Mo. Senate passes college performance funding bill

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri’s four-year public universities would be rewarded for good performance under legislation passed by the state Senate.

Under the bill, the 13 universities would get funding increases tied to certain performance standards.

The colleges would work with the Department of Higher Education to develop five goals. Three of those goals must be tied to graduation and retention rates as well as job placement in a field appropriate for a graduating student’s degree level.

The legislation would apply only in years the state can afford to increase higher education funding and would expire in 2016.

A 2012 state law requires the development of a funding formula for Missouri’s public universities.

Senators voted 33-0 to send the measure to the House on Thursday.

University Funding is SB 492
Online: Legislature: http://www.moga.mo.gov

Planning and Zoning approves new student apartments near MU

COLUMBIA — Despite the uncertain future of downtown utilities, at least one student housing developer is still pushing forward.
American Campus Communities wants to build a five-story, 718-bed student apartment complex near MU's Mark Twain Hall. The development plan also includes a 546-space parking structure.

The Planning and Zoning Commission voted 8-1 Thursday in favor of rezoning. The 3.81-acre property is north of Turner Avenue, east of Providence Road, south of Stewart Road and west of Fifth Street.

American Campus Communities already owns three student-housing complexes in Columbia: Grindstone Canyon, Forrest Village and Woodlake, and the Cottages.

The property is currently zoned R-3 for medium-density, multiple-family dwellings. If the Columbia City Council approves the proposal, it would be rezoned to PUD 55, which allows for higher-density development. The project would replace 17 rental houses with 182 apartments.

In addition to the parking structure, the developers have set aside eight on-street parking spaces.

“This is the only student development that we have that meets 100 percent of its parking requirements,” Development Services Manager Patrick Zenner said.

The city’s inadequate utility infrastructure shouldn’t preclude rezoning, Zenner said.

“The use of the property is consistent with our plans and the area’s needs.”

American Campus Communities will ask the Columbia City Council to guarantee utility service for the development by fall 2016, when it expects to begin leasing apartments.

The council recently voted down a proposed tax-increment financing plan to address the utilities problem, and city staff members said they cannot guarantee a timeline for a resolution.

Planning and Zoning recommended that the city withhold building permits until its utility problems have been addressed.

With the commission’s recommendation, the project will go before the City Council for final approval. The council will also vote on the developer’s request to vacate Fourth Street south of Conley Avenue in order to make it a private road.
Editorial: The return of Jefferson City's Mean Boys Club

MU Mention pg 2

By the Editorial Board

A couple of years ago we labeled a group of Missouri lawmakers — most of them Republicans — as the “Mean Boys & Girls Club.” The legislators were supporting a series of bills that had no real purpose other than being mean to people, mostly poor people.

The club has gone active again. This legislative session has seen a series of GOP-sponsored bills meant to make it harder for the “navigators” trying to help Missourians — again, most of them poor — gain health insurance under the Affordable Care Act.


Here is the only thing that navigators do: They help poor people get insurance. That’s it. They’re not trying to stop lobbyists from paying for lunch. They’re not trying to steal the Rush Limbaugh bust from the Capitol rotunda.

Last year the Legislature also took a whack at these awful people who help the poor. They passed a bill creating a set of regulations intended to make it harder for the navigators to do their jobs. It has been put on hold by a judge because it conflicts with federal law.

Missouri Republicans love passing bills that conflict with federal law. They think it makes them look tough, even though it mostly shows that they’re willing to waste taxpayer dollars on expensive lawsuits that run afoul of settled law as determined by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Keep in mind, as much as most Republicans hate the Affordable Care Act, one thing is sure to happen because of their obstructionism: People will die.

Harvard researchers long ago determined that increasing the number of people with health insurance has a direct effect on saving lives. Recently, they applied that research to individual states.
In Missouri, which hasn’t expanded Medicaid as called for in the federal law, the study predicts an additional 700 deaths per year.

Every Republican who stands in the way of implementing the law, or actually trying to make it work better, has to live with that. Not expanding Medicaid means people die.

Trying to make it harder for navigators to help poor people get the insurance they deserve means more people will die prematurely.

That’s not just mean. That’s cruel.

(We interrupt this editorial about mean Republicans to point out that one smart House Republican, Rep. Noel Torpey, R-Independence, filed a bill this week to expand Medicaid. Like last year’s version of the bill filed by Rep. Jay Barnes, R-Jefferson City, it needs work, but it’s a start.)

Most Republicans not named Torpey or Barnes, of course, brush off the facts about Medicaid expansion. Even if they don’t care about the 700 premature deaths each year and the good health of the state’s citizens — and they apparently don’t — you’d think a Republican would be impressed at the economic impact of Medicaid expansion. A University of Missouri study has pegged it at 24,000 jobs and $7 billion a year in added payroll.

“We’re just trying to protect Missouri citizens,” Mr. Schaefer told the Associated Press.

Let’s unpack that a bit.

Republicans say they hate regulation. They really hate regulation in the health care market. That’s why they claim to hate the Affordable Care Act so much. They hate regulation so much that they just reversed themselves on a law they voted for less than a week ago that would have required gun owners to report any guns that were stolen within 72 hours. The purpose of that proposal, of course, was to protect the Missouri citizens who often find themselves at the wrong end of a stolen gun.

But it’s a regulation that might affect gun owners. So it’s bad. Very bad.

Republicans don’t want government regulations that protect Missouri citizens from just about anything: coal ash, pipeline disasters, pollution, farming accidents, guns. They hate regulation so much that Speaker of the House Tim Jones, a Eureka Republican, just created a committee called the Bipartisan Investigatory Committee on Regulatory Overreach.

Hey, Mr. Jones. We know you want to be the next attorney general, and Mr. Schaefer stands in your way. Here’s a thought: Put his regulatory overreach on your agenda.

Do Senate Republicans really believe voters are so blind as to fall for the canard that the sole purpose of adding burdensome regulations to health care navigators is to
protect citizens whom they won’t protect from many other, far more dangerous, risks? We’re supposed to believe that people whose sole job is to help make the Affordable Care Act work more efficiently are a risk to the citizens.

It’s laughable.

Too many Republicans in Missouri want to do everything they can to make the Affordable Care Act fail. Period. Then, when the law doesn’t work as well as it could, they want to say, “See, we told you it wouldn’t work.”

Blunt pushes congressional award for Monuments Men

Thursday, February 20, 2014 | 7:38 p.m. CST
BY SOPHIA CONFORTI

COLUMBIA – As he stood in front of four World War II-era paintings, Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., discussed his proposed bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Monuments Men.

Blunt addressed a crowd made up mostly of historians Friday morning at the State Historical Society in MU’s Ellis Library.

The Monuments Men was a group of about 350 men and women, including several with Missouri ties, that saved about 5 million artifacts that were stolen by Nazis. The medal would serve as a reminder of the group’s enormous contributions to art conservation, Blunt said.

Recognizing the famous conservators also honors their modern-day counterparts, said Joan Stack, curator of art collections at the State Historical Society.

"Very rarely are we validated for what we do," Stack said.

Only five of the 350 men and women who made up the Monuments Men are still alive.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the "highest expression of national appreciation for distinguished achievements and contributions," according to senate.gov.
Blunt bill seeks recognition, medals for ‘monuments men’

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm

When U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt called Robert Edsel to tell him about his "monuments men" bill, Edsel almost cried.

Blunt's bill — which he spoke about this morning in Columbia — would give the Congressional Gold Medal to about 350 men and women who helped preserve, protect and restore artwork, sculptures and cultural artifacts during World War II. These people were known as "monuments men."

About 15 years ago, Edsel started his research on these men and women, which led to three books, including "The Monuments Men: Allied Heroes," which prompted the film about their stories that is in theaters now.

Edsel said he was interested in the monuments men stories because no one else was telling them. His research led him to write books and, in 2007, create the Monuments Men Foundation. The foundation was a way to honor those men and women formally through a not-for-profit organization, Edsel said. In 2007, the foundation received the National Humanities Medal from President George W. Bush, which Edsel calls an honor, but winning the award also was a start to getting the monuments men stories out to the public.

Also during 2007, both chambers of Congress passed unanimous resolutions in honor of the monuments men, which was "the first time any mention of thanks was made," Edsel said. To help get the word out about the importance of that resolution before the vote, Edsel went to every Senate office and many House offices with his books and research.

Those men and women's work was exposed to the masses with the recent film, Edsel said.
"There are six living monuments officers," Edsel said. "Five are American, and one is British. We are living on borrowed time. It's shameful we would lose any of them without saying thank you from our country and civilization for what they saved."


This morning, Blunt echoed much of Edsel's sentiment. Blunt is on a three-day tour of the state, visiting a few sites that have significant ties to the four Missouri native monuments men or the 10 who later worked in the state after their service.

**Blunt spoke at the State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia, in the same building, Ellis Library, where one monuments officer, Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, worked after the war as a rare book expert.**

**Lewis Williams, another monuments officer, was an art professor at MU after his service.**

"Our connection to saving these treasures is significant," Blunt said. "I think beyond that there's a lesson to be learned here. World War II wasn't the only time when great works were in danger. I was in Egypt right after the big uprising at Tahrir Square, and a number of things were stolen from the Cairo museum that are still missing today."

Blunt said the recent film can help get the bill passed. This week, he and Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., hosted a screening of the film in the Capitol, which Blunt said will hopefully help get them the co-sponsors needed to help move the bill along.

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**MU hospital plans cystic fibrosis event**

*Thursday, February 20, 2014 at 2:00 pm*

University of Missouri Children's Hospital next month is hosting Cystic Fibrosis Education Day for caregivers of people affected by the disease.

The event is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. March 8 at the Hilton Garden Inn, 3300 Vandiver Drive.
The hospital's Cystic Fibrosis Center is sponsoring the event, which will feature a panel discussion, "Cystic Fibrosis on the Go." There also will be three break-out discussions: "Not Just Lungs/The Big Picture," "Successful Transition to Adulthood" and "Understanding Pulmonary Function Tests and Imaging."

The keynote speech will come from Jill Conner, a clinical exercise physiologist from Oklahoma. Conner was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis and had a double lung transplant at age 22. Her talk is about exercise and living with cystic fibrosis.

James Acton and Zarah Ner, MU Health Care pediatric pulmonologists, also will be present.

The event is free. Anyone interested in attending should register by Feb. 21 by calling 573-884-6688 or emailing jacksonle@health.missouri.edu.

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FOCUS ON RESEARCH

Why do scientists like weeds?

By CADE CLEAVELIN MU Undergraduate Research Office

Wednesday, February 19, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Have you ever pulled a weed? They're tough, hard to get rid of and nobody seems to like them. Scientists understand, though, that even the lowliest of plant species can play a significant role.

A wide variety of plants and animals is called biodiversity, and it's an important part of any healthy ecosystem. **Biodiversity lets researchers such as University of Missouri senior biochemistry student Che-Min Su understand all the creative and complex ways plants survive in nature.** Su decided to look closely at the eastern red cedar, a native Missouri tree that's highly abundant but looked down on as a pest — a weed of the tree world.

It turns out that this species can help people in a big way. With Chung-Ho Lin of the MU Department of Forestry, Su isolated hundreds of different chemicals produced in the red cedar's leaves and fruit. After testing groups of these compounds in a petri dish, Su found that one of them happens to be a spectacular antibiotic. "We've identified a compound in this tree that kills lethal pathogens like MRSA, and it kills them very efficiently," Su explained. "This was actually
very surprising to us, and we're trying to understand how it works so well." MRSA is a deadly bacterium resistant to most antibiotics — except that of red cedar.

So, the next time you yank out a weed, remind yourself that it still has purpose, even if it's not in your garden!

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