The University of Missouri is giving its employees the chance to finish their high school diplomas on the university’s dime.

Employees from MU, MU Health Care, MU Extension and UM System workers in Columbia can now finish their high school diploma work through MU High School as part of a two-year pilot program.

MU High School is an online program of more than 180 high school courses. The program is operated by the MU College of Education, which is funding 25 percent of the tuition costs for participants in the pilot project. The other 75 percent is paid by the university’s existing tuition assistance benefit program.

The exact cost of the new program won’t be available for a while because the program officially began today.

“Offering MU employees the opportunity to earn their high school diplomas from an accredited and well-respected entity like MU High School just makes sense,” Daniel Clay, dean of the education school, said in a news release. “It is good for the employees and the university.”

The application process gives the MU High School staff the chance to pair students with academic advisers.

Kiki Gross, a lead custodian with the MU Office of Residential Life, plans to apply as soon as possible.

Employees applying as part of the pilot program must get a letter signed by their supervisor indicating he or she knows the employee is taking these courses and meets any requirements.

For Gross, it was her supervisor who led her onto the program in the first place. Since hearing about it, Gross has already started gathering paperwork to figure out what classes she needs and what it will take to get ready for the semester.
Gross, a Columbia native, was in her last semester of high school when life circumstances got in the way and she dropped out. She has always regretted not walking across the stage with her classmates, but she has the drive to finish what she started.

“I am really excited about this,” Gross said. “And I know this is really opening the door for a lot of these other people.”

Gross has worked as a certified nurse assistant. After she gets her high school diploma, she is contemplating college — and would get 75 percent of her tuition paid if she takes classes at MU — pursuing nursing or cosmetology. She has time to decide, she said.

The program is on a two-year pilot, after which the university will assess completion rates, among other statistics. If it’s deemed a success, the program could be expanded to Kansas City, St. Louis and Rolla campus employees.

Employees can take three classes during the fall and spring semesters, and one class during the summer.

Students who participate in the pilot program also will receive help with their textbook costs. Virtual bookstore MBS Direct will provide textbooks to students at a reduced cost. The percentage of the cost employees will be responsible for is unclear.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU High School to offer free high school education to employees
Thursday, July 17, 2014 | 6:08 p.m. CDT; updated 6:18 p.m. CDT, Thursday, July 17, 2014
BY WILLIAM SCHMITT

COLUMBIA — **MU employees will soon be able to pursue a high school diploma for free. Starting in August, 200 online courses through MU High School will be offered at no cost to eligible staff members, according to an MU News Bureau news release.**

The two-year pilot program will be available to MU staff members, although it may be implemented at the other three University of Missouri System campuses if it proves successful, according to the news release.

"We want to evaluate how effective it is for people in the program, and we want to make sure that it meets their needs," said Daniel L. Clay, dean of
the MU College of Education. Clay said that many staff members have made inquiries, but he could not say exactly how many employees would enroll in the program.

In the past, UM employees enrolled in MU High School had 75 percent of their tuition costs waived as a part of the HR-303 Educational Assistance program. Staff members who enroll in the pilot program will have the remainder of their costs covered by the MU College of Education, according to the release.

Costs for a semester-long MU High School online course currently range from $165 to $300.

**Staff members enrolled in the pilot program will also be able to purchase textbooks at lower prices through an arrangement between Mizzou K-12 Online and locally headquatered textbook retailer MBS Direct, according to the release.**

"We're hopeful that we'll see people leaving less for other jobs because they'll be able to advance professionally at MU," Clay said.

MU High School began offering classes in fall 1999. It is open to "independent learners of all ages," according to the program's website.

This year, MU High School, which had 150 students eligible for graduation, according to previous Missourian reporting.

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**Round up: Fraternity gets the boot, UMKC lowers cost**

(Blog from Ashley Jost, Higher Education Reporter for the Columbia Daily Tribune)

- Another week of no records requests? Worst blogger ever. Fingers crossed that next week will come through.
The biggest news of the week out of MU was the hiring of a new medical school dean. Patrice “Patrick” Delafontaine, the chief of cardiology at Tulane University in New Orleans, starts at MU Dec. 1.

Additionally, MU employees interested in finishing out high school classes to get their diploma can do so for free through MU High School, an online program.

Fraternity news: Phi Kappa Psi’s MU chapter has been removed of its recognition as a student organization for the coming year, according to Nick Evans, coordinator of student organizations. The chapter failed to provide an array of documents to the university that every student organization has to submit each year, including a roster and indication of who the university adviser is. Evans said the chapter has already reapplied to become a new chapter in the coming year. I tried to contact multiple people at Phi Kappa Psi’s national operation for any details on what happened this year to no avail.

I stumbled across this cool story from the Kansas City Star. The University of Missouri-Kansas City, the most expensive of the four system schools for students and one of the most expensive public schools in the state, is trying to become more reasonably priced. The story focuses on the net price at the college, which is the difference between the cost of tuition and the student’s scholarships and grants. The trend with the net price climbing down at UMKC is inverse to the trend at MU, where it’s climbing up, slowly.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis will offer a beer brewing course this fall. Seems fitting, considering it’s St. Louis, the beer capital of the Midwest. (I’m from St. Louis - can you tell?)

The UM System rolled out a new magazine - though for now it’s a one-time publication - called Spectrum. Well, now it’s online. Enjoy.

Outside the system:

Other interesting news from the week: Missouri’s A+ Scholarship Program is expanding to include those Missouri students who apply and receive deferred action for childhood arrival status from the federal government. The story has sparked some interesting debate.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch’s Koran Addo had a story this week out of STL about Everest College in Earth City, which is part of North St. Louis County. Everest College is closing. In fact, it’s one of several campuses that are part of the Corinthian College for-profit company that is shutting the doors. Addo goes into why and what’s next in his story.

The New York Times ran an incredible and horrific story this week on one New York college’s handling of a sexual assault case involving a few of the school’s football players. The school is Hobart and William Smith Colleges, a pair of liberal arts colleges in Geneva, N.Y.
MU Health Care one of “Most Wired” health systems, nationwide

July 17, 2014  BY Aaron Pellish

University of Missouri Health Care was recognized Thursday as one of the “Most Wired” health systems in the country for the fourth consecutive year.

In the 2014 edition of the Most Wired Survey released in the July issue of the American Hospital Association’s “Hospitals & Health Networks” magazine, the survey distinguished the University of Missouri Heath Care system as one of the most technologically advanced hospital systems in the United States.

The magazine’s “Most Wired” award is given to hospitals that adopt health information technology that advance the efficiency of hospital infrastructure, business, administrative management, clinical quality, clinical integration and safety.

“As a health care system, we strongly believe that technology can help us better engage patients in their care and improve their health,” MU Health Care CEO and COO Mitch Wasden said. “The bar is raised each year, and we are honored to once again be recognized for our continued commitment to improving patient care through the use of advanced medical technology.”

In 2013, MU Health Care opened 90 new “smart” rooms that are equipped with technology designed to directly integrate with MU Health System’s electronic medical record. MU Health Care is one of two health systems in Missouri to have access to HIMMS Analytics’ Stage 7 designation for advanced electronic medical records, which are the most technologically advanced level of electronic medical records. MU Health Care has also installed MU Healthe, an online patient portal that offers patients the ability to make appointments and communicate with health care providers online.

“MU Health Care has made a major investment in medical information technology over the last several years,” Bryan Bliven, chief information officer at MU Health Care and executive director of the Tiger institute said. “This technology frees our clinicians to spend more time caring for patients and less time writing notes and flipping through patient charts.”

MU Health Care serves patients in 114 Missouri counties and employs approximately 6,000 physicians, nurses and health care professionals that care for more than 500,000 outpatient visits each year.
Bright Flight fully funded for first time in four years

NO MU MENTION

July 17, 2014  BY Sophia Conforti

For the first time since the 2009-2010 academic year, Missouri’s Bright Flight Scholarship will be fully funded for the state’s top-scoring students this coming academic year.

Students receiving the Missouri Higher Education Academic Scholarship, known as “Bright Flight,” will see a $500 increase in the scholarship amount for the 2014-2015 school year. Students who score in the top 3 percent on the ACT or SAT test are eligible to receive the maximum scholarship amount of $3,000 to attend a qualifying Missouri college or university.

Eligible students for the scholarship must be Missouri residents, earn a composite ACT score of 31 or higher or a score of 800 in both critical reading and math on the SAT and enroll at an approved post-secondary school for the academic year immediately following high school.

Students that receive the scholarship can renew it annually for up to 10 semesters or until they receive a bachelor’s degree if they meet eligibility requirements.

The Bright Flight Scholarship was established in 1986 in an effort to encourage leading high school seniors to continue their education in Missouri. The scholarship awards vary from year to year based on funding approved by the Missouri General Assembly. Last year students received $2,500.

Around 6,100 students are expected to receive the Bright Flight Scholarship this fall, according to a news release from the Missouri Department of Higher Education.