although post-president packages have gotten pretty sizable in recent years, Cotton said, "there is a lot more headroom to go."

At the end of this month University of Georgia President Michael Adams will retire with $2 million that he will get over five years. Adams, who has been president 16 years, will be paid $660,000 a year for two
years to teach and write and $258,000 for each of three years. He’ll also receive a one-time $600,000 payment in deferred compensation.

Until his retirement is official on Nov. 15, Deaton will receive his current pay: a base salary of $333,076, plus a one-time $42,000 payment for deferred compensation (accessible upon retirement). He also gets $29,800 in incentive pay which is based on goals set each year and a $50,000 retention incentive.

Because Deaton’s new job will be part time, he’s eligible to draw his retirement pay. University officials said they have haven’t calculated how much he’ll get in retirement benefits.

“But he won’t be getting any extra stuff,” said Christian Basi, university spokesman. No car, no housing allowance.

The university sees Deaton’s continued connection as an asset. His work to fight global hunger through the school’s new institution is expected to attract millions in domestic and international private funding to MU, said UM System President Tim Wolfe.

“I am a member of faculty first and foremost,” said Deaton, who won’t teach but will do research. “There are some faculty members paid a lot more than that, some less.”
MU museums' priceless artifacts make move a challenge

Friday, June 28, 2013 | 6:00 a.m. CDT

BY GRETA WEBER

COLUMBIA — Thousands of ancient artifacts, famous paintings and archeological remnants in two prized MU museums soon will receive a new home, but it's not a move that everyone is happy about.

The Museum of Art and Archeology, the Museum of Anthropology and the Museum Support Center will pack up their collections and move into the former Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, now as Mizzou North, at Garth Avenue and Business Loop 70. The move is part of the first wave of Renew Mizzou, a $22.85 million project that will include major renovations to Jesse, Pickard and Swallow halls.

The decision to move the museums to Mizzou North triggered criticism from MU faculty and community members, who worry about the museums' future. MU spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said the museums will remain at the former Ellis Fischel building "for the foreseeable future." It remains unknown whether they will ever return to the main campus. While the Ellis Fischel building could offer more space for displaying the museums' collections, most of which are in storage, the old hospital needs significant updates to serve as a proper museum that is safe and secure for invaluable art pieces.

And relocating the museums from the center of campus could limit their accessibility for MU courses and nearby Columbia schools that incorporate the collections into their curriculum.

Despite the concerns, Michael O'Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science and the director of the Museum of Anthropology, is optimistic it will work out.

"I think in the end, this will be an excellent arrangement for everybody," he said. "At least I hope so."

Museum of Art and Archeology

One of the most renowned museums in Missouri, Pickard Hall's Museum of Art and Archeology houses more than 15,000 pieces from the Paleolithic period to modern times.
Pickard Hall was home to MU's chemistry department, and experiments in the 1960s left lingering radiation in the walls, its attic and beneath the floor boards. Although the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 2011 said the amount of radiation in Pickard Hall was safe, MU officials asked for more time to clear out the entire building and conduct further tests. Plans call for completing the museum's move by the end of the year.

"Since we now have available, workable space in the former Ellis Fischel Hospital, we have determined the most effective way to continue necessary testing in Pickard is to completely empty the building during the process," Gary Ward, associate vice chancellor for facilities, wrote in a news release.

The large scope of the inventory and limited space in Pickard Hall allow the museum to display only 3 percent to 6 percent of its collection at any given time, director Alex Barker said. The rest is packed into the museum's storage rooms.

One of the storage rooms is a small space solely devoted to paintings. Several rows of vertical fence-like racks can be pulled out to hang dozens of paintings from floor to ceiling. One of the paintings in this high-density storage room is a portrait of former Missouri Gov. David R. Francis, for whom Francis Quadrangle was named.

Two other storage rooms have scores of cabinets and drawers that contains thousands of artifacts ranging in size and age. One contains non-Western pieces and the other materials from all over the world. An oversize woven mask from Melanesia, smeared with paint and mud, sits on one of the storage room cabinets as the staff prepares it for the move. Barker said they need to build a crate around the delicate mask, which dates back to the early 20th century, so it can be safely moved.

"We're preserving things that weren't designed to be preserved," Barker said, referring to the mask. "We have to stabilize the material without changing the inherent character of the piece."

There are three main factors — light, temperature and humidity — that museums have to control to preserve art. Barker said the staff tries to keep the building's temperature and humidity as constant as possible.

"Changing temperatures are bad, but changing humidity is worse," he said.
Significant changes in humidity cause artifacts to expand and contract, resulting in damaging cracks. Digital and analog loggers around the museum keep track of temperature and humidity. Those will have to be installed at Ellis Fischel.

The museum acquires most of its pieces from donations, some from the artists themselves. American watercolorist Keith Crown painted a work specifically for the Museum of Art and Archeology that depicts the museum and some of its collection.

The museum's display has 11 permanent galleries, including an ancient art gallery, a cast gallery, a medieval and Byzantine gallery and a European and American art gallery. Collections are rotated through the museum's three exhibition spaces.

The European and American art gallery is one of the largest in the museum. It has pieces from the internationally recognized Samuel H. Kress collection, which was given to MU in 1961 and is "the nucleus of the National Gallery of Art," Barker said.

"The Kress collection of Renaissance paintings is hugely important," Barker said. "In many ways, receiving that collection of masterpieces transformed what had been a study collection of ancient art into a true art museum."

The cast gallery is also a distinguished collection. Plaster replicas of Greek and Roman figures, some standing more than 10 feet tall, are on display in the ground-floor gallery.

"The cast gallery is an oddity," Barker said. "They are very high-quality reproductions, because they are done from the original material."

Casts from original sculptures are also something that museums no longer allow, because the replication process can damage the originals. The gallery belongs to the Department of Art History and Archaeology, but the Museum of Art and Archaeology has managed it for about 30 years, Barker said.

The American Association of Museums accredited the Museum of Art and Archeology in the 1970s. Of roughly 17,000 museums in the U.S., only 700 are accredited. Accreditation from the group "brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards, and continued institutional improvement," according to the museum's website.

'Unethical, inexcusable' versus 'a change in mindset'
Larry Stebbing, assistant preparator for the Museum of Art and Archaeology, said the move is a terrible idea.

"This is the jewel and crown of the university," Stebbing said. "It's the third-largest art collection in the state of Missouri. It's a beautiful little place."

Although the former Ellis Fischel building has more square footage than Pickard Hall, Stebbing said more space doesn't necessarily mean the museum can display more of its collections.

"We have a net 15 percent reduction in the amount of display space we have," he said. "The people involved in making decisions on this are thinking in two dimensions. Art is displayed in three dimensions, and we don't have enough overhead space to put up two dozen different things."

Stebbing deemed Ellis Fischel "a wholly inappropriate place to put the art."

"There's steam lines, water lines and duct valves in every place we would put the art," he said. "That is a standard in the industry not to stick stuff under those kind of utilities."

Stebbing said he and other staff members are calling Ellis Fischel "Mucinex," a nickname that came out of "museum annex."

Stebbing not only sees a problem with housing art in an unfit building, but he also worries about what the move itself will do to the collections.

"This move will put the whole museum at risk," he said.

Stebbing also said no one at the museum was consulted before MU declared that it must move, resulting in uninformed decision-making.

"I think whoever decided that we would be out by the end of the year really did think that we would just drop some small things in cardboard boxes wrapped in newspaper and that it'd be as easy as moving the family china," Stebbing said. "But it's not."

Stebbing said he recently learned that MU is soliciting bids from companies that could perform the move.
The cast gallery will be one of the most difficult collections to move because the items are extraordinarily heavy and delicate. One of the solid marble statues, the Bathing Nymphs, weighs close to a ton, museum guard Lucas Gabel said.

Barker said the statues will need to undergo a rigging process that involves strategically placing straps and ropes so movers can transport them.

"If you rig them too tightly or in the wrong place, straps could dig into the plaster," Barker said.

Museum guard Lucas Gabel agreed there was a lack of consultation. "There are people making decisions that have never stepped foot in this museum."

He also said the timetable to move out by the end of this year is unreasonable.

"We can't possibly move all of this in six months," Gabel said. "I don't see a way to renovate, reinforce the floors here so we can move, as well as give preparators time. Those three tasks make for an extremely tall order."

Stebbing summed up the decision to move the museum as "unethical, inexcusable and aesthetically strange."

While Stebbing and Gabel are deeply concerned about how the move will affect the museum and its collections, O'Brien sees it differently.

"I think there's a lot of positives involved in the move, including the fact that you have two great museums housed under the same roof," O'Brien said. "It's one-stop shopping for the museum world."

O'Brien said he fully expects that Ellis Fischel will be able to accommodate everything in the Museum of Anthropology and in the Museum Support Center, located on Rock Quarry Road just south of Stadium Boulevard.

"I don't think (the move) will affect operations once we get relocated and open," he said. "I think it will be just great."

O'Brien also said Ellis Fischel will provide a lot of close parking for visitors, which is a problem on campus. He added that sometimes it takes people longer to get across campus than the eight minutes it takes to drive to Mizzou North.
"It's a change in mindset," he said. "You have to get people used to the idea that the museums are no longer on campus, but they're eight minutes away."

**Museum of Anthropology and Museum Support Center**

Now located in Swallow Hall, the Museum of Anthropology will join the Museum of Art and Archaeology in Ellis Fischel. The Museum of Anthropology also has to store the majority of its collection. What isn't on display in Swallow Hall is kept off-site at the Museum Support Center, which also is set to move into the former Ellis Fischel.

O'Brien said the 23-year-old support center is not in the best condition. Once renovated, Ellis Fischel could be a better place for the artifacts, he said.

The support center houses most of the Museum of Anthropology's collection. The center is a large warehouse where thousands of boxes rest on rows of metal shelving more than 10 feet high.

"All museums have collections that are way too big to display," Assistant Curator Brandy Tunmire said. "We're unique because we let you see what's in storage."

The center opens its doors to MU students, researchers and the general public. Most museum storage facilities don't do that, Tunmire said.

According to its website, the museum is the only anthropology museum in Missouri and one of few in the Midwest. Its archeological collection is the largest holding of prehistoric Missouri artifacts in the world, including millions of items dating from 9,000 B.C. to modern times. Basketry, weapons, masks and textiles are among its ancient artifacts.

The **Grayson Archery Collection** is one of the most distinguished collections housed in the support center. Collections Manager Audrey Gayou said it contains about 3,000 arrows and 2,500 bows from six continents. The oldest item is a Persian bow from 1300 A.D., which Gayou said is in remarkable condition for its age.

"We are so lucky to have this collection," Tunmire said. "It gets more regular people to come visit us at the MSC."

Very little of the Grayson Archery Collection is actually on display at the Museum of Anthropology because the display cases are too small for the bows.
One of the most unique items in the support center is a green 1975 Ford Econoline van named "Ghost Dancing." Author and former MU English professor William Trogdon drove the van around the United States while writing his bestselling book, "Blue Highways," under the pen name William Least Heat-Moon. The support center received the van in 1994.

"An artifact is anything and everything used and modified by humans," Gayou said.

The support center also has a controlled environment to protect the artifacts. The building is kept at 70 degrees with 40 percent humidity and low lighting to keep conditions stable.

"We have optimum preservation conditions," Tunmire said.

The permanent exhibition in Swallow Hall focuses on Native American and Missouri history. Handmade Native American blankets with intricate and colorful patterns are hung in one of the dimly lit display cases. Other cases house woven basketry, pottery and guard sticks.

The permanent exhibit in Swallow Hall is scheduled to move out by June 1, 2014. The support center's holdings won't be moved until faculty with temporary offices at Mizzou North can return to Jesse Hall, which is being renovated now, O'Brien said.

"That is two years down the road or so," he said.

**Educational accessibility**

Because the museums are in the center of campus, MU courses and nearby schools integrate tours into their curriculum.

"As an academic museum, the research and teaching functions are central to what we do, and that's ultimately how we value individual works in the collection," Barker said.

Rachel Harper, coordinator of the humanities sequence in the Honors College, believes the museums will lose their educational benefit to the campus when they move to Business Loop 70. She uses the Museum of Art and Archaeology to help her students understand the "material culture" of the humanities.

"Every year, we set up tours with the curators for all of the students enrolled in the sequence," Harper said. "The curators do a wonderful job showing collections that match the time period that we're covering."
She said the school takes 250 to 275 students to Pickard Hall every semester.

Moving the museum "will completely make it unavailable to students," Harper said. "The benefit of having the museum locally on campus is that we can take students during the class period for a tour."

With no plan for the museum's return to campus, Harper questions its future.

"The move of the museum to north campus without a plan for return is essentially a death sentence for the museum," Harper said. "You can't use the collections as we have in the past."

Even if moving to Mizzou North would allow the museum to display more of its collections, Harper would rather keep it on campus where it's easily accessible to students.

Lee Expressive Arts Elementary School, which is five blocks away from the museums, frequently schedules tours of the exhibits.

Ann Mehr, Lee Elementary art specialist, said the Museum of Art and Archaeology is the school's official Partner in Education.

"The museums have such a powerful effect on learning because the children learn that throughout time and in all cultures, people basically have the same needs and celebrations," Mehr said. "It's an authentic learning opportunity in a sea of virtual learning for these kids."

She said each grade visits the museums at least twice a year.

"The second-graders do a unit on literacy through the historical development of jazz, and we start that unit in the Africa section of the museum," she said. "We talk about geometric patterns and traditions and ceremonies."

Fifth-graders do a kind of capstone project with the Museum of Art and Archeology, selecting an individual piece to research and prepare a talk about.

"Once the kids have adopted an artifact and talked about it, they feel so very confident about being able to discuss art and use art vocabulary," she said.

Having the museums on campus not only makes them walkable for Lee Elementary students, but it also exposes the children to higher education, Mehr said.
"When the children go on the Mizzou campus, they gain a familiarity with higher education that will make them comfortable attending universities in the future," she said.
She also hopes that plans for bringing the museums back to campus will become more clear. "It's vital for the health of the campus as well as the health of downtown."
"I appreciate the fact that they're going to clean up Pickard, but it seems that one thing that the people I have talked to on campus and at Lee want to understand is a timeline to get the museums back to campus," Mehr said.

**Turning a hospital into a museum**

Major changes will be required before the former Ellis Fischel building can serve as museum. Of the $22.85 million budget for Renew Mizzou, $1.5 million has been allocated for moving the Museum of Art and Archaeology and renovating the hospital building, according to the news release. Karlan Seville, spokeswoman at MU Campus Facilities, said the cost for moving the Museum of Anthropology is unknown.

O'Brien said he and other museum staff are figuring out exactly what kind of renovations need to be done.

He said some walls will have to be taken out to accommodate foot traffic through the exhibits.

"You have to build displays," he said. "You've got to look around and decide what walls need to be taken down and moved. There's a lot of work that will have to go into that."

Banken, the MU spokeswoman, said Campus Facilities is assessing the old Ellis Fischel building. Ward told Banken that he knows some changes will need to be made in the air conditioning and heating systems. Some walls also will have to be moved to accommodate the huge statues, she said.

"They're assessing," Banken said, "and once they know exactly what will need to be done they'll call for bids for the work."

*Supervising editor at Scott Swafford.*
Editor, the Tribune: New University of Missouri System Vice President Henry Foley is a needed change in system administration. Faculty form pillars of merit upon which MU exists, and the dismal absence of system administrators who actually experienced university teaching and research, faculty governance and the tenure process has led to ineffective practices on issues ranging from online education to commercializing intellectual property.

Foley has been a professor for more than 20 years and has the needed qualifications. He might be worth $350,000 a year.

Salaries like his have resulted in the $43 million annual budget of the UM System. We can only hope that President Tim Wolfe follows through on the consolidation of administrative positions and reduces this Missouri taxpayer burden.

The request has been made to give tenure to Foley in the Department of Chemical Engineering. Evidently, Foley and the administration do not believe a $350,000 annual salary is enough and believe Missouri taxpayers should basically give $10.5 million ($350,000 over 30 years) to Foley just for showing up and staying in Columbia.

Tenure is important to preserve academic freedom in research and teaching, neither of which applies to the position of vice president of academic affairs. Isn't it interesting how liberally MU administration is willing to spend Missouri taxpayer money for administrator perks?

I hope Foley fixes the many broken aspects of UM System administration — or perhaps eliminates it altogether. However, let's first see what he is all about before we make the $10.5 million commitment.

Galen J. Suppes, professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Missouri
MU student leader joins effort to fight Stafford loan rate increase

Thursday, June 27, 2013 | 7:13 p.m. CDT; updated 7:52 p.m. CDT, Thursday, June 27, 2013

BY CLAIRE BOSTON

COLUMBIA — Barring action from Congress, interest rates on subsidized Stafford loans are set to double Monday, increasing borrowing costs for more than 40 percent of MU undergraduates.

Nick Droege, president of the Missouri Students Association, joined more than 100 campus leaders from across the country to send a letter urging lawmakers to take action on the rates.

"We signed on with the national effort, and we kind of took it into our own hands to make local efforts," Droege said. "Right now, we're focusing on contacting our local representatives by calling and tweeting and urging them to take action."

Subsidized Stafford loans are available to undergraduate students with financial need. The U.S. Department of Education pays the loans' 3.4 percent interest rate until six months after a student leaves school.

The rate is set to jump to 6.8 percent next week.

Unsubsidized Stafford loans, available to all undergraduate and graduate students regardless of financial need, already have an interest rate of 6.8 percent, which the student begins paying immediately after taking out the loan.

**During the 2011-2012 academic year, 10,491 undergraduates at MU took out $42.7 million in subsidized Stafford loans, according to the Missouri Department of Higher Education's DHE-14 form.**

Justin Chase Brown, associate director of the MU Office of Student Financial Aid, said few students have expressed concern about the increase.

"We haven't heard much feedback" from students, Brown said. "There's a lot of misinformation."
Brown said some sources have suggested, incorrectly, that a rate hike would cost students $1,000 more a year. Rather, he said, students who make minimum payments on their loans for 10 years would expect to pay about $2,600 more over the life of each loan.

"When they talk about the interest rate doubling, that puts a more severe perspective on it," Brown said. "It’s not like their loan would double, but it would impact students and how much they end up paying in the long run."

According to the Department of Education, MU students take out a median of $19,403 in federal loans to finance their education. The national average is more than $26,000.

Droege, who receives financial aid including a subsidized Stafford loan, urged all students and Columbia residents to take action.

"The biggest thing that would be really helpful, whether it’s students who are affected or students who aren’t, or even people who aren’t students at all, would be to contact local representatives," Droege said.


"That’s kind of all we can do right now, being in the time crunch we are now," Droege said.

*Supervising editor is Elizabeth Brixey.*
WASHINGTON — Student loan rates will double Monday — at least for a while — after a compromise to keep student loan interest rates low proved unwinnable before the July 1 deadline, senators said Thursday.

Sen. Tom Harkin, the chairman of the Senate education panel, said none of the proposals being circulating among lawmakers could win passage, and he urged lawmakers to extend the current rates for another year when they return from the July 4 recess. Harkin said his colleagues could retroactively restore the current rates after the holiday.

"Let's put this off for a year," Harkin, D-Iowa, told reporters.

The interest rate on new subsidized Stafford loans is set to go from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent Monday unless lawmakers take action. Congress' Joint Economic Committee estimates the increase will cost the average student $2,600.

"Neither party wants to see rates rise next week," said Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C.

But a one-year rate extension isn't an acceptable option, either, he said.

"Last year, we kicked the can down the road and passed a one-year extension for only a small group of students. ... Why would we make the same mistake again and just kick the can down the road another year?" said Burr, who was among a group of senators who worked on a competing proposal with Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va.

The Manchin-led proposal would link interest rates to the financial markets. It borrowed heavily from a version House Republicans passed earlier and from principles included in President Barack Obama's budget proposal.

Critics called it a bait-and-switch move that would provide students lower interest rates at first before they climb upward as the economy improves.
"Students across this country would rather have no deal than a bad deal," said Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I. "We're at the point where we have to do our best to extend the 3.4 percent interest rate while we work on a good deal, not just any deal."

Republicans blamed Democrats and said they would be responsible for the expected rate hike.

"As a result of their obstruction, the Democrat-led Senate will leave town and allow interest rates on some new student loans to increase on Monday," said Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell. "Senate Democrats continue to block reform and insist on kicking the can down the road."

Republicans also noted the Manchin-led proposal had many similarities with Obama's, including a link between 10-year Treasury notes and student rates.

"This agreement is very much like the proposal in the president's budget, it is very much like the proposal passed by the Republican House of Representatives and it will save billions of dollars in interest for all 11 million students taking out loans this year by dropping rates on all student loans," said Tennessee Sen. Lamar Alexander, the top Republican on the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

Alexander, a former education secretary, called Harkin's proposal "a short-term, political fix."

"That's no fix at all when we have a plan to help all students that we can pass quickly," he added.

Nothing was happening — quickly or not — before July 1, meaning students who take loans would face higher rates. Senators were heading out of town without a deal, and Harkin said his colleagues would consider a retroactive fix on July 10.

"I think we are nowhere between now and July 1," said Rep. George Miller of California, the top Democrat on the House Education and the Workforce Committee. "It sounds to me like the Senate is going to leave town without dealing with this."

But Democrats promised to turn back to them when they get back to Washington, first with a short-term fix and then a longer-range measure.
The law that governs college and universities expires this fall and lawmakers planned to rewrite it starting in September. Democrats said they prefer to include a comprehensive student loan measure in it, rather than as a stand-alone bill.

"We need a one-year patch to keep interest rates from doubling on student loans," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass. "That buys us the time."
Why Americans Are Eating Fewer Hot Dogs

By Paul Lukas

June 27, 2013

Americans spent $1.7 billion on hot dogs last year—and that’s just at supermarkets; it doesn’t count wieners purchased at restaurants and sports facilities or from street vendors. And no day is better for hot dog consumption than the Fourth of July, when Americans are expected to eat about 150 million of them—enough to stretch from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles more than five times.

While those numbers are impressive, overall hot dog sales are declining. According to figures from IRI, a Chicago-based market-research firm, sales dropped more than 3 percent in 2012 from 2011, following two consecutive years of smaller declines. Figures for this year are looking soft as well. The slump is surprising in light of the sluggish economy—hot dogs are usually considered the ideal recession foodstuff.

Ronald Plain, a professor of agricultural economics at the University of Missouri, offered a few possible explanations for the frankfurter’s failing fortunes. Hot dogs are particularly popular among children, for example, so America’s declining birth rate may be to blame. Changing immigration patterns and demographic profile may also play a role. Janet Riley, president of the National Hot Dog & Sausage Council, a trade group, sees other factors at work. “Higher raw-material costs are leading to higher retail price points,” she says. “Consumers are very sensitive to that.” Ryan Stalker, brand manager for Hebrew National, whose sales are off by 5 percent this year, agrees. “The biggest challenge facing our industry is the rising costs of goods, especially beef prices, over the past few years, which usually translates into softness in sales.”

None of this surprises Josh Ozersky, a food journalist and historian. He predicts the hot dog will become increasingly marginalized as the U.S. palate broadens. “I would be willing to bet that more Americans, and especially younger Americans, now eat nachos or tacos than hot dogs,” he says. But what about the many outlets that serve nachos on hot dogs? “That’s just proof of the desperate state of the hot dog!” he says. “That’s like a middle-aged actress who gets Botox and breast implants to try to stay relevant.”

One brand has bucked the downward trend: Nathan’s Famous (NATH), whose sales are up 17 percent from last year. “Naturally, I think it’s because we have the best hot dog,” says President Wayne Norbitz. “In tough times, if people are going to eat fewer hot dogs, they often choose a premium product. They choose to indulge.” Nathan’s also gets a promotional boost from its annual July 4 hot-dog-eating contest at Coney Island.
The hot dog still has one stronghold: baseball stadiums. Fans can buy everything from sushi to barbecued ribs, but hot dogs remain the top seller at almost every big league ballpark. (The exception: Miller Park in Milwaukee, where sausage is king.) There’s also a smattering of artisanal dog restaurants, such as Bark, in Brooklyn. The owner, Josh Sharkey, bastes his hot dogs with “Bark sauce,” a concoction of smoked lard whipped with butter.

Even Sharkey says it’s not easy being in his line of work. “It’s a pretty tough business model, because it’s based on a low price point,” he says. “So it’s a volume business—you have to sell a lot of hot dogs.”