Boone County legislators address MU students' concerns on tax-cut bill

BY Celia Ampel, Emily Donaldson

*An earlier version of this article misstated the area Rep. Caleb Rowden represents.*

COLUMBIA — **State legislators and university administrators addressed MU students' concerns about a state tax-cut bill Thursday in a forum at the MU Student Center.**

Reps. Chris Kelly, Caleb Rowden and John Wright debated the effects House Bill 253 could have on higher education funding. Gov. Jay Nixon vetoed the bill in June, and legislators will meet next week to vote on a possible override.

"We need serious money," Kelly, D-Columbia, said of public universities. "We don't need to be doing evidently reckless legislation."

The bill could lead to a $692 million drop in state revenue, according to the legislative fiscal note. Educators, administrators and students across higher and lower education have mobilized against the override in recent weeks.

The Missouri Students Association organized Thursday's forum to educate students about how tax reform could affect them. All six members of the Boone County delegation were invited to speak. A few hundred students attended the event, and some asked legislators to defend their positions.

University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe spoke against the bill, saying the state needs to continue to fund services students count on.

Wolfe said the bill could lead to a tuition increase of 8 percent to 16 percent. It would end a state sales tax exemption on college textbooks, adding an average of $200 in costs during a student's four years, Wolfe said.

MU Chancellor Brady Deaton encouraged students to voice their opinions about the bill to their legislators.

Rowden, the sole Republican lawmaker who attended the event, represents the district northeast Boone County and part of Randolph and Audrain counties.* He said Nixon is presenting Missourians with a false choice between supporting education and supporting the tax-cut bill.
"If, for one moment, we think that education and economic development are not irrefutably connected, we're deceiving ourselves," he said.

Rowden said the bill could put more money in taxpayers' pockets, stimulating the economy and generating more tax revenue to invest in education. He said he hasn't decided whether he will vote to override the governor's veto.

Kelly said House Bill 253 was irresponsibly drafted and included "sloppy" provisions that could lead to a $1.2 billion drop in revenue.

Sponsors of the legislation "need to thank their lucky stars that their bill is not judged by academic or business standards," he said. "This bill is a disgrace to the legislature."

Wright, D-Rocheport, emphasized the importance of funding higher education to produce more science and technology graduates who can help grow the state's economy.

MSA President Nick Droege, who has publicly opposed the legislation, said his goal for the forum was to send a message to lawmakers that students care about this bill.

Droege sent emails to MU students, urging them to learn about the bill and engage with legislators on the issue. He said this was probably MSA's most visible political stance in recent memory.

"I hope that tonight shows that statewide, students are paying attention to what's happening in higher education," Droege said.
The Missouri Students Association and Associated Students of the University of Missouri hosted a rally against Missouri House Bill 253 on Thursday.

HB253, passed in May, was shot down in June by Gov. Jay Nixon, who cited concerns of fiscal irresponsibility. Nixon’s veto, however, was contested by Missouri’s largely Republican legislature, which will attempt to override that veto next week, according to a previous Maneater article.

HB253 would lower the maximum income tax for individuals and corporations — a decrease that could, Wolfe said, mean a net revenue loss for the UM System, which would translate into an 8-16 percent potential increase in tuition.

“I want to take a moment and walk you back in time to when you first arrived here on campus,” Wolfe said at the rally. “Like all college students, you had an expectation of a certain level of service. This is why you showed up. That’s what all colleges deserve and what all college students expect, but it comes at a cost.”

That cost, Wolfe pointed out, increases exponentially when the UM System, a government-funded institution, loses its share of state revenue — a loss, he said, of potentially over $800 million.

“If that $800 million reduction, in general, was applied to all higher education, I would double your tuition immediately,” Wolfe said. “Who wants to do that? I don’t.”

Wolfe, a former IBM executive and a 30-year business veteran, said he knows the importance of tax incentives and a healthy tax infrastructure — and HB253, he argued, provides neither.

“You have to consider all things about that environment when you decide to locate your business there or expand your footprint,” Wolfe said. “The long-term health of the state economy is directly tied to the quality of its workforce, and the quality of the workforce comes from investments we make in education.”
Deaton agreed, calling for the community to support Wolfe’s proposed balance between business incentive and quality of life.

“Clearly there is nothing more important to the quality of life in our state and in our broader society than the quality of higher education today,” Deaton said.

He touched on, much like Wolfe, his experience in business and economics, but drifted later toward student political involvement.

“I want to urge you to stay engaged,” Deaton said. “Today it’s a tax issue and a potential override of a governor’s veto. Tomorrow it will be financial aid and other aspects of public policy that we want you to stay engaged in.”

That engagement was also praised by Rowden, a Republican. Yet as an initial supporter of HB253 — though not necessarily its veto override — he sat alone between Wright and Kelly, Democrats who both vehemently opposed the legislation.

“I believe the equation is very simple,” Rowden said. “When the private sector in Missouri is performing well, and when it’s growing, education around the state will benefit.”

He bit back at Wolfe, whose projected tuition increase, Rowden said, was calculated only given that the federal Marketplace Fairness Act would pass — an unlikely scenario, he noted, thanks to strong congressional opposition to that legislation.
Students plan anti-tax bill rally

Debate leads up to veto session.

By Rudi Keller

The latest salvos Wednesday in the fight over a tax-cut measure included criticism from a Boone County lawmaker that Gov. Jay Nixon has "bribed" public agencies to oppose the bill and a call from the bill's sponsor for a chance to change it.

Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, is one of the few Republicans who have not said publicly how they will vote on the $700 million tax-cut measure Nixon vetoed. So far, six Republicans have said they will oppose an attempt to override Nixon's veto, enough to ensure he prevails when lawmakers meet starting Wednesday to consider vetoed bills.

Rowden will speak today at a campus rally against the bill but said that's not an indication of how he will vote. The rally, sponsored by the Missouri Students Association, begins at 5 p.m. at the MU Student Center and will feature UM President Tim Wolfe, MU Chancellor Brady Deaton and state Reps. John Wright and Chris Kelly as well as Rowden.

"Truthfully I am still undecided," Rowden said. "What has frustrated me is the way the governor has handled it."

According to legislative estimates, the bill would reduce state revenue by $700 million annually when fully implemented. Nixon has highlighted a provision that he said could cost the state $1.2 billion this fiscal year and held back on $400 million in spending until lawmakers vote. The withholdings include all new campus and student aid funding.

The rally today will show that students are engaged and that they support university leaders who oppose the measure, MSA President Nick Droege said. He said he was glad Rowden will attend.

"I hope he will consider the voice of students," Droege said.
During a stop in Centralia last week, Nixon said he didn't think a legislator could vote to override his veto and still claim to be a supporter of public education.

"I just want to make sure you understand how the governor has really bribed his way into this debate," Rowden said, adding criticism that Nixon "is afraid of a conversation" on the bill. Rowden aired similar criticisms on his Twitter account after he was told he would not be given time during Nixon's visit to Centralia to present his views.

Rowden was told he was welcome to attend but would not be given formal time for remarks, Nixon spokesman Scott Holste said. Nixon took audience questions, and Rowden would have had his chance then, Holste said.

"The governor has always recognized legislators who were there, whether they are with him on this issue or in opposition to him and has had legislators on both sides speak up during the question-and-answer session," Holste said.

Along with the legislation's cost, Nixon has criticized provisions that repeal sales tax exemptions on prescription drugs and college textbooks. The bill's sponsor, Rep. T.J. Berry, R-Kearney, yesterday asked Nixon to call a special session for lawmakers to rewrite the bill. It could be done quickly, he said, addressing Nixon's specific criticisms.

Berry denied the letter was an admission of defeat. "It should be read as saying, if you want this to be the best piece of legislation possible, come to the table," he said.

Nixon sees no need for a special session, Holste said. The governor is willing to talk about taxes and how to encourage business, he said. "But as the many errors in this legislation demonstrate, trying to throw something together at the last minute is not the responsible approach to an issue as complex and important as tax policy."

The override vote will take place even if the outcome is certain defeat, Berry said. "I would rather take the field and lose on principle than never take the field."

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UM Press director finalists make their cases

Search committee plans to review public feedback.

By Karyn Spory

The University of Missouri Press is a step closer to selecting a director after the three finalist candidates made campus visits over the past three weeks.

Candidates include Clair Willcox, the current UM Press editor-in-chief and associate director; Leila Salisbury, director of the University Press of Mississippi; and David Rosenbaum, director of product development and project management at the American Heart Association. Each candidate had a three-day campus visit that included meetings with the provost, search committee and UM Press staff and a public forum.

Salisbury, who visited campus Aug. 20-22, spent 11 years at the University Press of Kentucky as a publicity manager and marketing director before taking the director position at Mississippi in 2008.

She said the press there wanted to invest in digital initiatives, so she made the decision — despite the poor financial climate at the time — to purchase a digital access management system. That allowed the publishing of e-books and the conversion of backlist titles to electronic form. She said the sale of e-books started out as 1.3 percent of net sales but now makes up 16 percent of them.

Salisbury said she had found her "sweet spot" at Mississippi, but it has become comfortable.

"I'm a long believer in the mission of university presses, and I think this is a moment of huge opportunity with this press," Salisbury said. She said her interest in the UM Press began with the controversy the press endured last year, when the university targeted it for closure before changing course. "I feel like if this press can move forward and make it really work, that's a win for all university presses."
Willcox, whose meetings took place last week, started at the press in 1988 as a manuscript editor and in 2009 became editor-in-chief. Willcox was laid off in 2012 when UM System administrators were planning to shut down the press but was later rehired and made associate director as the press was moved out from underneath the system to become an MU campus entity.

"I often hear sweeping generalizations of what presses have been or should become," Willcox said. He said no one can say for sure what the future holds for university presses as they cope with financial challenges, adapt to new technology, become sensitive to changing readership and markets, and find new roles within the university.

"Now that we're a part of a particular campus," we can "form partnerships with particular entities," Willcox said, adding that he would like to see collaboration between the press and Mizzou Advantage's Media of the Future initiative.

Rosenbaum began his career as a production manager at the Iowa State University Press. Rosenbaum said the ISU Press became a self-sustaining entity in the mid-1990s by having a strong focus on the bottom line. Although the ISU Press' nearly $2 million in revenue covered its costs, he said, the university ended up selling it to a science publishing company to avoid the possibility of having to subsidize the press.

Rosenbaum said although the press was doing well financially, editorially it was devoted to publishing subject matter about veterinary sciences, and the disconnect with other disciplines caused a disconnect with administration. He said the takeaway for the UM Press would be to tie the mission of the university with that of the press and to broaden the publishing scope past the humanities and publish more from the sciences and professional fields.

Greg Haefner, a senior English major and editorial assistant at the press, attended each of the candidates' public forums.

"I wanted to see what their ideas were in terms of what kinds of changes they wanted to make and what" drew "them to apply for the position," Haefner said.

Haefner said he liked all three candidates. "I don't think any of them would do a bad job; I think they would just do it differently," he said.

Jim Cogswell, co-chairman of the search committee, said the panel members will review the questionnaires distributed at each of the forums and online, and the feedback will help identify whether respondents had a favorite among the candidates. Next week, the committee will meet with Provost Brian Foster to discuss the merits of each candidate, he said. The provost will make the final decision on the position.

"We've had three worthy candidates, … and to make the choice of one is a happy problem to have," Cogswell said.
GEORGE KENNEDY: Growing optimism for University of Missouri Press

Thursday, September 5, 2013 | 5:54 p.m. CDT

BY George Kennedy

Just about this time last year, I wrote a rumination on the education of our newish university president. Tim Wolfe told me, “I’ve learned a lot” in his first six months on the job.

The lesson that must have been most painful — and was certainly most public — came from his abortive attempt to transform the University of Missouri Press from an actual publisher of real books into a sort of training ground for graduate students, supervised by a couple of professionals and an English professor.

That plan, announced on May 24, 2012, was renounced a couple of months later, after an uproar that startled administrators and reached the cover of the Chronicle of Higher Education. The 10 staff members, who had been fired, were rehired. The turmoil of a near-death experience was the low point of a trajectory that began in 1958.

At its peak, during the 20-year directorship of the legendary Beverly Jarrett, the Press had a staff of more than 20, published 60 or more books a year and brought in more than $1 million annually. Like all but a handful of the 134 university presses across the country, it required a subsidy from the system. Last year, that subsidy was $400,000.

At its nadir, the summer and fall of 2012, sales collapsed and authors fled. Nothing new was published this spring.

But things are looking up.

For one thing, the Press is no longer the red-headed stepchild of the four-campus system. It now belongs to the flagship campus. The fall list has 10 new titles. Another 14 are planned for spring 2014. The staff, led by long-time editor in chief Clair Willcox, is working hard to re-establish ties with skittish authors.

A second reason for optimism is that a national search for a new permanent director is nearing its conclusion. Having sat in on the public presentations by all three finalists, I think Provost Brian Foster has a strong field from which to pick.
First came Leila Salisbury, a Kentuckian who now heads the University Press of Mississippi, a joint operation of all the state’s public universities. Her background is production, and her personality seems relentlessly upbeat.

She spoke engagingly of “the magic of the book,” while noting the obvious, that “books” increasingly exist on computer screens as well as on paper.

Last year, she said, made Missouri “a test case for university presses.” There’s pressure to succeed now on both the next director and the campus. This is, she insisted, “a moment of huge opportunity.”

She appeared eager to seize the opportunity.

After all he’s been through, including the temporary loss of his job a year ago, you might wonder why Clair Willcox would want this one. But he does.

He described scholarly publishing as “a worthy – even noble – endeavor.” He proposed increasing production to 45 to 50 titles a year by 2016, with about 15 percent of those being trade books and 10 percent coming from MU authors.

He would learn from experience, he said, and try to do a better job of educating university administrators in the importance of the Press while also working more closely with campus programs such as Mizzou Advantage.

The third finalist, David Rosenbaum, made his pitch Wednesday. He currently oversees publications for the American Heart Association, but he chose to talk about “the rise and fall of the Iowa State University Press.” It wasn’t a pretty story. As he told it, the ISU press was doing well until it was suddenly sold to a commercial publisher and then a few years later folded altogether. He was editor in chief at the time.

The lessons MU can take from that, he concluded, are that our Press should insist on only top quality manuscripts, focus on serving this campus, work hard at selling the books it publishes and make as much money as possible. The Press can and should be self-sustaining, he said.

After his talk and before the punch and cookies, I wandered over to one of the several Press employees present and asked her impressions. Seeing my notebook, she didn’t want to say anything she might regret. So she fell back on the standard “They each bring something different. They’re all impressive.”

I thought she was mainly just relieved to have the prospect of a director and the assurance of a job.

It appears that the latest chapter in the up-and-down story of our Press is headed for a happy ending, after all.
Several Southern states underfunded historically black land-grant universities by tens of millions of dollars over a three-year period, according to a new report from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities.

The association came to that figure by examining the states' responsibilities under federal laws that authorize money for land-grant institutions. Those statutes, the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, promise that the federal government will support the universities financially as long as the states provide an equivalent amount of money.

The study found no problem with states meeting that obligation for the more than 50 universities created under the 1862 Morrill Act and which for nearly a century were open almost exclusively to white students.

But states have historically fallen short of that commitment for the 18 universities that were established under the second Morrill Act and meant to provide educational opportunities for black Americans, the association found.

Of the 17 states in which those institutions are, the report determined that 10 states owed the universities a total of nearly $57-million for the years 2010 through 2012, the period for which data were readily available from the Department of Agriculture, said John Michael Lee Jr., vice president for the Office of Access and Success at the association.
Florida and South Carolina had the lowest matching percentages, matching just 46 percent of the federal money that went to the historically black universities in those states, according to the figures from the study. Florida A&M University and South Carolina State University are each owed about $6-million by their states, the study says.

Texas owes the most money to a black college, falling more than $12-million shy of the amount the federal government gave to Prairie View A&M University, the report found.

**The other states that did not fully match the federal dollars to black land-grant universities are: Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.**

Alabama matched the federal dollars for one of its two historically black land-grant institutions, Alabama A&M University, but not the other, Tuskegee University, for which the state matched about 81 percent of the federal government's appropriation.

The states that did match all of the federal contribution to their historically black universities were Delaware, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Tennessee.

Under the current laws, the historically black institutions are accountable for the matching money and must apply to the federal government for a waiver if the state doesn't meet its obligation. There is no waiver process for the traditionally white land-grant universities.

"The onus of the waiver is on the institution and not on the state," Mr. Lee said.

The association makes four recommendations meant to ensure equitable support for the black colleges, including creating a uniform process for both traditionally white and historically black colleges to apply for state matching money and having a stronger federal enforcement mechanism.
Council favors weekend test for fan zone

Harpo's request stirs discussion.

By Andrew Denney

The Columbia City Council has not yet voted on a street-closure request that would allow Harpo's Bar and Grill to host a hospitality zone on University of Missouri home football weekends but agreed that MU's Homecoming weekend could serve as a time for a pilot program to allow such a closure.

Council members said there is potential for other downtown bars to request street closures for different game days, which would allow several businesses to try hosting hospitality zones.

The council received a memo about the proposed street closure near the end of its Tuesday meeting, which at that point had stretched past 2 a.m. yesterday. City Counselor Nancy Thompson said the fatigued city staff and council members did not note that the council had not actually voted on the request before moving to the next agenda item.

Thompson said Harpo's would not need to file a new street-closure request but that the council would still need to vote on an amended request, which could take place Sept. 16.

Mayor Bob McDavid, who proposed the pilot program, said there is "this sense of competition that it's a zero-sum game" among downtown bars, but hospitality zones can create a festival atmosphere downtown with the potential of bringing foot traffic to all businesses.

Harpo's had requested the closure of Cherry Street between Ninth and Tenth streets for four home games this fall.

The request was for the weekends of Oct. 18-19, Oct. 25-26, Nov. 1-2 and Nov. 30, which are the weekends MU is scheduled to take on Southeastern Conference opponents. For the first three dates, which fall on Fridays and Saturdays, the section of Cherry between Ninth and Tenth streets would be closed from noon Friday until early Sunday.
MU's Homecoming game, in which the Tigers will face South Carolina, is scheduled for Oct. 26. According to Mizzou Athletics' website, a kickoff time has yet to be determined for the game.

In protest of Harpo's request, the owners of nine downtown bars began the process of filing their own street requests for the same weekends that Harpo's requested.

In a letter to city officials signed by Bengal's Bar and Grill owners Jack and Julie Rader, the owners noted that in 2010, the council rejected a similar proposal from Harpo's because it violated the spirit of the city's street-closure ordinance and amounted to "a sports bar wanting to spew out into the streets to increase their capacity and thus make extra money."

In an interview today, First Ward Councilman Fred Schmidt — who represents the ward that encompasses downtown — said he remains opposed to Harpo's proposal because of public safety concerns and because of the concerns raised by the 2010 incarnation of the council.

"It's just a private business that wants to expand into the street," Schmidt said. "I didn't think we really thought this through."

Council members have expressed interest in bringing an event to downtown resembling the ill-fated Tiger Town concept, a downtown party zone proposed last year by local business leaders as a way to acknowledge MU's inaugural year in the SEC. Like the Harpo's request, the concept was met with resistance from downtown business owners who see street closures as providing an unfair advantage to other businesses.
Ex-MU football staffer Curtis Jones Jr. dies at 40

Curtis Jones Jr., a former Missouri director of football operations, died unexpectedly Wednesday in Morgantown, W.Va. He was 40.

The cause of death was not immediately released.

Jones, the older brother of former Missouri quarterback Corby Jones and the son of former MU player and assistant coach Curtis Jones Sr., had spent the last year as West Virginia University’s associate athletic director for academic support. Jones was married to Mary Ellen Jones, who is WVU’s director of sports administration.

“The Mountaineer athletic family is overwhelmed with sorrow at the sudden passing of Curtis Jones,” West Virginia Athletic Director Oliver Luck said in a statement. “In his brief time with West Virginia University he brought passion and professionalism to his position as the head of academic support for all of our WVU student-athletes.

“He was a beloved figure among the coaches, fellow administrators and student-athletes. He will be greatly missed. Our prayers and condolences are with his family, particularly with his wife, Mary Ellen Jones, a valued member of our Mountaineer family.”

A native of St. Louis, Jones was a four-year letterman in baseball at Dartmouth, where he graduated with a degree in sociology in 1995. He interned in the MU athletic department in 1996-97 while his brother played and his father coached for the Tigers. He completed a master’s degree in journalism in 1998, the same year his father died of a heart attack at age 55. In 1999, Jones took over as Missouri’s director of football operations under Coach Larry Smith, a position he held until Smith was fired in 2000.

Jones continued to work in academic affairs or NCAA compliance at Oklahoma, South Florida and Texas before taking the job at West Virginia.
Eleven fraternities rewarded for academic excellence

By Stephen Daw

The Fraternity Alumni Consortium recognized 11 fraternities at the Academic Achievement Banner Ceremony Wednesday night.

The ceremony, celebrated at Mizzou for seven semesters, recognizes fraternities for academic excellence in the Spring 2013 semester.

The consortium presented two different banners to the 11 fraternities.

Alpha Epsilon Pi, Beta Theta Pi, Lambda Chi Alpha and Phi Kappa Theta received gold banners for having the highest average GPAs in the Interfraternity Council. Beta Theta Pi had a 3.28, the highest GPA of all fraternities.

Seven fraternities received black banners for having a higher average GPA than the campus average. These fraternities were Alpha Gamma Sigma, Alpha Tau Omega, Delta Chi, Delta Tau Delta, Phi Gamma Delta, Sigma Nu and Sigma Pi.

John Miller, chapter president of Beta Theta Pi, said he was nothing but honored after the ceremony.

“I’m just so proud of all of the members — we worked so hard to get this award,” Miller said. “We are also nothing but humble towards these other fraternities who are present, and we congratulate them on their hard work.”

Sigma Nu chapter president Justin Kendall said he was excited to see his fraternity make it into this ceremony, and he thought that they could help set an example for the Greek community.

“You know, this is our first time making it to this ceremony,” Kendall said. “We’ve been below the line before. So I think that we’ve proved that if you do what it takes, then you’ll make it.”

At the ceremony, multiple speakers congratulated the fraternities for a job well done. The speakers included John Dean, the Fraternity Alumni Consortium’s chairman of academic achievement, Jim Spain, the vice provost of undergraduate studies, MU Athletic Director Mike Alden and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Cathy Scroggs.

“This is the first time in history that we’ve had 21 fraternities on campus receive above a 3.0 average GPA, which I think is incredible.” Dean said to the crowd on Wednesday evening.
One of the fraternities honored Wednesday evening, Phi Kappa Theta, was also congratulated for being the only fraternity to be awarded at every ceremony. Since 2009, Phi Kappa Theta has received a banner for Academic Achievement every semester.

“You’re setting the stage,” Scroggs in her closing remarks, “There are 11 chapters here, and all the other chapters can now look up to you for your incredible achievement.”
For a number of MU students, bicycles are a great commodity for traversing a sprawling campus and exploring downtown Columbia.

That is, until your bike goes missing.

MUPD and MU’s Office of Sustainability held their second annual Bike Smart Bike Registration event Sept. 4 to help students avoid such a situation and abide by city laws.

A Columbia ordinance requires bicycles be registered with police in an effort to cut down on theft and abandonment.

Office of Sustainability coordinator Steve Burdic said the event is also a good opportunity to raise awareness about bicycle safety.

“It’s a good chance for us to tell everybody how to ride their bikes right,” he said. “You can watch people weave in and out of traffic at 25 miles per hour every day. This is a chance for us to tell them ‘Hey, you need to do it right.’”

Bradd Anderson, Missouri 4-H extension adviser and bike enthusiast, said he was excited for the event.

“I think all things biking are cool,” Anderson said. “I actually haven’t registered my bike yet, so it seemed like an easy opportunity.”

After hearing about the event from friends, freshman Izaak Mohling decided to stop by. He said the event was good for peace of mind.

“I want to make sure that if it (the bike) gets stolen I have a better chance of finding it,” Mohling said. “I think it’s a really good idea, I see a lot of bikes here.”

The event offered free pizza, refreshments and played music for those that stopped by.

Those who registered their bicycles received complimentary water bottles and an entry into a raffle for a new bicycle.