MU expects smaller freshman class this fall

There will be fewer freshman moving into residence halls at the University of Missouri this fall compared with last year.

Ann Korschgen, MU vice provost for enrollment management, and Barbara Rupp, director of admissions, estimates freshman enrollment at 6,165 based on current estimates, the Columbia Daily Tribune reports. Korschgen said a decline in high school populations in Missouri and the Midwest is a main factor to the smaller freshman class this year.

Applications from Missouri residents dropped by 675 from last year, and deposits, a fee of $300, decreased by 417. Overall, freshman deposits have decreased by 477 from last year. Tuition for in-state students for the 2013-2014 school year is $9,430, while non-Missouri resident tuition is $22,822.
MU students get early start on move-in

Move-in week begins at MU.

By Karyn Spory

Monday, August 12, 2013 at 2:00 pm

The newly renovated Mark Twain Hall at the University of Missouri seemed eerily quiet Monday morning as rain pattered down outside — at least until freshman Justice Henderson turned up her music as she unzipped her suitcases to continue unpacking.

Henderson, a pre-journalism student, was one of nearly 80 students to move into Mark Twain yesterday, in preparation for the semester that begins next Monday. The residential hall will house 380 students, but the official move-in day isn't until Wednesday. Some students, though, including those planning to rush a sorority or participate in ROTC, Marching Mizzou or athletic teams, moved in yesterday.

Henderson wasn't among those groups but still wanted to get a head-start. "I paid to move in early just so" my mom and I "didn't have to deal with the hassle on move-in day," she said.

She said so far she liked her new home. "I like my bathroom — I don't have to go out into the hall to use the bathroom," she said. Mark Twain features single- and double-style suites.

Henderson, originally from Fort Worth, Texas, said she had only been on MU's campus twice — for a campus tour and orientation — and was excited to explore her new surroundings.

"I'm excited to just walk around and see where my life is going to be for the next year," she said.

Mark Twain was originally built in 1963 by the private Chicago-based University Dormitory Development Inc. MU bought the facility in 1986. The hall was closed in 2011 and reopened Wednesday after undergoing $21.7 million in renovations, hall coordinator Chase Rother said.

Rother said the hall features 194 spaces, with eight of those accessible for people with disabilities. The residence hall also is connected to The Mark, a dining hall that can
accommodate 250 students, according to the university's website. Mark Twain houses journalism, communication and education majors.

Jessica Root, an aspiring writer, said she hopes a little of the wit and success of her residential hall's namesake, Mark Twain, will rub off on her.

"Mark Twain is a writer from Missouri, and that's kind of what I want to do. It's inspiring that way," said Root, a freshman pre-journalism major.

Mark Twain Hall, however, was not Root's first choice. She said she and her roommate, a friend from high school, wanted to live in Hudson, but her roommate didn't accept the request soon enough, leaving few housing options. "

Mark Twain was one of the only ones left, but it worked out really well," she said, noting that the proximity of Greek Town will be nice because she is planning to rush.

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Nixon rallies educators and community leaders in fight against income tax cut

10 hours ago  •  By Margaret Gillerman mgillerman@post-dispatch.com 314-340-8126

NO MU MENTION

NORMANDY • Gov. Jay Nixon brought his campaign against a Republican-backed state income tax cut to town Monday night and urged a couple hundred school officials and community leaders to urge their legislators to sustain his veto of the bill. He said the bill would force draconian cuts to public schools in Missouri.

The governor has been touring the state to fight supporters of the bill, which he called a “reckless experiment cooked up by a few special interests, bankrolled by one very wealthy individual.” He was referring to retired investor Rex Sinquefield, the founder of a committee called Grow Missouri that has been mounting an expensive advertising blitz in favor of the bill. Supporters of the tax cut bill say it would boost the state economy and jobs.

In a speech at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Nixon also attacked “lobbyists and lawyers” who backed the bill and called them “special interests.” Nixon says the bill would also would hurt seniors and raise the cost of prescription drugs as well as harm education. The Legislature will hold a veto session next month.

Nixon warned Monday that if legislators listened to the “ideologues” and overrode his veto of the income tax bill the state could lose $800 million. The Legislature says the reduction would be about $692 million. According to the administration, K-12 school funding would plummet by $260 million a year. St. Louis city schools could see a reduction of at least $10.3 million a year, and up to $17.8 million this year, the governor said.

The bill “would starve our public schools of the basic support they need to educate our kids now... and for years to come — draining billions away from our schools over the next decade,” he said.

Nixon disappointed some in the audience in saying that he wanted to wait until next year to address state law on the student transfer programs affecting the Normandy and Riverview Gardens school districts. The districts are involved in the program because they lack state accreditation and must pay for tuition and transportation for their students to other schools.

“I understand how the recent court ruling on transfers has resulted in a lot of uncertainty and stress for your districts, and your students,” the governor said.
Later, he called the transfer program “impractical and expensive” and said policy leaders needed to find a solution.

But in response to a question from Dryver Henderson, a Normandy resident concerned about the transfer program, Nixon said that he would not call a special session on the student transfer issue this year because there was no consensus among legislators on a solution. It would be a “debating society,” he said.

To that, Henderson replied that because of financial problems, “By that time, we may not have our school district anymore.”
Mizzou mulls future of Hearnes Center

COLUMBIA, Mo. — University of Missouri basketball fans with fond memories of the former campus gym may want to whip out their cellphone cameras on their next visit to Columbia.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports athletic director Mike Alden is considering the “future and the viability” of the 41-year-old Hearnes Center now that the school’s men’s and women’s basketball teams call Mizzou Arena home.

Alden says the field house named for former Gov. Warren Hearnes is expensive to maintain and has high energy costs. He acknowledged the real estate next to Memorial Stadium may have more value as the university modernizes its athletic facilities.

Mizzou Arena opened in 2004. The Hearnes Center remains the home of Missouri’s volleyball, gymnastics, wrestling and track and field teams.
Officials from Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development spent last week learning about genetically engineered crops from University of Missouri faculty as part of a two-week visit to the United States.

The trip included stops at MU, the University of Iowa and Monsanto’s St. Louis headquarters. The educational tour, funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cochran Fellowship Program, is timely because the Vietnamese government will soon allow the domestic production of genetically modified soybeans, corn and cotton, referred to as "biotech" crops in Vietnam.

While the country has imported genetically modified, or GM, corn and soybeans for about a decade, only in the past few years has the government approved field trials within its borders.

Vietnam's first GM crop is expected in late 2014, said Bui Thi Huong, an agriculture specialist with the U.S. embassy in Hanoi, though this date has been pushed back repeatedly over the past three years.

Researchers in the College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources lectured the Vietnamese visitors on topics ranging from soil ecology to meat production, but the underlying theme was the impact GM crops will have on the country's food supply.

On Wednesday, Reid Smeda, a weed physiologist at the University of Missouri, discussed weed management techniques with the nine guests.

He emphasized the need to alternate weed-control techniques because overuse of an herbicide can build resistance. This can be problematic when planting GM crops, which are bred to be used in conjunction with a particular chemical spray.
Smeda's audience listened attentively, glancing between his PowerPoint presentation and the translator. At the end of the presentation, Ha Thuy Hanh, a deputy director general at the National Agriculture Extension Center, presented Smeda with a gift.

In exchange, Smeda jokingly offered the potted plant he had passed around during his talk. "Would anyone like to take pigweed home?" he said.

The group will return to Vietnam with information to disseminate to farmers, many of whom practice subsistence agriculture and have little knowledge of GM technology.

"It's our responsibility to educate the farmer," Hanh said.

Hanh said Vietnam's recent interest in GM technology is driven by a growing population of 90 million and a decreasing amount of farmland.

GM crops, which are generally considered to be higher-yielding than conventional varieties, will help Vietnam feed its population, she said.

Jerry Nelson, an adviser on Asian affairs and an MU agronomy professor emeritus, said Vietnam hopes to decrease the amount of corn and soybeans it imports for animal feed, making it more economically self-sufficient.

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