University of Missouri lays off eight in grants, research offices

By Ashley Jost

Thursday, May 8, 2014 at 12:46 pm Comments (7)

University of Missouri administrators laid off six employees in the Office of Grant Writing and Publications this week and two more in the Office of Research, giving them an eight-week warning before they will have to go elsewhere to earn a paycheck.

Hank Foley, senior vice chancellor for research and graduate studies, confirmed Thursday that he had to make the cuts for budgetary reasons.

“It’s the budget, pure and simple,” he said. “I had to return $714,000 this year into the pot so we can hire new faculty.”

The Tribune first reported all eight laid off employees worked in the Office of Grant Writing and Publications.

The UM System’s strategic plan includes a yearly 2 percent reallocation of funding from each department for hiring new faculty starting in fiscal year 2015. The move is meant to help the university’s ranking in the Association of American Universities.

“There was just no way to do it without stopping something we’re doing,” Foley said. “It’s just too big. And so we tried to do it as humanely as we could, but it’s never comfortable. It’s never a happy occasion.”

Heather Brown, director of grant writing and publication, said that employees found out about the layoff decision Tuesday.

“I can confirm everyone is pretty shocked and devastated,” she said. “For me, the thing that has been so disappointing is there was no acknowledgement of the impact of our work. It’s disappointing to be let go without any acknowledgement of the millions of dollars that we’ve assisted in bringing in.”
Brown said the office’s collective last day is July 1. The only two employees who were not let go are the senior editor and a web designer.

Among the two people laid off in the Office of Research was a high-level assistant to Foley.

Foley said staff will have the chance to look for other positions during the next eight weeks, inside and outside of the university.

“These are very talented individuals, which of course is what makes this so painful,” he said.

University of Missouri lays off 8 employees

Posted: May 09, 2014 6:59 AM CST Updated: May 09, 2014 6:59 AM CST

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - The University of Missouri laid off eight employees this week in grant writing and research offices.

Six of the employees work in the Office of Grant Writing and Publications and the two others are in the Office of Research. They will be given eight weeks to find other employment at the university.

Hank Foley, senior vice chancellor for research and graduate studies, said the cuts were necessary because the office lost $714,000 this year.

Heather Brown, director of grant writing and publication, says the only two employees left in that office are a senior editor and a web designer.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports the university system's strategic plan includes a yearly 2 percent reallocation of funding from each department to hire new faculty starting in fiscal year 2015.
Company to build radioisotope production facility at Discovery Ridge

By Ashley Jost


An Oregon company Thursday morning announced plans to build a $50 million radioisotope production facility at the University of Missouri's Discovery Ridge Research Park in southeast Columbia.

Nick Fowler, founder and CEO of Northwest Medical Isotopes, was joined by local officials and representatives of the state and university at a morning news conference at City Hall to announce the project.

The facility will make molybdenum-99, an isotope that is used by radio pharmacies to produce technetium-99m, which is used in nuclear imaging studies, including medical diagnostic tests for heart, bone and kidney disease as well as cancer.

The company is expected to break ground next year on a 50,000-square-foot facility at Discovery Ridge, and the facility should be in operation by 2016, Fowler said. The company's expansion involves a $50 million capital investment and is expected to create 68 high-paying jobs. About 60 percent of the investment is for the building, and the rest is going toward equipment.

In exchange for locating in the state, Northwest Medical Isotopes is able to access as much as $883,623 through the Missouri Works Program, which allows companies to retain employees' state withholding taxes, said Amy Susan of the Missouri Department of Economic Development.

The company also is eligible for as much as $100,000 through the Missouri Works Training Program, which provides a tax credit of as much as 2.5 percent of payroll for payments to train workers at community colleges.

The company must meet "strict job creation and investment criteria," which includes the $50 million capital investments and 68 new positions, Susan said.
Northwest Medical Isotopes also is eligible to receive benefits under the county's Chapter 100 policies, Southern District Commissioner Karen Miller said, though the company has not yet applied for them. The county used Chapter 100 bonds to help entice IBM here in 2010 and to help finance ABC Labs' facility at Discovery Ridge.

Fowler said he saw multiple advantages to locating in Columbia, including the central location. Easy access to Columbia Regional Airport and Interstate 70 were among those advantages, he said.

Of the two "critical markets" for molybdenum-99, one is Mallinckrodt Pharmaceuticals, which is in north St. Louis County. The other company is in Boston. These companies use molybdenum-99 to produce the necessary medical radioisotope for imaging studies.

"The United States is currently reliant upon two sources of this critical imaging tracer," Fowler said. "One is being decommissioned in 2016, and the other is being retooled in 2017 or 2018, meaning the U.S. supply is at significant risk. This is a huge, important diagnostic tool to cardiologists and oncologists."

Fowler said he hopes this facility will "fill an anticipated void" in the isotope production industry.

When it is operating at full capacity, the new facility will be able to meet 50 percent of the demand in North America for molybdenum-99, the company said.

The process for this new facility began at least a year ago, though Fowler said his research and development team has been working toward possible facilities since the company started in 2010.

In October, Northwest Medical Isotopes received one of several stamps of approval from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that are necessary to move forward with the new facility, according to NRC documents.

Access to the University of Missouri was another plus in choosing Columbia in Fowler's eyes.

"We have a partnership and relationship that we highly value," he said. "We plan to work on deepening and broadening that through time."

Northwest Medical Isotopes will work with the MU Research Reactor once its facility is in operation, said Steve Wyatt, MU vice provost for economic development.

"About half of our budget at MU is on the health care side," Wyatt said. "One of the things that's important to us is providing the best quality health care for our patients. One of the challenges is the national shortage of imaging products. This company is going to take on that national crisis."

Mayor Bob McDavid credited collaboration between the state, city, county, university and Regional Economic Development Inc., or REDI, for bringing the company to Columbia.
"The No. 1 business in Columbia is education," he said. "The second is health care. This transitions well into what Columbia already does well."

Vicki Russell, Tribune publisher and chairwoman of REDI, said she thinks Northwest Medical Isotopes will "keep Columbia unique."

"They're offering jobs that will help keep the brain trust that's coming out of the university each year," she said.

UPDATE: Medical firm to break ground next year at Discovery Ridge

Thursday, May 8, 2014 | 8:07 p.m. CDT; updated 8:23 p.m. CDT, Thursday, May 8, 2014
BY FRANCES WEBBER

COLUMBIA — **Northwest Medical Isotopes plans to build a production facility at Discovery Ridge research park, creating 68 jobs, the company announced Thursday.**

Salaries for the new jobs would average around $77,000, said Amy Susan, director of communications and marketing with the Missouri Department of Economic Development. The company also plans to make a $50 million capital investment.

The number of jobs and the amount invested qualifies the company to receive tax credits of up to $883,623 through the [Missouri Works Program](#) and up to $100,000 through the Missouri Works Training Program, Susan said.

The company expects to break ground on the project next year and begin operations in 2016.

**Northwest Medical Isotopes** produces Molybdenum-99, an isotope used in the treatment of cancer and heart, kidney and bone diseases. Hospitals use molybdenum-99 to make technetium-99m, which is used in diagnostic tests.
The arrival of Northwest Medical Isotopes "goes to one of our key strategic themes, which is to expand nuclear medicine here in Columbia," said Hank Foley, executive vice president for academic affairs for the UM System.

The MU Research Reactor Center also produces medical isotopes, and it was a factor in bringing Northwest Medical Isotopes to Columbia, according to a Department of Economic Development media release.

Fifty thousand people a day receive a medical scan that uses the isotope, said Nicholas Fowler, CEO of Northwest Medical Isotopes. "We very much and sincerely are looking forward to being a part of this community," he said.

Oregon company building facility in Columbia

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — An Oregon company has announced plans to build a radioisotope production facility at the University of Missouri’s research park in Columbia.

Nick Fowler, founder of Corvallis, Oregon-based Northwest Medical Isotopes, said Thursday the facility will make molybdenum-99, an isotope used to produce technetium-99m, which is used in nuclear imaging studies.

The Columbia Daily Tribune reports (http://bit.ly/1hAaMTY ) the facility is expected to break ground next year on the 50,000-square-foot facility at the university's Discovery Ridge Research Park. Fowler says the site should be in operation by 2016 and is expected to create 68 jobs.

If the company meets state job creation and investment criteria, it will have access to up to about $880,000 through the Missouri Works Program, which allows companies to retain their employees' state withholding taxes.

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri lawmakers approved more than $220 million in building projects Thursday, including many on college campuses, but it remains uncertain whether some of the projects actually will get money.

The House and Senate both gave final approval to a capital improvements budget that authorizes the spending, but some of the construction projects are contingent upon the issuance of state bonds or an excess of state revenues beyond what lawmakers have projected.

House leaders said they hope to pass a separate bill next week allowing the bonds to be issued.

Assuming the projects all go through as budgeted, "this is the biggest single economic development bill in 33 years," when Missouri last had a major bond issuance for buildings, said Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia.

Among its many projects, the bill would provide $40 million for an Ozarks Health and Life Science Center at Missouri State University in Springfield, **$38.5 million for an expansion of the Lafferre Hall engineering building at the University of Missouri-Columbia**, **$33 million for a new building for the State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia**, and $19 million for a new medical school at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Those projects all are among the more than $140 million of items dependent on the issuance of bonds.

**The bill also includes more than a dozen projects at universities and community colleges that will require local funding to pay half the cost.**
The legislation includes $4.5 million for the Missouri State Highway Patrol to replace a vehicle maintenance facility in Jefferson City that was destroyed by fire in early April.

Lawmakers finalize state budget that includes education funding increases

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, May 8, 2014 at 4:25 pm Comments (2)

JEFFERSON CITY — A $26.4 billion state operating budget with substantial increases for public schools, state colleges and student scholarships won final approval Thursday in votes that lacked the drama that has at times marked past spending fights.

Lawmakers also approved a capital spending bill authorizing $220 million for construction projects.

One of the lengthiest discussions focused on an item that is not in the plan — expanded eligibility for Medicaid. The budget rejects, for the second year, Gov. Jay Nixon’s call for expanded eligibility for Medicaid to cover 300,000 uninsured Missourians.

Nixon asked lawmakers to use $1.7 billion in federal aid, available under the 2010 Affordable Care Act, to expand coverage. With Republicans dominating both chambers, expansion has found few friends in the majority party.

“It is not just a fiscal issue, it is an immoral issue,” said Rep. Jill Schupp, D-Creve Couer. “It says do we care enough about our neighbors that when they get ill they have a place to go.”

Rep. Keith Frederick, R-Rolla, said the program as it is now operated is too expensive and works poorly. The money that would pay for expansion in Missouri would add to the federal deficit, he said.

“That money is not falling from the sky,” Frederick said.
A handful of Republicans have urged their colleagues to go along with a reform plan that includes expansion. During debate today, Rep. Noel Torpey, R-Independence, urged the majority to accept the federal help to make those reforms possible.

“Whether you think the ACA is the greatest thing since sliced bread or a train wreck, it is the law of the land,” Torpey said. “Why not sooner than later?”

The House votes on each bill were followed quickly by Senate votes as lawmakers finished work on spending a day ahead of the constitutional deadline.

The budget provides a 5 percent boost overall for colleges and universities, divided based on performance measures. The University of Missouri would receive a $21.3 million boost, to $428.8 million. The budget also allocates $15 million to increase stipends under the Access Missouri scholarship program and $7 million to do the same for Bright Flight scholars if a proposed loan program is not enacted.

Some Democrats opposed the bill because spending on colleges and universities remains below pre-recession levels. “We have not gotten back to where we were six years ago,” Rep. Judy Morgan, D-Kansas City. “I applaud the priorities of putting money back into higher education. We need to put a lot more money back in.”

State Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, voted for the bill. He said he was glad to see increasing support in any form.

“It is better to be one step from hell going up instead of one step from heaven going down,” he said. “And we are going up.”

Highlights of the spending plan include:

P $200 million to replace the aging Biggs Forensic Center at Fulton State Hospital. The project would be financed with bonds issued by the Missouri Development Finance Board with annual debt payments of about $14 million.

P $114.8 million more from general revenue and $163.2 million from any surplus over revenue estimates for the public school foundation formula, providing $3.19 billion to $3.35 billion in basic education aid. The spending plan also adds $15 million to school transportation services for a total of $115.9 million.

P $23.6 million more for in-home services for adults with developmental disabilities to eliminate the waiting list for services.

P $48.2 million to provide dental coverage for current Medicaid recipients.

P $483,000 to restore the budget of the State Historical Society of Missouri to pre-recession levels.
After lawmakers were finished, Nixon issued a statement praising most of the budget decisions but criticizing lawmakers for not putting more into education.

“From making college more affordable to expanding services for Missourians with developmental disabilities, this budget includes many of the priorities I laid out earlier this year,” Nixon said. “These smart, strategic investments in our future are made possible by an economy that continues to pick up steam.”

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**HEALTH & SCIENCE NEWS**

**Most MU weekend nurses sign incentive pay changes**

May 8

The Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. — **Nearly all the weekend nurses working for University of Missouri Health Care have agreed to sharp reductions in incentive pay.**

The hospital had announced in late March that it would reduce incentive pay for weekend nurses to 24 percent. Some nurses had been receiving up to 54 percent above their regular wage as incentive pay, with others getting 30 percent. The agreement also reduces the number of weekends the nurses can take off.

**Spokeswoman Mary Jenkins said 250 of the 292 weekend nurses signed the agreement, with a few nurses currently on leave who might also sign up.**

Those who didn't sign won't receive incentive pay. The program begins July 6.

"We are delighted with the response so far," Jenkins said.

The incentive program began during a nursing shortage in the 1980s and is now being reduced for financial reasons and because the need for registered nurses has decreased, The Columbia Daily Tribune reported (http://bit.ly/1m1Fs5z ).
The agreement also requires all the nurses to work a minimum of two 12-hour shifts 48 out of 52 weekends every year. Previously, the nurses were able to take off up to nine weekends per year.

**At least one nurse, Tami Verner, 55, said she chose to resign rather than sign the agreement.** Verner, who has worked weekends for MU Health Care for 31 years, was receiving **54 percent incentive pay**.

"I understand, really," Verner said. "I know they are in a crunch financially, but I just thought that was pretty aggressive."

She said the cuts come as nurses' work gets harder.

"I just was not going to work harder with sicker patients for less money," she said. "Also, I wasn't going to come to work all that happy knowing I was making 30 percent less money this week than last week, you know?"

Read more here: [http://www.kansascity.com/2014/05/08/5010455/most-mu-weekend-nurses-sign-incentive.html#storylink=cpy](http://www.kansascity.com/2014/05/08/5010455/most-mu-weekend-nurses-sign-incentive.html#storylink=cpy)

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**Ideas to Combat Sex Assaults**

May 9, 2014

By [Cory Weinberg](mailto:Cory.Weinberg@insidehighered.com)

**NO MU MENTION**

The message from the White House was loud, clear and footnoted last week: Colleges aren't doing enough to combat sexual assault on campus and dozens may be out of compliance with federal law.

But the 23-page report, "**Not Alone,**“ also handed out high praise to three universities that will “lead by example” to pinpoint how colleges can improve their sexual assault knowledge, policies and responses. Researchers at University of New
Hampshire, University of Texas at Austin and Johns Hopkins University will build on proven records of sexual assault research and launch studies over the next year to help fulfill the White House’s goals.

**University of New Hampshire**

One of the most important lessons New Hampshire researchers have learned after designing sexual assault education programs is that college students are “at the peak of their narcissism,” said Sharyn J. Potter, an associate professor of sociology and co-director of [Prevention Innovations Center](#).

That means when the New Hampshire group a social marketing program to increase awareness about sexual violence and bystander intervention, customization is key. The researchers have pushed for colleges to move past one-size-fits-all methods, instead tailoring the images and situations to students on specific campuses.

“Students get hung up on the little things, and say ‘no one would drink that kind of beer here,’ and the larger prevention message fades,” Potter said.

The eight-year-old Prevention Innovations center, made up of a dozen New Hampshire researchers across several disciplines, is known as a national leader for sexual assault prevention. Nearly 300 colleges use Prevention Innovations’ bystander intervention programs, which teaches students ways to step in, such as halting party-goers acting like predators through unconventional tactics such as spilling a drink on the guy or turning off the music as a distraction.

New Hampshire’s attention to the issue, which is also focused by the university’s Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program, crystallized after a 1987 gang rape on the Durham, N.H. campus in which students did nothing to stop the attack.

With White House prodding, the center will now try to identify the best ways to get students to remember campus sexual violence policies – whether colleges should teach them about the regulations online, in residence halls or in lecture halls.

Potter said few colleges support their sexual assault education programming with evidence about how effective it is, and it “is not uncommon for it to be 15 minutes in orientation where students are learning everything and being inundated, so just
to talk to them during sexual violence in those two days isn’t effective.”

Still, funding is hard to come by. The center has mostly been bolstered by a million-dollar grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention seven years ago, but is trying to figure out how to pay for the relatively low-cost White House project. With more money, the center could turn its bystander intervention program into a video game or smartphone app, Potter said.

“What we’ve learned from our research is we’re lucky enough to have these students for four to five years so we could change the message as students go through the years,” Potter said. “We just can’t deliver the message once, we have to deliver it in different formats, different ways.”

**University of Texas at Austin**

Universities have been under a microscope for how their police forces and administrators respond to sexual assault allegations. In preparing for her research, Noël Busch-Armendariz, director of Texas’ Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, said she has found that “people really want to do the right thing.”

Many just don’t know how to respond well, especially when sexual assault stereotypes pervade and officials often assume college students don’t know their accused rapists.

“When we have non-stranger sexual assault, things get thornier for law enforcement to figure out. That was the big impetus for the White House to bring us into the conversation,” Busch-Armendariz said.

The institute will take its national research on interpersonal violence and launch an assessment of campus police forces and sexual assault response teams to gauge their training practices, how they treat victims and how many sexual violence reports are filed per student.

The group published a toolkit last fall to help police talk to adult victims of non-stranger sexual assault, which recommends officers say statements like “I know reporting a sexual assault is hard. It took a lot of courage for you to make this call.”
“We really need to help law enforcement shift from investigations that looks at a focus of victim behavior that looks at a focus of offender behavior,” Busch-Armendariz said.

**Johns Hopkins University**

To add to the research on non-stranger sexual assaults, Johns Hopkins nursing professor Jacqueline Campbell will study her own campus. Campbell and several other researchers will use surveys, interviews and apps with students at Johns Hopkins over the next year to get more evidence on issues of consent and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender sexual assault. In particular, Campbell said the research will fill in two major information gaps college officials face: knowing how many students are raped in off-campus residences and how many males face sexual violence. The study, which will cost Johns Hopkins about $100,000, will also try to find out how campus health centers can better treat victims of sexual violence.

Campbell, who has studied intimate partner violence for more than three decades, said sexual assault research will gain momentum with the White House’s focus. “So often, when a victim reports the alleged perpetrator, it becomes a he-said, she-said or he-said, he-said. If we did a better job in documenting those injuries we would have an additional source around consent,” she said.

Repair process begins for MU Libraries’ moldy books

**Thursday, May 8, 2014 | 5:22 p.m. CDT**
**BY THOMAS DIXON**

COLUMBIA — **MU Libraries has started shipping half of the 600,000 books affected by mold last fall to be repaired in Texas by the restoration company Belfor.**

MU Libraries' lease on the underground Subtera cavern, where mold was initially discovered, ends June 1.
MU will ship as many books as possible to Belfor's Texas site to be repaired before the Subtera lease ends, said classical studies professor Dan Hoole, who heads the Faculty Council committee working with MU Libraries.

The remainder will be moved to a 26,100-square-foot storage facility at 6215 Cunningham Drive near Exit 121 on Interstate 70.

The clean books will be shipped back to this facility and stored separately from the moldy books. Once all of the books are cleaned, the storage area for the previously moldy books will be fumigated so it can be used for future storage, Hooley said.

The most recent estimate of books to be saved is 400,000, according to the MU Libraries website. The rest will be destroyed, but online copies will be available.

The facility is being leased to MU by D&D Investments at $16,965 per month, compared to $12,016 per month at Subtera, said MU Libraries communications officer Shannon Cary. The lease started May 1 and is ongoing, she said.

Various MU departments have written to University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin, requesting that funding be made available for a permanent and satisfactory facility, Hooley said.

In an April 28 letter to David Read, chairman of the Department of English, Wolfe said MU Libraries will submit plans to the UM System Board of Curators for an addition to the UM Library Depository, the primary storage facility for MU books since 1997.

Wolfe said they will submit plans for the curators' consideration as a "priority capital project."

In 2006, a request was made to the UM academic officers to consider funding an addition to the UM Library Depository, which holds about 1.2 million books, according to the MU Libraries website.

The request was deemed cost-prohibitive, and the current system of leased storage space was chosen instead, according to the website.

Hooley said Wolfe's letter is a "hopeful sign" that MU faculty's wishes will be fulfilled.
Letter to the editor: Tax cut is a step toward creating a pro-business environment

Your editorial "Knockout blow" (May 7) presents no data to correlate spending on education to quality. If it did, St. Louis Public Schools and others would be replete with Rhodes scholars.

You state "Of course, your kids' schools will be cruddier." Why? You state that Senate Bill 509 will increase the cost of higher education. Do you want more money for the University of Missouri so more student activity centers can be built?

I received a quality education in SLPS, when spending per pupil was a fraction of today’s expenditure. I lived in the city for 25 years, now I live in the suburbs, where "there is profound ignorance about the role that fair taxes play in a just society." Really? That is offensive to my intellect and my compassion for people. The editors must live in the city, where there is "profound ignorance" about the role of fair taxes on economic growth, job creation and global competitiveness.

In my career with a $1 billion St. Louis-based global company, I decided where to locate manufacturing facilities. I can tell you why Missouri was not chosen for one of them: a $50 million investment with 50 high-paying jobs: lack of a pro-business environment and not being a right-to-work state. The facility was built in Arkansas.

Senate Bill 509 is a step in the right direction. Now, to the next battleground — right-to-work legislation — which will further stimulate Missouri's economy. Let’s hope Rep. Keith English can see the light on that issue also.
Several Columbia projects make construction bill

Measure still must pass in the House.

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, May 8, 2014 at 2:00 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — Columbia's clout in state budgeting this year, greater than at any time since 1992, paid off in the $220 million construction bill that won approval Wednesday in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, who is chairman of the Senate spending panel, and Rep. Chris Kelly, who has 16 years of experience on the House Budget Committee, huddled on strategy to pass the bill shortly after the committee vote. The bill passed the Senate 28-4, and now it must win House approval after lawmakers in that chamber vote on 13 bills spending $26.8 billion on state operations next year.

The bill uses a mixture of funding sources to finance the construction projects, including $141.5 million from bonds, $46.9 million from general revenue and $27.8 million if state revenue reaches the optimistic levels predicted by Gov. Jay Nixon in his budget plan.

There are five Columbia projects totaling $78.9 million in the bill. Four are University of Missouri projects and the fifth, $25 million for a new research center and museum for the State Historical Society of Missouri, is housed on the MU campus.

The other local projects are:

- $38.5 million from bond proceeds to renovate and expand engineering education at Lafferre Hall.
$10 million from general revenue for an applied learning center at MU's Trulaske College of Business.
$2.8 million from surplus funds for a Fine and Performing Arts facility.
$1.5 million from surplus funds for a research and teaching winery.

Statewide, the UM System would receive $98.3 million for nine projects.

Sen. Scott Sifton, D-Afton, noted that almost all four-year universities received something from the bill. "And if I read this correctly, there is zero for the University of Central Missouri and zero for Truman State," he said.

Sifton then asked for Schaefer to add a project, but Schaefer refused. It was inappropriate to ask "on the last day" for a project "that was never mentioned to me," Schaefer said.

The last time Columbia had the political weight on spending that it does now, Kelly was House Budget Committee chairman and then-Sen. Roger Wilson was Senate Appropriations Committee chairman. But even with the current clout, most of the money allocated by the bill is uncertain.

State revenue is sluggish, well below both legislative and administration projections. At one point Schaefer was confident of legislative estimates; now he is "optimistic."

"There is always uncertainty in capital improvements bills," he said.

Another potential problem is that the big projects using bond funds alter the original intent of Sen. Mike Parson, who sponsored a $600 million borrowing plan to catch up on maintenance and repair needs statewide.

The House version, to authorize $400 million for new construction, must pass in the lower chamber. Parson must agree to the changes if the authorization bill returns to the Senate, or the appropriations will be worthless.

Yesterday Parson wasn't happy.

"I'm not sure why we would do new buildings when we can't keep up what we've already got," he said.
Missouri places four sports teams in top 10 percent in NCAA report

Thursday, May 8, 2014 | 12:45 p.m. CDT; updated 5:34 p.m. CDT, Thursday, May 8, 2014

BY MISSOURIAN STAFF

COLUMBIA — For the second straight year, the Missouri football team is recognized in the Top 10 percent in the nation in Academic Progress Rate for the 2012-13 year, as released by the NCAA.

The Missouri football program is one of two from the SEC to receive Top-10 recognition in the current report. South Carolina is the other. Missouri is the only SEC football team to received recognition in each of the last two years.

In all, four Missouri sports program were recognized: football, women's swimming and diving, women's indoor track and field, and women's outdoor track and field. That total ranks Missouri second in the SEC, trailing only Vanderbilt, which had six teams recognized.

The progress report was developed by the NCAA in 2004 to measure the academic progress and performance of athletic programs at member institutions. The multi-year average for the latest report spans the last four years, and institutions are awarded points when student-athletes remain academically eligible for competition and when they return the following semester, or graduate.

May 9, 2014
Battle Over College-Athlete Labor Unions Flares Up at House Hearing
By Vimal Patel

Washington

NO MU MENTION
Lawmakers aired starkly contrasting views about what collective bargaining for college athletes would mean at a Congressional hearing on Thursday called in response to Northwestern University football players’ bid to unionize.

A National Labor Relations Board regional director ruled in March that the players are employees under the control of the university, based in part on the strict sports schedule they must keep, and therefore are eligible to form a union. Northwestern has argued that the regional director ignored key facts and has appealed the ruling to the full NLRB. Meanwhile, the results of the players’ union vote, taken on April 25, have been impounded pending the full board’s review.

Among many concerns raised at Thursday’s hearing were that students who unionized could have to pay taxes on wages, colleges could face major financial burdens, and other colleges in an athletic conference could be harmed if one team’s players went on strike.

Rep. John P. Kline Jr., a Minnesota Republican and chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee, said the conditions faced by athletes should be dealt with "in a way that protects the athletic and academic integrity of higher education."

"The recent NLRB decision," he said in prepared remarks, "takes a fundamentally different approach that could make it harder for some students to access a quality education."

But some lawmakers voiced support for the union-organizing effort. Rep. George Miller, a California Democrat, said that colleges and universities in recent decades, with help from the National Collegiate Athletic Association, had cashed in on their best football and basketball players while treating them poorly, and had created "a big-business sports empire."

"In the end, this is a classic labor dispute," Representative Miller said. "By banding together and bargaining, these athletes can win the kinds of things union workers have demanded and won across the country."

**Greater Scrutiny**

The hearing, titled "Big Labor on College Campuses: Examining the Consequences of Unionizing Student Athletes," was held as lawmakers are paying more attention to how colleges
treat their athletes. Advocates for the players in recent months have met with lobbyists and lawmakers, and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is set to hold a hearing next week to examine the welfare of college athletes.

For its part, the NCAA has stepped up efforts to help athletes. Last month its Division I Board of Directors approved a measure allowing colleges to provide more meals for players. The board also endorsed changes in the Division I governance structure that are expected to provide wealthy colleges with more autonomy, setting the stage for big-time athletics programs to increase the value of scholarships and to provide new health and welfare benefits.

Opponents of unionization at Thursday’s hearing and earlier this week argued that the NLRB should not be driving major changes in college athletics.

"The real question with respect to the NLRB," said Baylor University’s president, Ken Starr, who spoke at the hearing, "is are we going to in fact use the National Labor Relations Act as a tool for negotiating improvements? And it seems to me exactly the wrong way to go."

The day before, Molly Corbett Broad, president of the American Council on Education, wrote in a letter to Representative Kline that the NLRB is "not in a position to consider all of the collateral consequences" of a decision that some athletes should be treated as employees.

"If the federal government is to change the legal status of student-athletes," said Ms. Broad in the letter, "that judgment should be deliberated by the Congress, not announced by the NLRB."

William B. Gould IV, who was chairman of the NLRB during the Clinton administration, said in an interview that Ms. Broad’s letter was "disgraceful" because it aimed to politicize the process and marginalize a body—the NLRB—that is doing exactly what it was created by Congress to do.

"If Congress wants to change the law, that is always their prerogative," Mr. Gould said. "But each decision that the board makes is not subject to a special referendum in front of Congress or anybody else."

Opponents of athletes’ right to unionize are "trying to snuff out both the rule of law and the spread of collective bargaining," Mr. Gould said. "What’s being asked for here is a special sanctuary where they are above the law."
Violence task force recommends city council 'ban the box'

By Alan Burdziak

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The Mayor’s Task Force on Community Violence unanimously agreed Thursday night to send a recommendation to the Columbia City Council to “ban the box,” which would prohibit employers from asking about a person’s criminal history on job applications.

Cities nationwide have passed similar laws, including Kansas City’s that took effect April 4, 2013 for city job applicants. Task force member Dan Hanneken said most jurisdictions that have done it – and by his count that number is 62 – begin with the ordinance only applying to city job applicants. The measure is intended to give ex-offenders a better shot at obtaining employment, which most on the task force admitted would be entry-level and unskilled.

“Certainly this is not a magic wand, but I personally believe this can be part of the solution,” to ex-convicts returning to a life of crime, Hanneken said. Recidivism, he said, is more likely if the released ex-offender is unemployed and has few options to make a living.

The task force’s recommendation, though, will run the full gamut, including private contractors and private employers, with the understanding the city council will refine and revise it as it sees fit after public input is taken into consideration. Kansas City’s ordinance prohibits employers from using or accessing applicants’ criminal records in a slew of circumstances as well, including when a sentence is suspended or expunged or a misdemeanor conviction in which no jail time was imposed. Background checks on applicants for city municipal jobs in Missouri’s largest city can only be done on qualified candidates and after an interview.

The task force also plans to reach out to the University of Missouri and the Chamber of Commerce for their input.
Along with Hanneken, among the most ardent task force members in support of recommending the “ban the box’ legislation were Pamela Hardin, Chris Haynes and Tyree Byndom.

“Let’s just go all the way,” Hardin said. “Let’s go ahead and try to include the private contractors. Let’s include the private employers.”

Byndom said he’s heard from unemployed ex-offenders who asked upfront if their record would disqualify them when applying.

Like Kansas City’s law, members agreed that certain other statutory limits on hiring from the state and federal levels would be adhered to.

“I don’t think anyone’s advocating we hire pedophiles at our day cares or people convicted of fraud at our banks,” Hanneken said.

Over the last decade or so, cities, counties and states across the U.S. have been re-evaluating hard-on-crime penalties made popular in the 1980s and '90s. Recently released research from the Brookings Institution, an independent, nonprofit public policy think tank, blamed the increase in the nation’s incarceration rate on mandatory sentencing guidelines for nonviolent crimes, including “three strikes” rules in place in several states.

In addition to Kansas City, other major cities like Baltimore; Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago; Detroit; San Francisco; Oakland, Calif.; New York; Philadelphia; and Washington, D.C. have passed some sort of “ban the box” legislation, according to the National Employment Law Project.