Loftin outlines faculty hire plan in Strategic Plan presentation

By Ashley Jost

Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at 4:30 pm

As part of the Strategic Plan, University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin plans to bring aboard at least 20 new faculty members in specific disciplines during the next four years.

Loftin presented his plans for the coming fiscal year, which starts next Tuesday, as well as a recap of this past year, to the Board of Curators last Friday.

All four campuses are required to have a strategic plan in place each year that provides a mission for their campus that all projects should be connected to.

During his presentation, Loftin showed the breakdown of the 20 new faculty members he hopes to hire, including seven from the medical and health sciences fields, four from physical sciences, four in life sciences, four in engineering and one new journalism faculty member.

Loftin said he hopes many of these new faculty hires will have appointments in multiple colleges to broaden the interdisciplinary aspect that MU’s strategic plan is striving to increase.

Some of the new faculty will be replacement hires, but not all. And Loftin stressed that he isn’t sticking just to this list - he hopes to bring on others who are well-qualified, too, regardless of whether they fall in one of these categories.

Looking back on the previous year, Loftin said nine new faculty are already in place, and six additional, “highly productive” faculty will join MU’s campus this fall.

Plans for this past year to bring up to 100 non tenure-track faculty that would engage in research at MU did not work, Loftin said. Instead of the 100 goal, MU had about two or three potential NTT faculty come forward with proposals. He said administrators are working to find a better approach for these hires in the future.
Take a peek at Loftin’s presentation (located to the left of this blog post) to see what data he included about the FY 2014 strategic planning process, including course redesign and merit raise information.

UM System President Tim Wolfe and board Chairman Don Downing said during a press conference Friday that they are pleased with the strategic plan efforts at MU, and are particularly excited to see detailed plans for future hiring goals.

Look for some stories in the near future on the full MU Strategic Plan for FY 2015.

MU to oversee campus sexual assault, violence center

By Ashley Jost

Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at 10:15 am

Starting next week, the University of Missouri’s Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center will have new oversight on the MU campus.

For years, the RSVP Center has been an auxiliary operation of the Missouri Students Association, using student fees and grant money provided from the Department of Justice, said Cathy Scroggs, vice chancellor for student affairs. Now, it will operate under Student Life, with continued funding from student fees.

Scroggs said six years ago, the Department of Justice provided a grant that MU shared with the University of Missouri-Kansas City to better address sexual assault and violence prevention, which led to the development of the resource center. Similar functions were part of the Women’s Center before that. MU’s portion of the grant was $500,000 over a six-year period, Scroggs said.

As that grant money is starting to dwindle down, Scroggs said, administrators saw an opportunity to suggest moving the center from the student government’s oversight to the Student Life office.

“Since we’re at the very end of the grant, we said this is an important center on campus, and it’s something we want to continue,” Scroggs said. “We want to make sure funding is available and
not subject to whoever the president of the student body is, so we went to MSA and asked, ‘Can we transfer the fees you’re putting in and place RSVP under Student Life, that way, administratively, we can be sure it will continue.’ ”

Scroggs said administrators didn’t want to just “take the program away.” The student association agreed to put it to a vote from the student body, and students approved the oversight change in early May.

Missouri Students Association will continue contributing $20,000 in student fees toward the center, and RSVP also will receive $60,000 from Student Life. Student Life contributed to RSVP’s budget last year, too, Scroggs said.

Missouri Students Association President Mason Schara said the student group sees this as a positive change in light of the ongoing national discussion about campus sex assaults. With this change, Schara said, there’s a greater chance that RSVP will receive additional funding that it could use for sexual assault and violence prevention programming — funding the student group would not be able to provide.

Scroggs said administrators will consider the RSVP Center when making funding requests from the UM System during the coming months. UM System President Tim Wolfe has committed to providing more financial resources to campus programs that address sexual assault and mental health.

**Nixon cuts $786.2 million because of revenue shortfalls, tax uncertainty**

By [Rudi Keller](mailto:rkeller@columbiadailytribune.com)

**Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at 12:05 pm Comments (4)**

JEFFERSON CITY — Almost all new spending in the coming budget year — including increases for public schools and higher education — must be put off, Gov. Jay Nixon said Tuesday as he announced $786.2 million in budget restrictions and vetoes.
A shortfall in revenue was aggravated by a “complete breakdown” of the budget process as lawmakers passed a series of sales tax exemptions and other tax breaks for businesses in the final week of the session, Nixon told reporters during a news conference.

“Any new items that were presented above the level I recommended were vetoed, except for a couple of items that were restricted,” Nixon said.

Nixon vetoed 10 tax cut bills but is withholding $213 million in the fiscal year 2015 budget, which begins July 1, while he waits to learn whether his vetoes will be sustained in September.

With his actions today, Nixon withheld $100.2 million slated for public schools through the foundation formula, $15 million for public school transportation, $43.4 million for aid to colleges and universities and $18 million for scholarship programs.

His vetoes included $483,250 budget increase for the State Historical Society of Missouri, $6 million for converting the St. Mary’s Hospital building in Jefferson City into a nursing education center for Lincoln University and more than $20 million set aside for provider rate increases under the Medicaid program.

Nixon also announced he would eliminate 260 state jobs, close 19 regional offices for state agencies and withhold the 1 percent pay raise included in the budget.

The St. Mary’s project was a personal favorite of Nixon’s, and he said it is now dead as a state project. “I am not here saying everybody’s ideas were not good, but you have got to put another hole in the belt,” Nixon said.

The budget actions announced today were made worse by legislative tax changes, but revenues have lagged behind projections, both those used by legislators and Nixon’s more optimistic estimates. Revenues are down slightly for the current fiscal year, which creates a shortfall of more than $160 million as the new year begins.

Speaking before Nixon had announced his decisions, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer said Nixon is to blame for anemic revenue growth because he has failed to make the state more attractive to business.

The tax cut legislation approved this year is an example of the legislature trying to make those changes on its own, Schaefer said.

“All Missourians would be better off if the governor would engage with the legislature,” he said. “The governor refuses to do that, so here we are.”

In his budget actions, Nixon withheld but did not veto almost $100 million in capital spending projects in Columbia, leaving open the possibility that if his tax vetoes are sustained and revenue rebounds, they could go forward.
Those projects include $38.5 million for renovation and expansion of Lafferre Hall, $25 million for a new research center and museum for the State Historical Society and $2.8 million for a fine and performing arts facility.

Nixon protected funding to rebuild Fulton State Hospital, a $200 million project financed by state bonds.

The public school aid and funding for higher education would be the first programs to have their restrictions lifted if lawmakers sustain his vetoes in September, Nixon said.

“That is the choice in front of us. Is a tax break for a utility company, a tax break for a fast food restaurant, a tax break for a dry cleaner — are those ahead of funding education in this state?” Nixon said.

A look at budget cuts by Missouri's governor

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon announced numerous budget vetoes and spending restrictions Tuesday. Nixon said he may lift some spending restrictions if legislators sustain his vetoes of separate bills granting tax breaks to various entities. Legislators could override line-item budget vetoes by a two-thirds majority vote in each chamber. Here is a look at some of Nixon's significant budget reductions involving general state revenues:

EDUCATION

— $115 million in basic aid and transportation expenses for public K-12 school districts. Restricted.

— $43 million in performance-based funding for higher education institutions. Restricted.

— $18 million for scholarships through Access Missouri, Bright Flight and A-Plus programs. Restricted.

— $17 million to expand child care subsidies for low-income families. Restricted

— $4 million for school safety grants. Vetoed.

— $3 million for grants to preschool programs. Restricted.

HEALTH CARE
— $43 million for payment rate increases to health care providers. Vetoed.

— $24 million for Medicaid payments to hospitals. Restricted.

— $18 million to restore dental coverage for adult Medicaid recipients. Restricted.

— $10 million for a medical school partnership between the University of Missouri-Columbia and Springfield hospitals. Restricted.

— $7 million to restore therapy services for adult Medicaid recipients. Restricted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

— $18 million for the Missouri Technology Investment Fund. Restricted.

— $13 million to expand job training through the Missouri Works Job Development Fund. Vetoed.

— $5 million to help host the Republican National Convention in Kansas City. Restricted.

— $4 million for increased tourism promotion. Restricted.

BUILDINGS

— $120 million for maintenance and repairs at state facilities. Restricted.

— $46 million for repairs and renovations at the Missouri Capitol. Restricted.

— $38 million to expand state office space through construction and renovation projects. Restricted.

— $10 million for the College of Business Administration at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Restricted.

— $10 million for an Applied Learning Center at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Restricted.

— $7 million for the Free Enterprise Center at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Restricted.

— $6 million to renovate a Jefferson City hospital for use as a state building. Vetoed.
UPDATE: Missouri Gov. Nixon vetoes, freezes $1 billion of spending

Tuesday, June 24, 2014 | 7:26 p.m. CDT; updated 7:52 p.m. CDT, Tuesday, June 24, 2014

BY RACHEL BROOKS AND THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon vetoed or froze more than $1.1 billion in spending Tuesday for Missouri's next budget, citing concerns about declining revenues and the potential for new tax breaks to drain state dollars even further.

Nixon's budget cuts include nearly $276 million in line-item vetoes and $846 million in spending restrictions affecting items ranging from public schools and universities to the Medicaid health care program.

These cuts include more than $77 million to MU's Columbia campus and more than $2 million to Columbia Public Schools for projects and daily operations.

The Democratic governor said his actions were necessary because the budget approved by the Republican-led legislature was "dangerously out of balance."

"This is economic reality," Nixon said at a news conference.

Missouri's new budget is to take effect July 1.

Nixon's actions mean there will be no funding increase for public school districts, colleges or universities when the new school year begins. But the governor said the education money would be the first to be released if legislators in September sustain his previously announced vetoes of bills granting special tax breaks to a variety of industries and organizations.

In Boone County, these restricted funds include $38.5 million for renovations to Lafferre Hall, $25 million to build a new research center for the State Historical Society — currently located in Ellis Library — and $10 million to fund the Applied Learning Center, an entrepreneurship center run through Trulaske College of Business. Columbia
Public Schools expected an increase in state funds of more than $2 million, which is also being restricted for the time being.

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer of Columbia said the governor was "holding school kids hostage" to try to get his way on tax policy and, ultimately, to try to persuade the legislature to expand Medicaid eligibility for low-income adults, which would draw additional federal dollars.

University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe said in a statement Tuesday that the funding being held in limbo makes it difficult for MU to achieve its mission.

"We recognize the state budgetary challenges, and are concerned that the uncertainty of this critical funding will make it difficult for us to plan for the future, prepare the state's workforce for Missouri's future economy and help move the state forward," he said.

He said the delays prevent the university from carrying out building projects that will provide a boost to the local economy.

This marks the second straight year that Nixon has used budget restrictions as a means of gaining leverage over lawmakers during the September veto session.

Last year, Nixon froze about $400 million for education, health care and other programs, releasing the money only after the legislature failed to override his veto of an income tax cut bill. Last year's battle came despite the fact that Missouri revenues had surged above expectations.

Missouri's tax revenues currently are 0.2 percent below last year's, with only a week remaining in the fiscal year, said Nixon's budget director, Linda Luebbering. Revenues also are running well short of the projections upon which next year's budget was based.

All told, Nixon froze or vetoed $786 million of expenses from general state revenues and $336 million dependent upon federal or other funding sources. Of those general revenue cuts, a little more than half are attributable to the shortfall in tax revenues, Luebbering said.
Nixon said the budget reductions also are partly due to erroneous legislative assumptions about tobacco settlement revenues and the legislature's failure to enact an amnesty program to encourage people with overdue taxes to pay.

The governor said the Republicans' refusal to expand Medicaid eligibility has worsened the state's finances by rejecting a potential influx of billions of federal dollars available under President Barack Obama's health care law. Republicans contend that Medicaid expansion would be too costly for the state in the long term.

Nixon contends the shortfall would be worsened by up to $425 million annually if lawmakers override his vetoes of various tax-law changes, including bills offering sales tax breaks to computer data centers, electric companies, restaurants and fitness centers.

"While eroding our tax base with new loopholes for special interests, the legislature simultaneously littered the budget with earmarks and new government programs, demonstrating misplaced priorities and a stunning lack of fiscal restraint," Nixon said.

Luebbering said more than $200 million of Nixon's budget reductions are due to the potential for lawmakers to override his vetoes of those tax-law changes.

Republican lawmakers have questioned Nixon's figures and defended many of the tax-break bills as mere corrections of tax policies that they say have been wrongly applied by the courts or Nixon's administration.

Business groups urged lawmakers to forge ahead with veto override attempts on the tax-break legislation.

While Nixon blamed lawmakers for causing the budget cuts, Schaefer said the governor should bear the responsibility for declining revenues.

"The governor's lack of economic policy in the state of Missouri is having a faster and more detrimental effect than anyone realized it would," said Shaefer, R-Columbia.

In addition to freezing funding increases for education, Nixon also put a hold on state employee pay raises, increased tourism promotion, expanded child care subsidies and restored dental and therapy coverage for adult Medicaid recipients that had been eliminated a decade ago. All of those could later be released at Nixon's discretion.
The items vetoed by Nixon include funding for a new economic development office in Israel, pay rate increases for mental health care providers, and the acquisition and renovation of a private hospital in Jefferson City to be used as an office building for the state and Lincoln University.

Nixon said he was eliminating 260 full-time state positions and closing 19 regional state offices, including seven for the Department of Revenue and six each for the departments of Mental Health and Natural Resources.

Missouri J-school honors British, Ukrainian papers

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — The British newspaper that won a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of secret U.S. government surveillance is among this year's recipients of the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism.

The University of Missouri School of Journalism presents the medal annually in recognition of superior or lifetime achievement.

The school cited the Guardian newspaper for its coverage of surveillance by the U.S. National Security Agency surveillance.

Also being honored is Ukraine's Kyiv Post, an English-language weekly, for its work chronicling the political turmoil that swept the country's president from power.

The other medalists are former Wall Street Journal editor and New York Times ombudsman Byron Calame; National Public Radio host Audie Cornish; retired MU journalism professor Steve Kopcha; documentary filmmaker Eugene Richards; and Wired magazine.
As we try to guess the future of downtown student housing, the University of Missouri’s plan for on-campus expansion is a pertinent factor.

Almost everyone agrees new student housing should be built near the campus rather than out in the suburbs. The most certain example of this infill development is expansion on the campus itself. Any private developer with millions to spend in downtown Columbia will want to know what MU planners have in mind.

All hands got new insight last week when the UM Board of Curators approved MU’s campus master plan for 2014. New and remodeled student housing was not the only category on the list, but development of residential halls was a major factor.

Interim Chief Operating Officer Gary Ward said MU plans to increase enrollment by 3,000 in five to seven years and wants on-campus accommodations for all freshmen and 1,000 additional beds for upper classmen or graduate students, requiring about 7,500 beds.

Sharp-eyed private developers will use these numbers to calculate how much they should spend on competitive off-campus space.

I think we can safely assume student housing on campus always will fill up, but that leaves quite a chunk of business for the private marketplace. The university has its own financial limitations and is happy for private developers to fill part of the need, but MU will expand its own facilities within reason.

Current plans call for a new dormitory on South Virginia Avenue, remodeling and expansion of the Dobbs Group — Jones, Laws and Lathrop Halls — and remodeling of the Manor House Hitt Street high-rise for graduate and professional students. All of this will take several years, depending on cost.
The bottom line is positive: The conservative expectation that MU enrollment will grow by 3,000 within seven years warrants on-campus residential expansion and the likelihood of additional private development as well.

Several projects already are in stages of development, and others not quite so certain receive lip service, but the monumental crush of student housing is over. The recent announcement of MU residence hall plans won’t stop private development, but as enrollment increases taper off and MU continues to build out its own dormitory space, the invasion of downtown student high-rise developers will not be so frantic.

City policymakers will have a bit of breathing room. Their next noticeable move will be to increase developer fees somewhat to help pay for associated expansion of transportation and utility infrastructure.

Recently promoters of this idea released a survey showing current developer fees pay only about 15 percent of these associated costs, and they hint about 70 to 80 percent would be more like it. Eighty percent is too much, and 15 percent is too little. The debate is under way.

Lt. Bruce Britt honored posthumously with Lifesaver Award

Tuesday, June 24, 2014 | 10:26 p.m. CDT; updated 6:39 a.m. CDT, Wednesday, June 25, 2014
BY AUSTIN HUQUELET

JEFFERSON CITY — Lt. Bruce Britt, the first Columbia firefighter killed in the line of duty since 1986, was honored by the American Red Cross Heart of Missouri Chapter on Tuesday night.

His wife, Leigh Britt, accepted the 2014 Firefighter Lifesaver Award on his behalf with their 3-year-old daughter Stormy standing alongside her on stage. Leigh Britt spoke of her husband's legacy to the assembled crowd.

"Bruce loved his job," she said. "I'm hopeful, if nothing else, that his sacrifice protected the lives of innocent students and families that use that facility."

After the ceremony, Leigh Britt also said that she and her daughter have been overwhelmed by the support they have received from both strangers and friends since her husband's death.
"One of the positive things that's come from this is all the love that we have for each other, and we've seen that," she said. Fire Chief Charles Witt "was there right by our side for several days after Bruce died, and that was incredible," she said.

Bruce Britt was the last of nine Lifesaver award recipients honored at the Capital West Christian Church Event Center in Jefferson City. He was the first person the organization had honored posthumously, said David Griffith, the organization's executive director.

The crowd, which included five Fire Department officials, including Witt, observed a moment of silence for Britt after the awards presentation.

"It's nice to see organizations recognize the sacrifice that Lt. Britt made. Public safety officials do their job every day, and unfortunately sometimes they don't get to come home," Witt said.

Britt died Feb. 22 from injuries he received while trying to evacuate residents from University Village apartments. Britt was on a second-story balcony walkway at the apartments when it collapsed beneath him.

MU announced March 12 that the University Village would close on June 30 and be demolished shortly after. His family filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against the UM System Board of Curators later that month that alleged the university acted with negligence when it failed to properly maintain the apartment complex, leading to the conditions that caused Britt's death.

Attorneys for the curators denied the allegations in a response May 12.

Supervising editor is Edward Hart
Title IX coordinator becomes full-time position

After a report in April concluded that MU did not properly follow Title IX guidelines, Loftin acknowledged the need for improvements.

By Maddie Foster

Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin recently announced that he will make the Title IX coordinator — the officer responsible for handling student and employee complaints regarding sexual discrimination, harassment and sexual assault — a full-time position.

“We have been working to improve coordination among law enforcement, our Title IX coordinator and the Office of Student Conduct related to the handling of conduct allegations and investigations, particularly those involving sexual assault,” Loftin said in an email sent to the MU community.

Loftin acknowledged the need for such improvements after an investigation revealed that while MU’s handling former Missouri swimmer Sasha Menu Courey’s case was not in violation of the law, MU did not properly follow Title IX guidelines, which are in place to prohibit sexual violence, sexual harassment and discrimination based on sex.

Prior to the investigation, the Title IX coordinator was a part-time position.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said that in light of the report, Loftin decided such an important position needed to be full-time.

“The position has evolved over time as duties and responsibilities have changed,” Basi said. “Safety is MU’s top priority, and we are always looking for ways to enhance and improve policies and procedures to make the university a safer place for everyone.”

Until a permanent full-time Title IX coordinator is hired, Linda Bennett — who had previously served as an assistant to the provost and an associate professor of learning — will be appointed as the interim coordinator.

Bennett hopes to get the ball rolling toward improving campus safety.

“Chancellor Loftin has given me the responsibility to do three things,” Bennett said. “The first one is to oversee the university's compliance efforts as it applies to Title IX. The second is to assist the chancellor and the campus with reviewing our policy and procedures. And then third is to develop training for Title IX for faculty, staff and students.”
Bennett also said many faculty and staff hope that by making the position full-time, there will be more time and effort put toward making students more aware of the information and resources available to them when it comes to issues such as sexual assault.

“We want to educate and be proactive in supporting of students if they’re in need or have questions, or want to help out others,” she said.

Noel English, the previous Title IX coordinator, will remain as a deputy coordinator and focus on cases regarding faculty and staff.

English was unavailable for comment.

**New assistant vice provost appointed**

**Burns-Wallace hopes to assess and reduce gaps in MU's student resources.**

By Daniela Vidal

Navigating through the store to find school supplies excited DeAngela Burns-Wallace, but when she navigated through Stanford University as a first generation college student, she needed a different set of school supplies: university resources.

**As the new assistant vice provost for undergraduate studies at MU, she will be searching for ways to help students access resources so they can be more successful.**

“The resources to build my future began (at Stanford),” Burns-Wallace said.

Her scholarship didn’t cover all the costs of her education, so Burns-Wallace was looking for ways to fund the rest of her education when she received an invitation from the undergraduate director to a fellowship dinner.

There, Burns-Wallace learned about the Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship, which would cover the rest of her undergraduate costs, give her the chance to study at Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and get her started on a career path with the U.S. State Department.

A year later, she was one of ten in the nation to receive the fellowship.

“I didn’t have a clear concept of what a fellowship was until that dinner,” Burns-Wallace said. “It changed my path.”
Burns-Wallace has been working to change MU students’ paths since 2009.

As director of access initiatives, Burns-Wallace coordinated MU’s statewide college access strategy and focused on increasing college readiness.

“I want students to be not only surviving or making it,” Burns-Wallace said. “I want them to be thriving and engaging in the institutional environment.”

Burns-Wallace’s new position is the result of a collective effort among the offices of Enrollment Management, Student Affairs and Undergraduate Studies to increase freshman retention and graduation rates.

“The student is like a tightrope walker,” Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Jim Spain said. “But there are gaps in the safety net beneath the walker. We want to minimize the risk of students falling through the gaps. (Burns-Wallace) has demonstrated she not only understands the big picture or broad issue, but she can turn those ideas into specific action items.”

Burns-Wallace said she wants to start conversations across campus and examine MU’s student-resource landscape to better understand the gaps that exist and how to reduce those gaps.

Spain said Burns-Wallace’s passion and empathy struck him when she told Spain about her parents’ work and sacrifices, which paved the way for her education.

“She understands and appreciates what families have done and sacrificed,” Spain said. “She understands how special and meaningful this opportunity is, not just for students, but for their families.”

The efforts to improve student success will also focus on including better support for families, Spain said.

“We have a responsibility that we’re putting resources out there,” Burns-Wallace said. “We need to meet students where they are.”
WASHINGTON -- Sharper divisions are emerging between Democrats and Republicans over how Congress should go about reauthorizing the Higher Education Act.

House Republicans released an outline Tuesday of their priorities for rewriting the massive law. Their plan includes streamlining and consolidating federal student aid programs as well as eliminating many regulations affecting colleges.

Meanwhile, Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, the Democrat who chairs the Senate education committee, unveiled an outline of the Higher Education Act legislation he is drafting. His proposal calls for year-round Pell Grants, new federal accountability measures for colleges, and increased consumer protections for student loan borrowers.

The vast differences in the competing plans set the stage for partisan clashes in the coming months -- and likely well into next year -- over the federal government’s proper role in keeping college prices down and the extent to which it should hold colleges accountable for the outcomes of their students.
The Republican plan says that college leaders should be responsible for controlling students' college costs and that it’s not the federal government’s job to “dictate college costs or set price controls over tuition and fees.”

“The federal government can help control costs by removing unnecessary and burdensome requirements” on colleges, the report says.

Representative John Kline, the Republican who chairs the House education committee, told reporters Tuesday that reducing requirements on colleges has been “at the core of what we’ve been looking at.”

In addition to reducing what colleges spend to comply with regulations, paring back some rules will also “make sure that institutions have the flexibility to innovate,” he said. The Republican plan singles out competency-based education and direct assessment programs as two types of innovation they hope to promote.

Kline also said that while he wants colleges to be accountable for the federal dollars they receive, it is not the role of the federal government to limit colleges tuition prices.

Harkin’s bill takes a different approach. He said in a statement that he is seeking “bold changes to our system of higher education to make a college education more affordable and accessible.”

The proposal would also hold colleges responsible for how successfully their graduates repay their loans, and set up a commission for exploring “holding low-performing institutions financially responsible for poor student outcomes.”

There is some overlap among the proposals released Tuesday. For instance, both call for improved financial counseling for students and the creation of a single income-based student loan repayment program. But the plans are both largely partisan wish lists, as they contain major proposals that are unlikely to garner much, if any, bipartisan support.
Harkin’s proposal, for instance, seeks to clamp down on for-profit colleges by further reducing the percentage of their revenue that may come from some federal sources and by prohibiting federal money from going to advertising and marketing.

The Republican plan, on the other hand, effectively calls for the repeal or blocking of large chunks of the Obama administration’s higher education agenda over the past six years. The proposal takes aim at the administration’s proposed college ratings system, the gainful employment rules that would govern for-profit colleges, and state authorization regulations. It also says that regulation of teacher preparation programs, over which the administration has sought more oversight, should be “primarily a state responsibility.”

**Different Strategies**

While Harkin plans to introduce comprehensive legislation, House Republicans said they planned a more piecemeal approach to reauthorizing the Higher Education Act.

Kline said he would be introducing a handful of smaller bills, starting this week, that address various aspects of the overall plan released Tuesday. He said the strategy was aimed at getting broader, bipartisan support for the legislation.

He said he has been discussing the legislation with House leadership and expected the House to take a vote on at least some of the bills before the November elections.

“This has been the philosophy of the Speaker, that we do things step-by-step and put things out in smaller chunks.” said Representative Virginia Foxx, who chairs the House higher education subcommittee. “It seems to work better.”

“You can sit there with comprehensive bills and make no progress,” Kline added.
A spokeswoman for Representative George Miller, the top Democrat on the House education committee, countered that the House Republican plan amounted to “small potatoes.”

The priorities the Republicans laid out “clearly aren’t a real effort to address real problems like skyrocketing tuition or massive student loan debt, and they won’t make a significant difference in students’ ability to get into, complete, or pay for their education,” said Julia Krahe, the Miller spokeswoman.

**The Chronicle of Higher Education**

June 25, 2014

**House and Senate Offer Different Visions for Renewal of Higher Education Act**

By Kelly Field

**NO MENTION**

House Republicans and Senate Democrats unveiled dueling visions of higher-education reform on Tuesday, with both groups arguing that their approach would make college more affordable, help students reach more-informed decisions, and hold institutions accountable to students and taxpayers.

In the Senate, Democrats released a summary of legislation to reauthorize the Higher Education Act that they plan to introduce on Wednesday. Asreported last week in The Chronicle, the bill would create several new grant programs aimed at reducing college costs, crack down on for-profit colleges, and take steps to reduce student-loan defaults.
Not to be outdone, Republicans in the House of Representatives issued a white paper outlining their priorities for reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, and promised legislation to that end later this week. Their plan calls for radically simplifying federal student-aid and loan-repayment programs, encouraging online and competency-based learning, and easing the regulatory burden on colleges.

Broadly speaking, the Senate Democrats favor top-down accountability for colleges, while the House Republicans prefer a limited federal role. Their plan would block President Obama’s planned college-rating system, while rolling back recent "program integrity" rules that expanded state oversight over colleges, defined the credit hour, and conditioned a college’s receipt of student-loan funds on its graduates’ "gainful employment."

The Senate proposal also focuses more on consumer protection, with provisions that would standardize financial-aid-award letters, provide more upfront disclosures to borrowers, and restore the ability to discharge student loans in bankruptcy.

But there are some areas of agreement between the approaches. Both would streamline student-loan repayment plans, revamp teacher-preparation programs, and make Pell Grants available year-round. The lawmakers also agree on the need to improve students’ financial literacy, slim down the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, and simplify the information provided to prospective students.

Even so, the two chambers are taking opposite approaches to renewing the nation’s largest higher-education bill, and they aren’t likely to reach a compromise on it during an election year. Senate Democrats are offering a comprehensive bill; House Republicans are taking a piecemeal approach.

In a conference call with reporters on Tuesday, Rep. John P. Kline Jr. of Minnesota, chairman of the House education committee, said Republicans felt they would have a better chance of passing their bills through the Senate with a "step by step" approach to reauthorization.
"We have a lot of difficulty in sometimes getting our colleagues on the other side of the Capitol to move legislation," he said. "We’re going to get at things where we think we can get bipartisan, bicameral support."

But House Democrats dismissed the Republican plan, saying it would do little to make college more affordable or student-loan repayment more manageable.

"The Republicans’ small-potatoes ‘priorities’ clearly aren’t a real effort to address real problems like skyrocketing tuitions or massive student-loan debt," said a spokeswoman for Democrats on the committee, "and they won’t make a significant difference in students’ ability to get into, complete, or pay for their education."

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June 25, 2014

College Lawyers Confront a Thicket of Rules on Sexual Assault

By Eric Kelderman

NO MU MENTION

Lawyers representing colleges have a host of worries about if and how their institutions can possibly meet a burgeoning list of federal rules for dealing with sexual violence on campuses.

The new, and still evolving, laws and guidelines have set off a scramble at institutions across the country. Colleges that can afford it are hiring staff members to investigate and help resolve sexual-assault complaints. Smaller institutions that may not be able to afford to hire their own staff are pondering alternatives, such as collaborating with other colleges. Nearly every institution is poring over its policies and procedures for how to manage cases of sexual violence.
And there is training—lots of training—for students, faculty members, nonacademic staff members, administrators, and even trustees on what they can and can’t do, and what individuals must do if a student reports a sexual assault to them.

In conversations with lawyers here at the annual meeting of the National Association of College and University Attorneys, nearly all stressed that colleges want to protect students from sexual violence, and that it is the right thing to do. But even as colleges work to do so—and to meet the administrative and legal requirements that now entails—lawyers here expressed frustration that their institutions were being held to a different standard than even law-enforcement agencies and were being given increasingly complex rules that sometimes go well beyond their capacity.

And though colleges have embraced the moral and legal imperatives of confronting sexual harassment and violence on their campuses, the issues are not unique to higher education, said Leslie M. Gomez, a partner in the Philadelphia office of the law firm Pepper Hamilton. In many cases, she said, colleges are being held responsible for the wider failings of society and inconsistencies in the criminal-justice system, with little recognition of the broader context.

"Issues of rape culture are not unique to college campuses," said Ms. Gomez, a former district attorney in Philadelphia who prosecuted cases of sexual and domestic violence against minors.

A Flood of Information

The pressure on colleges to respond more comprehensively to sexual assaults has been increasing since 2011, when the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights sent a letter to campuses explaining that a college’s mishandling of complaints could lead to a finding that it was in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits gender discrimination at educational institutions that receive federal money.

That pressure has grown significantly in recent months. In May the Education Department announced that the Office for Civil Rights was investigating more than 50
colleges for possible violations of Title IX in their handling of complaints of sexual violence or harassment. The number of colleges under investigation has since grown to more than 60.

In April, the White House issued stringent guidelines designed to help colleges prevent and respond to sexual violence and to offer students a "road map" for filing complaints against institutions that fall short in their responses.

That was followed by a 52-point series of questions and answers from the Education Department about specific issues relating to reporting and responding to incidents of sexual violence. Proposed new rules specify a range of incidents of sexual violence and harassment that colleges will be required to track, report, and offer prevention programs for under the Clery Act, as amended through reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, which Congress passed last year. Those rules would require more oversight not only of sexual assault but also of dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking. While the regulations have not been made final, colleges are still required to comply through a "good faith" effort, according to information presented at a session of the conference.

The flood of information about sexual violence and harassment has presented significant challenges to colleges. The various recommendations lay out broad responsibilities for campuses without always giving concrete guidance on what will satisfy the regulations, several college lawyers said. For example, there is no clear standard for how frequently students and faculty members have to be trained on issues of sexual assault.

Lawrence White, vice president and general counsel at the University of Delaware, said his institution was going forward with broad training programs, though the specifics of how to comply with the new regulations were not entirely clear.
"The surest route to disaster is for the Office for Civil Rights to find out we hadn’t done training," he said.

Not Acting Is Not an Option

Beyond the issues of meeting the expanded federal requirements, college lawyers are asking if it’s appropriate, or even practical, for academic institutions to take on the role normally played by law-enforcement agencies.

One problem is that federal and state laws are often at odds, said Ms. Gomez. Another is that colleges don’t have the resources available to police departments and prosecutors.

Law-enforcement agencies have dedicated investigators, subpoena power, and the ability to collect and analyze forensic evidence, Ms. Gomez said. In addition, law-enforcement agencies can decline to prosecute a case without any legal repercussions.

"Colleges and universities lack the same tool kit, legal protections, or ability to decline a review," Ms. Gomez said. "On college campuses, Title IX requires the institution to take immediate and appropriate action in every case to eliminate a hostile environment, prevent its recurrence, and address its effects, even if the victim requests that the college not take action," she said.

And taking action requires time and resources. At the same time that many colleges are still struggling to regain their financial footing after the recession, they feel compelled to hire staff members with legal expertise to investigate complaints and provide support services for students who file complaints. For example, hiring Title IX coordinators, a position required on campuses by federal law, is a "seller’s market," according to one legal consultant attending the conference.

Several lawyers pointed out that managing complaints of sexual violence requires several people, because the person doing the investigation has to be different from the person providing the support and advocacy services to the alleged victim.
But smaller campuses are wondering where the money will come from to hire people with such expertise, or whether they can manage with their existing staffs and procedures.

At Dickinson College, many people involved in resolving complaints of sexual assault are not trained as lawyers, said Dana Scaduto, the college’s general counsel. And even if the college spends the time training those people to understand complex legal concepts, that information may not be fresh or familiar by the time they have the opportunity to apply it, she said.

But she hastened to add that the college is committed to creating a "safe, hostile-free" environment. "No one is saying we’re opposed to complying."

Is a college degree still worth it? Study says yes

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Business Writer

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NEW YORK • Some comforting news for recent college graduates facing a tough job market and years of student loan payments: That college degree is still worth it. Those with bachelor's or associate's degrees earn more money over their lifetime than those who skip college, even after factoring in the cost of higher education, according to a report released Tuesday by The Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The study, by economists Jaison R. Abel and Richard Deitz, also found that a degree is still a good investment for college grads whose jobs don't require college. About a third of all college graduates remain underemployed for most of their careers.
A person with a bachelor's degree can expect to earn about $1.2 million more, from ages 22 to 64, than someone with just a high school diploma, the report said. And someone with an associate's degree will bring in $325,000 more than someone with a high school education. The study used data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Rising tuition costs, surging student debt levels and an increase in unemployment rates among new grads since the recession have caused some to question the value of higher education. The New York Fed study is just the latest to say that a degree is a good investment. A Pew Research Center report from earlier this year said young adults with college degrees make more money, have lower rates of unemployment and are less likely to be living in poverty than those with just a high school education.

The New York Fed report said that between 1970 and 2013, those with a four-year bachelor's degree earned an average of about $64,500 per year, while those with a two-year associate's degree earned about $50,000 per year and those with only a high school diploma earned $41,000 per year.

After subtracting tax benefits and average financial aid awards, the researchers said a bachelor's degree cost about $122,000 in 2013, while an associate's degree cost $43,700. Those numbers take into account that students held off earning money from a job to go to school. The study used data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Education Department and The College Board.

Recent graduate Katie-Beth Vornberger thinks her degree will eventually pay off. The 24-year-old graduated from George Mason University in May with $20,000 in debt, even though she worked part-time to help pay for some of the tuition.

She's currently working in a paid summer internship where she helps a consulting company in Fairfax, Virginia, manage their social media accounts. She said she is earning about $4 more an hour than the job she had before graduating, which she attributes to having a degree.

"I'm hoping it turns into a full-time position," said Vornberger.
A Slew of Studies, Summarized

June 25, 2014

By
Doug Lederman

Hardly a day goes that doesn't bring the release of some analysis or another about higher education. But an unusually large number of reports and studies about college financial aid and finances were released Tuesday (or are being made public today). The following are brief summaries of them, with links for those who want to dig deeper.

The New York Federal Reserve: College Is Still Worth It. With jobless rates higher than normal and tuitions higher than ever before, critics are, in ever-greater numbers, questioning the value of going to college. Wading into that debate, the New York Fed makes the case that the benefits of college still outweigh the costs -- but the rationale isn't so much a ringing endorsement of higher education as a condemnation of what's happening elsewhere in the economy.

The wages of college graduates have indeed stagnated since the early 2000s, and fallen since the Great Recession of 2008. But because the fortunes of those without a college degree have declined much more sharply, the "college wage premium" -- the earnings advantage that degree holders have over those without one -- "has remained near its all-time high," the Fed's report states. The average return to a college degree -- bachelor's or associate -- is about 15 percent, "easily surpassing the threshold for a sound investment."
And while the average student's expenditures on college have also increased significantly, "rising college tuition has largely been offset by the declining opportunity cost of attending school, which, again, is driven by the falling wages of high school graduates." So because opting to stay in the work force rather than attend college has become less lucrative, college-goers give up comparatively less in lost wages even as tuitions have risen.

The report is careful to note that its analysis is true for college graduates on average, and it includes a table showing that the economic return varies significantly by major, led by engineering, math and computers, with education, agriculture, and leisure and hospitality trailing.

**Center for College Affordability and Productivity: The Harmful Effects of Federal Student Aid.** Richard Vedder, an emeritus professor of economics at Ohio University and director of the center, is a persistent critic of higher education and questioner of the enduring value of a college degree. In a report to be released today (and discussed at this event at the American Enterprise Institute), he and two co-authors argue that the federal financial aid programs have driven college prices higher, financially burdened many college-goers in ways that have affected their life choices, and harmed educational quality.

The paper also notes that the programs have increasingly moved away from their original purpose as a progressive system encouraging access for low-income students. (The report does not blame the aid programs for the ascendance of ISIS in Iraq, but that may just have been a space limitation.) The center's solutions -- short of abolishing federal student aid programs, its preference "in a perfect world" -- involve scaling back the scope of the programs significantly and refocusing them on the neediest students.

**Brookings Institution's Brown Center on Education Policy: What Student Loan Crisis?** The Brookings paper, which generated a Twitterstorm of criticism on Tuesday (The Awl: "That Big Study About How the Student Debt Nightmare Is in Your Head? It's Garbage") after being profiled by David Leonhardt in *The New York Times*, does not deny that there is lots of student loan debt out there. But it does argue that much of
the rhetoric about a student loan "crisis" exaggerates the extent of the problem. (They blame the news media for focusing excessively on outliers.) Much of the increase in students' debt, the Brookings authors argue, can be attributed to Americans' increased pursuit of graduate education (which, yes, might be a concern in its own right), that incomes have on average risen enough to more than cover the increase in debt burden, and that the monthly payment levels of most student loan borrowers have held steady over two decades.

Critiques in the blogosphere cite a set of methodological issues with the Brookings paper, including about the data set explored and how the researchers used it.

**Higher education tax credits.** A set of papers from several D.C.-based policy organizations explored how the federal tax code is used (and in some cases misused) to enable college going. They came from the Corporation for Enterprise Development and a cadre of think tanks and advocacy groups that call themselves the Coalition for Higher Education Tax Reform.