COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Note: According to its Twitter account, The Columbia Missourian website is experiencing problems. Links to today’s MU stories are included below; The Missourian website should be available later today.

Link to article: MU Breaks Spring Enrollment Record

Link to article: MU Student Athletes to Receive More Scholarship Money

Link to Article: South Providence Medical Park Helps Meet Columbia’s Growth

Link to Article: Ruffin, Nuccio Seek First Ward City Council Seat

Businesses impacted by record-breaking MU enrollment

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=27231&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - Mizzou’s spring 2015 semester kicked off Tuesday morning with record-breaking enrollment numbers.

After almost a month-long winter break, local residents are forced to re-adjust to living alongside the 32,588 students currently enrolled for the new semester at MU.

"We really gauge on a mass exodus when the students leave," resident Trish Wallace said. "And then when they infiltrate back in we can also tell a huge difference. Today was the first time I have seen a horrendous amount of traffic that caused me to be late to work."
In addition to increased traffic, Wallace said she always expects longer lines at restaurants and shops near campus. After living in Columbia for more than 30 years, Wallace said she has learned to improvise in her daily living routines.

"There's a lot more chaos and congestion," she said. "I took different routes and streets because I know the back ways and I avoid turning left so I'm constantly re-routing myself."

Kirk Wacker owns Sub Shop on Eighth and Locust and said those long lines have helped keep him in business since 1975.

"When we opened we were on Walnut Street and we were there until 1993 and then we moved over here," he said. "It's been great. We're right on the edge of campus and we get a lot of traffic, not as much as Ninth Street, but we're kind of a destination restaurant because we've been here so long."

Wacker also said his work force is influenced by the number of students attending MU.

"We try to hire college students," he said. "You know when we're slow it's usually when the college students are on vacation and then it's kind of nice to say to our college employees that it's no big deal if they're not here."

While a larger student body means increased business for some, other customers have learned to plan ahead.

"I'm used to it," resident Derrick Cowan said. "I've learned to expect it. I take lunch at times that I know I will avoid the rush and have had to establish my own system."

More students in Columbia has resulted in more construction of student housing. Wacker said he's looking forward to the completion of a new apartment complex near his business.

"Things definitely slow down here during breaks," he said. "But the last few years the foot traffic hasn't gotten quite as slow because of all the apartments and now with the new apartment and 300 kids living right next door a lot of them leave but aren't gone the whole time when they have an apartment like that."

MU officials report the total number of undergraduate students at 25,186 and professional and graduate students at 7,402.
Missouri governor to propose increased education funding

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) - Democratic Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon plans to call for increased education funding and bipartisan cooperation as he delivers his annual State of the State address to a Legislature dominated by Republicans.

The governor will outline his budget priorities Wednesday as part of his seventh annual state speech to a joint session of the House and Senate, which has some of its largest GOP ranks in decades.

Nixon already has discussed one part of his agenda - a bonding plan for repairs and renovations at public colleges, universities and state facilities such as the Capitol. Ahead of the speech, his office said Nixon also plans to seek increased funding for all levels of education and will call for additional spending on things “that will create jobs and grow the economy.”

Bipartisan cooperation will be essential if Nixon wants to accomplish anything on his agenda. That’s because Republicans hold a 117-45 advantage over Democrats in the House and a 25-9 Senate majority - both greater than the two-thirds majority required to override gubernatorial vetoes. Last September, some Democrats joined with Republicans to override Nixon’s vetoes on 47 budget items and 11 other bills, including measures cutting income taxes and lengthening the state’s abortion-waiting period.

The governor and lawmakers alike have expressed a desire to boost education funding, but state spending on Missouri’s K-12 schools remains well short of what’s called for under a 2005 law. Schools are expected to get nearly $3.2 billion in basic aid this year. That would have to rise by $482 million - or 15 percent- if they were to be fully funded during the 2016 budget that takes effect July 1.

Nixon has not said how much of a funding increase he will propose for schools.

Missouri’s public colleges and universities are seeking a 5 percent increase in basic state aid, according to requests submitted to Nixon’s budget office by the state Department of Higher Education.
Those operating funds are separate from a building improvement plan already embraced by Nixon.

Last year, the Legislature passed a measure authorizing up to $400 million in bonds for repairs or renovations at state facilities and an additional $200 million for college campuses. **But the only project actually getting financed is an engineering building at the University of Missouri-Columbia, because no other specific bond-funded renovations were included in the annual budget.**

The governor recently traveled to campuses around the state highlighting repairs that could be made if legislators approve a project list for a bond issuance during their 2015 session.

Nixon also has talked in advance of his speech about the need to come up with a new way of funding Missouri’s roads and bridges. Transportation officials have warned that they won’t have enough money to adequately maintain everything starting in 2017.

Voters last August defeated a proposed 1 cent sales transportation sales tax. Nixon has since revived the prospect of allowing a private company to rebuild Interstate 70 and collect tolls - an idea that failed in the Legislature three years ago.

Nixon is also likely to make a renewed push Wednesday to expand Medicaid eligibility and impose campaign contribution limits. The Legislature repealed contribution limits in 2008 and has rejected attempts each of the past several years to expand Medicaid to more low-income adults under the terms of President Barack Obama’s health care law.

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**Spain-Johanson report targets Missouri tuition**

According to the report, MU tuition has nearly doubled since 1994 and loans make up almost 70 percent of all financial aid in Missouri.

**Missouri legislators are making higher education a lower funding priority and causing students to contribute more to increasingly expensive tuition, based on recent research by an MU administrator and a student.**

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies Jim Spain and MU junior Gunnar Johanson are producing a report on tuition and higher education funding for MU administrators and students to refer to when discussing tuition and funding issues.
Johanson said the overall theme of the report is that higher education is becoming more of a personal benefit for individuals instead of a public good for the state, as tuition increases while state support is on the decline.

According to the report, student tuition at MU has nearly doubled over the past 20 years. In 1994, tuition was $158.76 per credit hour in 2013 dollars, which has risen to $274 per credit hour for fall 2013.

During that time, state funding for higher education fluctuated, according to the report. In the 2013 fiscal year, funding for the Missouri Department of Higher Education made up nearly 5 percent of the overall state budget, the second-smallest portion of the budget since the peak of 6.7 percent in 2001.

Spain and Johanson said they based their research on data from various state budget offices and government archives. They said they hope to complete the report by the end of the 2014-2015 academic year.

The report also highlights a shift in loans provided versus grants and scholarships for higher education. The Missouri Student Loan Program made up 57 percent — about $46.7 million out of $81.5 million — of the overall financial aid appropriations in 1994, and about 68 percent — nearly $220 million out of $321 million — in 2013.

MDHE Director of Communications Liz Coleman said the allocation of funds for higher education depends on a variety of factors.

“For state-level programs operated by the MDHE, the Coordinating Board of Higher Education approves a budget request each year, which is submitted to the state budget office for approval through the state appropriations process,” Coleman said in an email.

Coleman said the General Assembly ultimately determines the state budget for higher education.

“The MDHE coordinates the budget requests from the state’s public colleges and universities and provides those requests to the state budget office,” Coleman said. “The department also provides information about the need for funding to support higher education in Missouri and provide higher education opportunities to as many Missourians as possible.”

Johanson said there could be a number of causes for a decreased focus on higher education, such as the Hancock Amendment, which requires new taxes to be approved by the general population, and the 1992 introduction of term limits for state representatives, which he said could affect legislators’ priorities while in office for a shorter period of time.

Johanson said student apathy on tuition and funding issues could be another major cause.

“There are more and more students that come to the university and don’t really care about state support, or out-of-state students that don’t care what happens in the state legislature if they’re only here for four years,” he said.
Johanson became interested in state funding of higher education as a cabinet member of the Missouri Students Association his sophomore year. He continues this work as an intern for Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster, where he prepares briefs on a number of issues, including higher education.

When he started his research, Johanson said he wanted to discover what MU students could do to help their peers who struggled to afford higher education through his research of public education funding in Missouri.

Johanson said he hopes the report will elevate conversation about higher education funding.

“The state of higher education in Missouri is overshadowed by a lot of other issues, especially on campus,” Johanson said. “For a long time, Missouri was a beacon of higher education, and the state supported it and many students were able to go to many different campuses. That’s just not the case anymore. The state support is starting to dwindle, and a lot more is coming from student tuition and student money, putting a higher burden on the students.”

Spain said he believes student leaders have an important role in understanding the issue and educating other students.

“This is an issue that is affecting higher education across the country,” Spain said in an email. “Our campus leaders have been working with leaders across higher education and with elected officials to address this trend. The concern is how it will impact financial accessibility to higher education.”

Johanson also said he wants more students to be involved in the conversation.

“I don’t think we’re going to see state support for public higher education grow until the students demand it,” he said. “My main goal is to get students educated about who they’re voting for, what their representatives are voting on and if there is a role we can play in the conversation.”

MU Health Care opens new medical building on S. Providence

COLUMBIA, Mo. - The doors are officially open at the South Providence Medical Park building in Columbia.
It's a $32 million project that was approved by the University of Missouri Board of
Curators in 2010 and broke ground in June of 2013.

The new building will house 250 healthcare professionals.

The new location provides all the necessary basic healthcare services for families.

"One place to come to take care of your family, your child, your mind, radiology for diagnoses
and all things you need are going to be right here for you," said Chancellor of the University of
Missouri Bowen Loftin. "None of this trotting around town to three or four places to get things
done."

The new patient exam rooms are bigger than what some patients may be used to at other
facilities where they've been going.

There are also more exam rooms to accommodate more patients.

"In 2015, we're expecting 100,000 patient visits at this facility," said Dr. Harold Williamson with
MU health Affairs.

And Loftin said it's about more than just that.

This is a healthcare center to serve people in Columbia and Boone County and it will be more
than that,” he said at Tuesday's ribbon cutting event. "It's going to be an example of how we're
going to shape the face of healthcare going forward."

Doctors started seeing patients at the new facility Tuesday morning.

MU health officials said the 25 acres of land the building sits on will allow them to expand in the
future.

The project was mostly funded by $30 million in bonds issued by the University of Missouri in
February of 2012.
MU Health Care introduces new medical building

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=27229&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - Several university health facilities can now all be found in one location. MU Health Care held an open house for South Providence Medical Park Tuesday afternoon.

The building is located on the corner of Providence Road and Southampton Drive at 551 E. Southampton Drive. It will house Family Medicine, General Pediatrics, Urgent Care, Lab, Radiology Services, Adult Psychiatry, Mammography and a drive-thru Pharmacy.

Dr. Thomas Selva at MU Children's Hospital said the medical services already worked together, but the new setup will create a more patient-friendly workplace.

"We've always had this wonderful collaborative relationship amongst Family Medicine, Pediatrics and Psychiatry," Selva said. "It's just really nice to have it all in the same place now."

More than 100 physicians and 200 employees will work at the medical park. The building is 85,512 square feet, and according to its website muhealth.org, it cost approximately $35 million to build.

Selva also said the new setup will create more efficiency.

"Everybody is walking past each other so everyone is aware of how busy we are and how busy families are," Selva said. "There's a lot of line of sight for physicians and nursing staffs, so it becomes much more efficient."

The medical park saw its first patients Tuesday at 7:30 a.m.
Mizzou prepared for NCAA's historic changes

By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Starting in August, University of Missouri scholarship athletes will receive expanded scholarship payments as part of the cost of attendance measure passed at last week’s NCAA convention in Washington.

That’s where the five power conferences in college sports put their newly granted autonomy in motion. On Tuesday, Missouri athletics director Mike Alden met with reporters to discuss measures he described as “historic” and how they’ll impact Mizzou.

Voting 79-1, schools and athlete representatives from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten, Big 12, Pac-12 and Southeastern Conference voted to allow member schools to expand the definition of athletic scholarships and offer scholarship athletes what’s often described as cost of attendance. Alden confirmed that Mizzou will indeed pay its scholarship athletes the additional cost of attendance, a figure that will be different from school to school, based on financial aid figures and other federal guidelines.

For Mizzou athletes, the estimated cost of attendance figure the athletics department will pay athletes on full athletic scholarship will be approximately $3,000 a year, Alden said. That figure will be in addition to the scholarship the athletes receive to cover tuition, fees, books, room and board and is implemented to help cover transportation, academic supplies and other personal expenses.

The new scholarship model, along with other measures approved at the NCAA convention, will be instituted in August.

The full $3,000 annual payment applies only to athletes in the so-called headcount sports — sports where athletes receive full scholarships, not partial scholarships. At MU, the headcount sports are football, men’s and women’s basketball, women’s tennis, women’s gymnastics and women’s volleyball. The other sports — softball, baseball, track and field, etc. — are considered equivalency sports, where each team receives a set number of scholarships and they’re split among the team members at the coaches’ discretion.

In the equivalency sports, an athlete who’s on a 20 percent athletic scholarship can receive up to 20 percent of the cost of attendance figure.

“This is an opportunity for us to further benefit our student athletes,” Alden said. “If the rules allow us to do that, we want to be able to do that.”
Missouri has not finalized its athletics budget for the 2015-16 fiscal year, but it has already set aside $1 million to cover the new cost of attendance payments, Alden said. Four sources of revenue will help cover the $1 million: football ticket revenue, annual giving through the Tiger Scholarship Fund, enhanced multimedia rights packages and projected revenue from the SEC Network.

Alden said Missouri won’t have to cut any of its teams to afford the cost of attendance payments.

The other major development at the NCAA convention concerned multiyear athletic scholarships. In 2012, the NCAA gave schools the option of offering multiyear scholarships, though many schools do not and instead consider athletic scholarships subject to annual review. At the convention, schools narrowly passed a measure prohibiting schools from choosing not to renew an athlete’s scholarship for athletic reasons.

Alden said the SEC was opposed to multiyear scholarships based on the opinions of the athlete representatives who took part in the voting.

“Theyir theory being that you want to give the opportunity for the coaches and institutions and teams to recognize are the student athletes doing what they’re supposed to be doing?” Alden said. “Are they a positive influence on the team?”

Nonetheless, Missouri will offer multiyear scholarships, Alden said.

AD Mike Alden, on autonomy measures and other stuff

By David Morrison

Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at 3:25 pm

Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden, fresh off the NCAA Convention in Washington, D.C., last week, held a press conference Tuesday to discuss the autonomy measures that passed, allowing schools from the "Power 5" conferences to enact certain proposals with the aim of providing more benefits for their athletes.

For a tidy wrap-up of what all the NCAA has put on the table, read this story from USA Today's George Schroeder.
For Alden's thoughts on those measures -- and a couple other topics -- read on:

What's the process from here? Conferences and schools can enact these measures but they're not forced to?

"That's an opt-in provision, is what that's called. The five conferences have the ability to be able to vote these in for you to be able to access that. But, as an institution, if you decided you didn't want to provide full cost of attendance, that would be an institutional position. You would not be mandated to do that. But those five conferences voted that in. Schools outside of those five conferences would have the ability to opt into that as well, but they could opt out of that just like we could opt out of that. It goes into play August of 2015. That's legislation that will affect us financially and also practically beginning in August of 2015."

So you're opting in?

"Yes. We will opt into that and be able to provide full cost of attendance to our student-athletes beginning in August of 2015. We're looking forward to that."

What's the yearly price tab for that?

"Each school, generally speaking, will have a different number. The way that full cost of attendance is determined is based upon the financial aid officers at each specific campus. Not the NCAA, not the conference, but each specific campus. The University of Missouri, our financial aid folks -- through federal guidelines -- will determine what's the full cost of attendance, in general, for a student at the University of Missouri. You're able to apply that toward student-athletes. You'd have to abide by what those are. There's be different numbers for schools throughout the country. For Mizzou, just ballpark for us, it's approximately $3,000 full cost of attendance on top of tuition, fees, books, room and board. It would be perhaps a little bit different at Purdue, Arkansas, Auburn, Oklahoma State, whatever that may be. I don't know what it would be for everybody else."

How do partial scholarships work into that?

"Proportionality, what that means is if you have a student-athlete that's on a 20-percent athletic scholarship -- there are a number of sports that are equivalency, not head-count -- that person would be eligible for up to 20 percent of whatever that full cost of attendance is. If that number is $3,000, that person would be eligible for $600 toward cost of attendance. For a full-ride student-athlete, which would be head-count -- football, volleyball, gymnastics, men's and women's basketball -- that number is $3,000. The proportionality would just be whatever percentage you're on."

How much is this costing MU?

"Approximately $1 million. For our FY 16 budget, we've budgeted an additional $1 million for financial aid for our student-athletes. We anticipated this passing, so that's already been worked into our budget, at least our plan for next year."
"From my understanding, the vast majority -- if not all -- of the five-conference schools will be doing full cost of attendance for next year."

**How does this jibe with Title IX?**

"The way we look at that is we look at this as an opportunity to further benefit our student-athletes. If the rules allow for us to do that, we want to be able to do that. Is there other Title IX implications on that? Sure there are. You want to make sure you're not taking care of one sport or two sports, you want to make sure you're taking care of all the sports, all your kids. That wouldn't be our driving force, and I think the majority of folks it wouldn't be your driving force. I would hope it would be because it's a great opportunity to recognize all your student-athletes."

**Anybody who opts out, wouldn't that be a pretty big disadvantage?**

"I would think it would be pretty challenging for you to be a school that, perhaps, didn't take advantage of this opportunity. Those are going to be institutional decisions that folks make. To me, there would be very few schools that would choose to go in that direction. That's something we would not do at Mizzou."

**The SEC proposed a way, in the equivalency sports, to keep the same number of athletes under scholarship even with increased money available. Where does that stand?**

"There's a maximum number of student-athletes that can get full aid or partial aid. You've got to split up those scholarships amongst a finite number of people, which means that when you add full cost of attendance to that, you're recognizing a full number of kids. Every one of those kids is going to benefit from that. As you add dollars toward full cost of attendance for an equivalency sport, you can actually -- in some sports -- spread it out over more kids. What the SEC said is, 'Look, if what we're trying to do here is be able to recognize and reward student-athletes at a higher level, then that's what our intention should be. We shouldn't be spreading that out over more student-athletes.' What happened to that proposal is they tabled that. They put that off for further study. The Council, that new organization that's made up mostly of athletic directors, they'll take that under advisement and work on that over the next year. That was tabled and referred to the Council."

**The SEC voted against multi-year scholarships. How come?**

"The student-athletes themselves, for the most part -- the student-athlete advisory committees here at Mizzou and around the country -- were the people that spoke the strongest against doing multi-year scholarships. Their theory being you want to give the opportunity for their coaches and the institutions and the teams to recognize the student-athletes doing what they're supposed to be doing. Are they a positive influence on team? A negative influence? Are they doing the things that are expected from our program, and are they going to lessen the ability of our coaches to be able to implement doing the right things in our program by doing this? The student-athletes suggested to us that we don't want multi-year agreements. That was loud and clear in that room when we met. There was a student-athlete from Oklahoma and UCLA that spoke on the other side of that, but the majority of student-athletes that spoke in front of all these people said we
don't want you to implement that. The SEC was really following what our student-athletes had suggested to us.

"For us at Mizzou, what this rule indicates is you can't withdraw a scholarship from a student-athlete based on athletic performance. For us, as a matter of practice, we've not done that. There have been times we've reduced aid or pulled scholarships for other reasons -- it could be attitude, grades, a lot of things -- but there's a very vigorous appeal process we have at Mizzou, and every school has to have an appeal process. The SEC was not supportive of that, not because we don't believe in doing the right things for our kids, but because we were listening to what our student-athletes had to say. But it passed, and what that means is, when you recruit a student-athlete, you can not reduce their scholarship aid based upon athletic performance. But if there are other issues that come up, you have the opportunity to review those."

Isn't that impossible to enforce?

"I'm sure you're going to find people that look at this and find direct ways or creative methods to try to achieve whatever means they may have. Your hope is they're doing their decision-making with a pure heart and looking at things and doing things in an appropriate fashion. Time will tell on this. This is all new for us."

Will full cost of attendance help clean up athletics? As far as impermissible benefits?

"I think some of it will. It's a step forward in that direction. But I tell you what. As far as the outside influencers that are out there -- and we all know they're out there in our industry -- that's going to continue to be an issue that all of us deal with. You hope some of this will have an impact on that but, again, time will tell."

What goes into full cost of attendance?

"There are federal guidelines that determine what is involved. Some of that is travel to and from, some of it has to do with gasoline money. Some of it has to do with food outside of the normal meal plan. We'll follow the same format of any other school. They tell you this is what you can apply those things toward, and what determines those numbers."

Will MU provide multi-year scholarships?

"We'll be consistent with what everybody else is doing in the leagues. The answer to your question is 'yes.' We'll be consistent. This in itself indicates the reasons why you can't withdraw. But on the opposite side of that, we'll be consistent with what other people are doing, too."

The Big 12 wanted more comprehensive concussion guidelines and it still passed. What went into that?

"In that discussion, which went on for quite a while, I was actually dumbfounded -- frankly -- to see how anybody could be sitting here trying to argue against why we wouldn't try to implement something that would benefit our student-athletes, let's say, from a concussive standpoint. From
a student-athlete health and wellness standpoint. I think what I was taking away from that was the argument was this hasn't gone far enough. There's more we should be doing. Well, yes. But we better get something started right away. The argument was we shouldn't do this until it's perfect. Well, most logical thinkers in that room said we ought to just get this started and we'll continue to improve it as we go along. The more level-headed folks in that room said, 'It's probably never going to be perfect, but let's get this thing started right away.'"

**And now athletes can borrow against future earnings?**

"Right now, student-athletes can get an insurance policy on themselves to be able to guard against injuries, based upon future professional sport earnings. So Shane Ray was able to get an insurance policy on himself. Jace Long, a golfer for us, was able to do that. But you have to go through a process that they have to apply for this, then there's an independent group that tells you whether they project you to be a draft choice or not. You've got to qualify for that in a number of different ways. What this allows folks to be able to do is, those insurance policies are not very cheap. They're pretty expensive. William Moore, Shane Ray, that's an expensive number. It just depends upon what these independent groups determine your draft status could be and what your earning status could be. For many student-athletes, that can be a very costly type of deal. From a family standpoint, 'Can I really afford to spend $15,000 for a one-year insurance policy?' What this is going to do is going to allow them to take out a loan and be able to take that back. It's all going to be based upon the fact of what are they projected as? And your hope is, when they take out those loans, those projections are pretty accurate. That they'll be able to pay that back."

**Where is that extra million a year coming from?**

"I'm pretty confident we're going to see some growth in our ticket revenue. We're confident in our Tiger Scholarship Fund, our annual giving. We're also working very hard on our review and continued advancement of our multimedia rights package. Those three areas show pretty good opportunities for growth signs. In addition to that, certainly the introduction of the SEC Network has benefited our department this year, we're going to see those numbers grow in the next couple of years. That number is probably going to come from four primary areas. We should see growth as far as ticket revenue for football, our annual giving, review and revision of our multimedia rights deal, and we know we'll see growth with regards to the SEC Network, our television, and bowl revenue that comes from the SEC."

**So, no cutting sports?**

"No."

**Outside the Power 5, how common will it be for schools to opt in?**

"It's not hard and fast data, I would suggest the majority of those schools that aren't part of those five conferences are going to do what they can to be able to provide full cost of attendance. It may not be for every single sport, but they're going to try to do that for several sports, which will incorporate male/female opportunities. I think the majority of them are going to look at ways to be able to do that, which I think is a good thing. But, financially, you're going to find out how are
you going to be able to fund that? Is it from athletics revenues, or other university revenues? That, we didn't get into. What I was hearing from most people outside our five was they were going to try to do what they could to be able to incorporate that, at least for a couple of sports. Balancing that out, male and female opportunities. Which I think is a good thing."

**Increased ticket revenue. Does that mean more expensive tickets?**

"We haven't determined our season ticket prices for next year. One of our home football games next year will be in Kansas City, so we'll have six home games next year. We don't anticipate an increase in our season ticket prices. Our push forward is going to be to be able to really shoot for a higher number of season tickets, to be able to expand that base. That's what we hope to be able to see the increased revenue come from."

**What about all the other schools in Division I?**

"You can't get away from the fact that five conferences are financially showing a higher trajectory that, not only the other five conferences in the FBS, but the other 22 conferences beyond that, so how can we make sure we're recognizing that and making decisions for the benefit of all of Division-I athletics and not just for the benefit of these five? To me, we don't have an answer to that right now. It's always healthy discussion. The more we can make sure folks are in the room -- regardless of what those decisions are -- hopefully we can work together to be able to smooth that out. That's a big challenge for us, and something that's going to take time to continue to work for."

**What can you do about the waning men's basketball attendance?**

"It's on all of us within the department to fix that. I still believe we have great fans at Mizzou. We anticipated a lesser flat revenue for men's basketball this year. We knew there was going to be a transition on that. The numbers, as far as the attendance is concerned, is a little bit lower than what we had anticipated and hoped for this year. It's on all of us. What I always tell our staff is we can not control what goes on on that basketball court, that football field, that softball field. We can not control that, nor can we control the weather. But, to the best of our ability, we want to control everything else. That's on all of our staff, in addition to Coach (Kim Anderson), to make sure that what we're doing is making this the place to be to be able to get here, have a good time, and certainly we've got a lot of work ahead of us. We aren't pleased with the decline in attendance, however, you're also very appreciative of those folks that do show, continue to show and support the team enthusiastically. I think we're going to see some more of that when we play Arkansas this weekend in a positive way. But it's a concern, but something all of us are working on."

**Did you expect these on-court struggles?**

"I knew there was going to be some growing pains with regards to a new coach, a different system, only a couple of guys who had only an appreciable amount of time that were here. I must tell you, I've been pleased to be able to see the growth of our team. What we've seen as far as their cohesiveness, the things they're doing together and how they've been able to grow as a
team, I've been pleased with that over the course of the last six to eight weeks. We had anticipated and knew there were probably going to be some struggles this year."

**Is the coaching staff in the clear after the Jakeenan Gant situation?**

"Jakeenan had to sit while we were reviewing his eligibility, things like that. Right now, I think we're in good shape going forward."

**You're going into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame this weekend. How's that feel?**

"Frankly, I was surprised when I got that call. I was humbled. I'm honored. I think it is a great opportunity and a good reflection of Mizzou. I don't think this is about me. I think this is about Mizzou. I think that the folks from the Hall of Fame have seen the success our student-athletes have had academically, some of the growth we've had in our facilities, our finances, what we've done competitively. For me to be able to represent Mizzou, that's a big honor. I'm looking forward to it. It should be a lot of fun. It's very humbling to be able to do that."

**How are the softball complex and south end zone renovations coming along?**

"With the softball complex, that project should be going in front of the board of curators the week after next for approval to be able to move forward with the architect we'll be recommending to design the new softball complex. Remember, that softball complex is going to be designed and built on the east side of the Hearnes Center. From a financing, funding standpoint, we're in good shape with all of that. It's all subject to approval by the board.

"With regards to next steps on the end-zone complex, that's something that still needs to be approved by the board of curators in concept. That will not take place at these next meetings, but that's something that we're hoping to be able to get that out for approval in the next, I don't know exactly what meetings those will be, but it will be in the near future."

**Can you tell us which architect is being recommended for softball?**

"I can't, until it goes before the board of curators in a couple of weeks. We are excited about those people that turned in proposals and we're looking forward to, hopefully -- and this is all subject to approval by the board -- we're excited about our new softball complex, whenever we get that moving."

(Alden also said his one-year appointment as National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics president has come to a close. Northwestern's Jim Phillips is taking over.)
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Read more here: http://www.kansascity.com/sports/college/sec/university-of-missouri/article7788843.html#storylink=cpy

University of Missouri researchers’ discovery may aid Parkinson’s fight

January 20, 2015 by Kyle Loethen

University of Missouri researchers might have found a way to lessen the severity of Parkinson’s disease. Researchers have discovered a molecule that could be key to developing drugs that will keep brain cells healthy in individuals with Parkinson’s.

Mitochondria generate the energy needed to keep brain cells alive. When mitochondria become damaged and are no longer capable of making energy, they are sent to a part of the cell called a lysosome to be repaired. For those suffering from Parkinson’s disease, mitochondria fail to move to lysosomes, causing buildups of damaged mitochondria that kill brain cells.

Department of Biochemistry professor Mark Hannink says the goal is to prevent the cells from dying.
“We think we know what causes the cells to die and that’s failure to recycle the mitochondria,” said Hannink. “So, what we think we’ve found is an alternative way to promote the getting rid of damaged mitochondria.”

The alternative pathway for mitochondrial recycling uses a protein called phosphoglycerate mutase family member 5 (PGAM5). Hannink’s study found a peptide which acts as a “switch” to cause the protein to generate an alternate pathway. By regulating the protein with the peptide he discovered, it could be possible to restore mitochondrial recycling in neurons of patients with Parkinson’s.

Hannink says most of the published work has been test tube based.

“That’s really the foundation of drug development. Drugs are small molecules, but are designed then to interact in very specific ways with particular regions on proteins and change their function,” said Hannink. Hannink says after they characterize how the molecule behaves against purified protein and against mitochondria in cultured cells, they will begin testing on mice.

“There’s a couple of researchers in the school of medicine who have mouse models of Parkinson’s disease. We’ll be collaborating with them to do those tests,” said Hannink.

With the hope of developing new treatments for Parkinson’s, University of Missouri officials may request authority from the federal government to conduct human clinical trials if these additional studies are proven to be successful.

the maneater

Parson, Pfeffer win 2014 Geyer Award

The award celebrates advocacy for and contributions to MU.

A state senator and a legislative advocate were named as recipients for the Mizzou Alumni Association’s 2014 Geyer Awards on Jan. 12.

The two men, Wally Pfeffer and Missouri Sen. Mike Parson, R-Bolivar, were commended for their efforts to influence higher education public policy in Missouri at a reception for the award. Recipients are chosen based on their advocacy and contributions to MU.

The award was named after Representative Henry Geyer of St. Louis, who authored the Geyer Act of 1839 that established MU, said Lesa McCartney, chairwoman of the Mizzou Legislative Network (MLN), a Mizzou Alumni Association group. The award was first presented in 1992.
“This award recognizes the work of public officials and citizens who have made a positive impact on higher education and Mizzou,” McCartney said.

Parson said he was grateful for his award.

“I am very humbled and honored to receive this award,” Parson said. “Ten years ago when I entered into the legislature, I would have never thought I would be the recipient of such an award.”

McCartney said Parson advocated for higher education as a state representative and Missouri senator. Parson has developed legislation in the Missouri House and Senate to support higher education for years.

“This past year, he was instrumental in shepherding Senate Bill 723 to final passage and also strongly supported House Bill 2012,” McCartney said. “Without his support, it is unlikely that either bill would have obtained final passage.”

The two bills regulated funding going toward higher education.

“My work throughout my time in the legislature supporting education reflects my commitment to higher education, specifically my work last year through Senate Bill 723 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 39 to support repairs and renovations to the university’s infrastructure,” Parson said.

But Parson stressed the importance of continuing the work.

“We need to continue to make higher education accessible and affordable for all,” Parson said. “It is through our higher education efforts our state will prosper and thrive for decades to come, as a skilled and educated workforce is created.”

Parson said students and their education will play a significant role in the future of the state.

“There will come a time when the reins of our nation's governance will be passed to the next generation,” Parson said. “We have a duty to prepare our youth, to educate them, to guide them and to equip them with the tools they need to succeed in today's global market.”

McCartney also detailed the accomplishments of Pfeffer, a current member of the MLN.

“For over twenty years, Pfeffer has been one of the most active legislative advocates for the University of Missouri,” she said.

From 1995 to 2011, Pfeffer served on the board of the MU Political Action Committee and was Chair of the Committee from 2005 to 2011. From 2009 to 2013, he served as chairman of the Mizzou Legislative Network. During the past legislative session, Pfeffer worked to promote passage of House Bill 2012 and Senate Bill 723.
“In addition to Wally’s contributions legislatively, Wally has been a life member of the MAA for 30 years and has contributed his time and efforts to the university in many other ways,” McCartney said.

McCartney said she hopes students will recognize, respect and value the work these individuals are doing in order to advance MU.

“Due to the incredible efforts of these award recipients and previous award recipients, the students of the University are benefiting from state funding that supports the higher education provided by a nationally recognized AAU university — with quality faculty, facilities and research,” McCartney said. “Their education holds value and benefits for their future.”

Pfeffer has been heavily involved in the advancement of MU through public policy. While serving from 2009-2013 as the chairman of the MLN, he testified before House and Senate committees regarding the advancement of higher education.

There, he discussed equalizing state-funded scholarships, 50/50 capital matching, consolidating extension districts and other types of funding towards higher education.

“I had the opportunity to testify on several issues that came out well,” Pfeffer said.

Pfeffer also spoke on how integral MU students are in his work and how his work has impacted them.

“The students have been some of our most important partners in the last few years because funding from the state and governor directly impacts tuition and staff salaries, and as a result directly impacts the value of their education,” Pfeffer said.

Pfeffer said he was honored to receive the award and was happy to see the acknowledgement of longtime efforts.

“It’s a recognition of the work that so many of us have done over the years to try to influence the political process in a positive way for higher education and our university in particular,” Pfeffer said.
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January 21, 2015

Obama Presses for Free Community College and Tax Reform

By Kelly Field

NO MU MENTION

Community colleges were back in the spotlight on Tuesday night, as President Obama plugged his plan to make the institutions free for millions of students.

Speaking to Congress and the nation, Mr. Obama urged legislators to follow Tennessee’s lead and make two years of college "as free and universal in America as high school is today."
"Whoever you are, this plan is your chance to graduate ready for the new economy, without a load of
debt," he said in his next-to-last State of the Union address.

Mr. Obama also touted his tax-reform plan, announced over the weekend. That plan would increase
taxes on the wealthiest Americans and on financial firms to pay for free community college, while
streamlining the higher-education tax credits and rolling back tax breaks for college-savings plans,
among many other changes.

Like past addresses, Tuesday’s speech focused on jobs and the economy, with higher education cast as a
path to individual prosperity and national competitiveness.

"Americans thrived in the 20th century because we made high school free. ... We were ahead of the
curve, but other countries caught on," he said. "In a 21st-century economy that rewards knowledge
more than ever before, we need to up our game."

He called on businesses to "offer more educational benefits and paid apprenticeships—opportunities
that give workers the chance to earn higher-paying jobs even if they don’t have a higher education."

In a fact sheet released during the speech, the White House said the president would convene
employers, foundations, educators, unions, nonprofit organizations, and others "who are equipping
front-line workers with the skills they need to advance into better-paying jobs and punch their tickets to
the middle class" to share best practices.

Regarding immigration, the president vowed to veto a Republican bill in the House of Representatives
that would undo most of his executive actions on that issue, including his 2012 decision to stop
departing young immigrants who were brought to the country illegally as children. That program, known
as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, has shielded some 600,000 young immigrants—some of them
college students—from deportation.

College Costs

Missing from this year’s speech was the tough talk on college costs that distinguished some of Mr.
Obama’s past addresses to Congress. The president didn’t mention his college-ratings plan, either.

In 2012 and again in 2013, Mr. Obama took colleges to task over rising costs, putting them "on notice"
that the government would not continue to subsidize ever-escalating tuition.

This year, the only allusion to tuition growth came in a pledge to make student debt more manageable,
"so that student debt doesn’t derail anyone’s dreams."

The community-college plan, which the president previewed in an appearance this month at Pellissippi
State Community College, in Tennessee, calls for the federal government to pick up the tab for about
three-quarters of students’ tuition costs, with states kicking in the rest. If enacted, it would save full-
time students an average of $3,800 in tuition per year.
But the plan isn’t cheap, and Republicans in Congress have already dismissed the idea. On Friday the office of the speaker of the House, Rep. John Boehner of Ohio, used a series of GIF animations of the musician Taylor Swift to mock the plan and highlight its $60-billion price tag.

Republicans have also criticized Mr. Obama’s tax proposals. On Sunday, Sen. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, chairman of the Senate education committee, suggested the ideas were dead on arrival.

"Hopefully the president’s address will also include some proposals that might actually have a chance to become law," he said in a written statement.

But Mr. Obama isn’t giving up on either idea. In a conference call with reporters before the speech, a senior administration official said the president was "not slowing down," and "intends to take full advantage of the next two years." The change to Republican leadership in Congress would not deter him, the official added.

One area where Mr. Obama might be able to reach agreement with Republicans is on student-aid simplification. According to the White House fact sheet, the president is calling for the elimination of 27 questions on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or Fafsa. That’s not quite as radical as Senator Alexander’s plan to shrink the form to the size of a postcard, but it’s something.

Following up on his speech, the president is scheduled to pitch his proposals this week in two heavily Republican states: Idaho and Kansas. On Wednesday he’ll visit Boise State University, and on Thursday he’ll visit the University of Kansas.
Some of the proposals — like the free community college plan — are brand-new.

But others are not. The White House, for instance, previously has asked Congress to exempt from taxation the student loan balances that the federal government forgives under its income-based repayment programs.

And still other higher education proposals, such as the college ratings system, went unmentioned in Tuesday’s speech. But they nonetheless remain a priority for the administration.

Below is a guide to the Obama administration’s higher education priorities and legislative proposals as the clock ticks on its final two years in office:

**Tuition-Free Community College**

The most ambitious of the proposals, which President Obama first announced earlier this month in Tennessee, is a plan to eliminate two years of tuition for some community college students nationwide.

The White House plans to pay for program, which it says will cost $60 billion over the next decade, by raising taxes on wealthy Americans and financial institutions.

Unlike the Tennessee program on which it is based, the Obama plan, is a "first-dollar" scholarship program, White House officials reiterated on Tuesday.

“You would eliminate tuition entirely at community colleges for all students, regardless of whether or not they receive a Pell Grant now,” a senior administration official told reporters. “Students receiving federal financial aid could use those resources for books, supplies, transportation and any other cost of going to college."

In addition, the White House confirmed that the program would be open to any student regardless of when he or she finished high school.

“We aren’t contemplating any type of age-eligibility requirement,” the official said.

The administration is proposing to distribute funds under the program through grants to states that are “conditioned on offering free tuition and ensuring the quality of institutions,” a White House official said in an email Tuesday. If states have excess grant money after eliminating tuition, they can spend those funds on “expanding quality community college offerings, improving affordability at four-year public universities, and improving college readiness,” according to a fact sheet released Tuesday.

Some conservative higher education observers have said they are concerned about how the conditions on those block grants could give the federal government more control over locally run community colleges.

**Simplifying the FAFSA**

The White House on Tuesday firmly backed simplification of the federal student aid application, known as the FAFSA. The administration said in a fact sheet that it wanted to eliminate 27 of the "most
burdensome and difficulty-to-verify” questions on the form, which currently has more than 100 questions.

Obama would axe questions about untaxed veterans’ benefits and clergy pay, for instance, but continue to ask about parental income and a student’s college choices.

FAFSA simplification has been a major priority of Sen. Lamar Alexander, the Republican who chairs the Senate education committee. Alexander’s proposal, however, would go much further, gutting the current form completely and asking students only two questions to determine their eligibility for aid.

Expanding and Reforming Income-Based Repayment

Obama plans to use his executive power to make all existing federal direct student loan borrowers eligible for the federal government’s most generous loan repayment plan. He had, two years in a row, asked Congress to make such a change, but the plan didn’t go anywhere.

The Education Department next month will kick off negotiations over how to carry out the proposed changes to the “Pay As You Earn” repayment plan. The program caps borrowers’ monthly payments at 10 percent of their discretionary income and forgives any remaining debt after 20 years.

The White House is also calling on Congress to exempt from taxation the student loan balances that are forgiven under any of the federal government’s repayment plans. The change was previously proposed in the administration’s budget request and recently appears to have some traction in Congress.

A bipartisan group of U.S. Senators, led by Sen. Richard Burr, a Republican, and Sen. Angus King, an Independent, introduced legislation last week that would stop counting the loan forgiveness benefit under income-based repayment programs as taxable income. The bill also would streamline existing income-based repayment programs and cap some benefits for high-income, high-debt borrowers. Some of those proposed reforms overlap with what the Obama administration has previously recommended.

Alexander has said he wants to include the proposed changes to income-based repayment in the student aid simplification bill he hopes to bring to a full Senate vote this spring.

Changing Higher-Ed Tax Benefits

As it has in previous budgets, the White House is calling on Congress to make permanent the American Opportunity Tax Credit, which currently provides up to $2,500 in partially refundable tax credits for tuition. The administration also wants to change how the tuition tax credit treats Pell Grants, so that more recipients would either see a reduction in their taxes or an increased tax credit.

The Republican-led U.S. House of Representatives last year approved similar education tax changes.

A new part of the administration’s plan is to consolidate a series of education tax breaks and to expand the benefits for the American Opportunity Tax Credit. Under the plan, families would be able to claim the credit for up to five years as opposed to the current four-year maximum.
The White House also has a new proposal to reap savings by cutting some higher-education tax benefits that it believes are not well-targeted.

The administration wants to raise taxes on 529 college-savings plans. It is seeking to roll back a tax cut signed by President George W. Bush that exempts the earnings on those plans from taxation.

“Earnings on existing contributions will continue to be tax-exempt, but earnings on new contributions will be counted as taxable income,” a senior administration official told reporters Tuesday.

The 529 savings plans “overwhelmingly benefit higher-income Americans,” the official said. About 80 percent of the tax benefits of 529 plans go to families earning more than $250,000, according to the White House.

Obama is also looking to eliminate a tax provision that allows student loan borrowers to deduct from income taxes the interest they pay on their loans.

The student loan interest deduction, which Congress made permanent in 2013, is too confusing and not many taxpayers take advantage of it, the White House official said.

“We think it is better to put that money back into strengthening the Pay As You Earn program and making sure that loan forgiveness at the end of the Pay As You Earn period is tax-free,” the official said, adding that the administration’s college tax package is a net tax cut.

“We will be reducing taxes for families paying college tuition by tens of billions of dollars over the next decade,” the official said.

Finalizing College Ratings

Although Obama did not mention it Tuesday night, the college ratings system remains a priority for the administration. Obama himself touted the plan as recently as two weeks ago, when he unveiled his free community college plan in Tennessee.

“We’re creating a new college ratings system that will give parents and students the kind of clear, concise information you need to shop around for a school with the best value for you,” he said, adding that the ratings would provide “the capacity to recognize schools that offer a great education at a reasonable price.”

Education Department officials are currently soliciting public feedback on their draft outline of the ratings system. The deadline for comments is Feb. 17, and officials have said they will produce ratings for the first time by the beginning of the 2015-16 school year.

Congress, meanwhile, has declined to provide the administration the $10 million it requested for the task of creating the ratings. And some lawmakers have also sought to block the department’s power to create a ratings system altogether.

Tangling With For-Profits on Gainful Employment
The administration will continue to fight with for-profit colleges in court over regulations aimed at clamping down on that industry. Government lawyers last week handed over to the Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities thousands of pages of records relating to how the department developed its “gainful employment” regulation.

In the next few months, both the administration and the for-profit college association each will formally ask a judge to rule in their favor without having a full trial. The judge has scheduled a hearing for late May. The rule will take effect July 1, barring judicial or Congressional intervention. Republicans have previously sought to block the regulation, though a White House official last year expressed confidence about the future of the regulations.

Prodding States to Boost Oversight

Concerned that some states have been too lax in regulating colleges and universities, the Obama administration has pushed new “state authorization” rules aimed at prodding states to bolster their oversight of higher education.

One of those rules, which is already on the books, will take effect this July, after being twice delayed by the department amid concerns that it is too confusing. That rule applies only to colleges with physical locations.

Separately, the administration has pursued a state authorization requirement for online programs. But after a negotiated rulemaking panel failed to agree on the language for that rule last year, Undersecretary of Education Ted Mitchell said officials were temporarily pausing the effort.

The department has told some consumer advocates that it plans to eventually return to the rule. It is controversial because it would force distance education programs to seek approval from regulators in every state in which they enroll students. Some state regulators also haven’t been keen on the proposal.

Promoting Competency-Based Education

The Obama administration has said it wants colleges to try offering competency-based education as an innovation that can help lower costs and improve college completion. It is in the process of granting regulatory waivers so that scores of institutions can allow students to receive federal student aid as they experiment with the emerging form of higher education.

Holding Teacher Training Programs Accountable

The White House will move ahead this year with a controversial plan to cut off some federal funding for poorly performing teacher preparation programs. The plan would tie TEACH Grant funding for teacher preparation programs, in part, to the rate at which their graduates get jobs and how well they perform at the schools where they are hired.

Many higher education groups oppose the proposal, on which public comments are due by Feb. 2.
The department has said it plans to finalize the regulation by September. Although teacher preparation programs and states would have to start publishing a host of new information over the next few years, the earliest a program would lose TEACH Grant eligibility is 2020.

New Rules for Campus Credit Cards

The department plans to move ahead with efforts to tighten regulations on student debit cards, which may include a ban on certain fees. Negotiators failed to reach a consensus on the regulatory language last year.

Financial institutions have lobbied against the regulations.

A department spokeswoman last week said officials did not yet have a time frame for when they would publish the proposed regulations.

Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act

The Obama administration will likely come up with a set of proposals for rewriting the Higher Education Act, as Congress gears up this year to reauthorize the sweeping law that governs student aid and colleges and universities.

In his final months in office, Sen. Tom Harkin, the Iowa Democrat who chaired the Senate education committee, last year produced a rewrite of the law that read largely as a wish-list of Democratic priorities. The White House and Education Department now will have to work with a Republican-controlled Congress on rewriting the law. Alexander, the Republican who now heads the Senate education committee, has said he wants to begin work on reauthorizing the Higher Education Act later this year after Congress finishes work on revamping the main law governing K-12 education, No Child Left Behind.

On one key issue, accreditation, the department has already tasked its accreditation advisory committee with developing some recommendations for changing the law.

January 21, 2015

**NCAA Says It’s Investigating Academic Fraud at 20 Colleges**

By Brad Wolverton
UNC, you’re not alone. The National Collegiate Athletic Association is investigating allegations of academic misconduct on 20 campuses, the association’s head of enforcement told The Chronicle on Tuesday.

The cases are at various stages, from preliminary inquiry to awaiting a hearing with the Division I Committee on Infractions, and they involve a variety of missteps, including allegations that players received impermissible assistance from professors, academic advisers, or people outside of an athletic department. Eighteen of the cases are in Division I, one is in Division II, and one is in Division III. The official declined to name any of the colleges.

Last month Jonathan Duncan, the NCAA’s vice president for enforcement, said the association was investigating potential academic violations at 12 to 15 colleges.

In an interview on Tuesday, NCAA officials said they were looking at alleged academic misconduct in 20 athletic programs.

Last year, in response to growing concerns over academic fraud, the NCAA established an academic-integrity group within its enforcement department, naming Katherine Sulentic, a former academic adviser at the University of Colorado at Boulder, as its chair. In the coming months, Mr. Duncan said, he plans to bolster that unit.

The NCAA’s 60 or so investigators already receive training on what constitutes academic fraud and how to handle potential academic violations. Ms. Sulentic will provide additional training to a handful of enforcement officials. Her goal, she said, is to help them better understand NCAA rules on academic eligibility and to learn more about the documents that are available to aid in investigations.

"The timing is right to dedicate more resources to this," Ms. Sulentic said. "Everyone’s antenna is up about academic fraud on a college campus in general."

A Wide Network

Allegations of academic misconduct are on the rise in college sports, and represent a growing share of the 120 cases the NCAA is investigating.

In November the association’s Division I Committee on Infractions placed Weber State University on probation for three years and reduced scholarships in its football program after finding that a mathematics instructor there had helped five football players cheat. The instructor, who is no longer at the university, reportedly obtained access to players’ online accounts and helped them complete quizzes and tests.

The Weber State violations mirrored some of the findings in a recent Chronicle investigation that exposed a nationwide cheating scandal involving hundreds of college athletes. The article described how a former college-basketball coach had systematically exploited online classes to help players gain NCAA
eligibility. Mr. Duncan said he had a plan to deal with some of the problems that the article brought to light, but he declined to elaborate.

In December the NCAA ordered a nine-meet suspension for Jack Bauerle, the head coach of swimming and diving at the University of Georgia, after determining that he had asked a professor to register a star swimmer in a fall independent-studies class after the fall semester had ended.

The NCAA is also reportedly investigating allegations of widespread academic violations at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. An independent report, released in October, found that academic advisers there had directed hundreds of players to no-show classes that helped them stay eligible for sports.

Mr. Duncan and Ms. Sulentic attributed the increase in alleged academic violations to a variety of factors, including stricter NCAA academic standards and a rise in cheating among college students in general.

They said that many of their current cases involved people who had relationships with an athletic department or a particular sports program, but who were not necessarily employed by the department. Those include professors, academic advisers who work outside of athletics, and people in the registrar’s office.

Coaches are also involved. In some cases, head coaches have urged members of their staff—secretaries, athletic trainers, people in the weight room—to "get this young man or woman eligible," Ms. Sulentic said.

"It’s not necessarily a directive about what to do—'I need you to write this kid’s paper,'" she said. But she said coaches were making "proclamations" to a broad network of people, encouraging them to cheat on behalf of current players or recruits.

The association is also seeing other people involved in players’ lives, including agents, amateur basketball coaches, or financial planners, taking inappropriate steps to help players gain eligibility.

"They might say, ‘In exchange for you working with me in the future, I’m going to get you eligible to play Division I ball,’” Ms. Sulentic said. "What consistently surprises me is the definition of the word ‘help.’"
WASHINGTON -- Addressing the nation on Tuesday evening, President Obama highlighted what he called his “bold” plan to make community college free for some students. He also called for an overhaul of the tax code that redirects benefits away from wealthy Americans in order to extend tax credits for college.

As has been the case with other key speeches throughout his presidency, Obama’s latest State of the Union address framed higher education in economic terms, casting it as vital to national competitiveness.

The president wove college affordability into a speech that focused, in broad strokes, on combating inequality and pitching a domestic agenda that he dubbed “middle-class economics.”

After describing his plan to eliminate tuition for some community college students, Obama said "let's stay ahead of the curve."

Like he did in first announcing the community college plan earlier this month, Obama pitched it as an idea that should have bipartisan appeal. He alluded to the Tennessee Promise program championed by Republican Governor Bill Haslam and a free community college program run by Democratic Mayor Rahm Emanuel in Chicago.

“Whoever you are, this plan is your chance to graduate ready for the new economy, without a load of debt,” Obama said. “Understand, you’ve got to earn it -- you’ve got to keep your grades up and graduate on time.”
Perhaps recognizing the tough odds his community college plan faces in a Republican-controlled Congress that is skeptical of the estimated price tag of $60 billion over 10 years, Obama emphasized the proposal as a fundamental cultural shift rather than merely an item on his legislative agenda.

“I want to spread that idea all across America, so that two years of college becomes as free and universal in America as high school is today,” he said.

Obama pointed to Rebekah and Ben Erler of Minneapolis, whom he cast as a typical American middle-class family. Rebekah, he said, took out student loans to attend community college and train for a new career after her husband’s construction business dried up.

The family had to “forego vacations and a new car so they can pay off student loans and save for retirement,” he said, and face basic childcare costs that are “almost as much as a year at the University of Minnesota.”

Trading Accountability for Affordability

Obama’s remarks on higher education marked a shift in tone from some of his previous State of the Union addresses. While he has previously used the forum to chastise colleges over rising tuition and to threaten to hold universities more accountable for their performance, Obama instead focused Tuesday evening on proposals aimed at boosting college access and affordability.

Although he noted that “we still live in a country where too many bright, striving Americans are priced out of the education they need,” Obama framed that problem as one of national competitiveness rather than institutional accountability.

Obama also said Tuesday he would reach out to the new Republican-led Congress on student loan issues.

“I want to work with this Congress, to make sure Americans already burdened with student loans can reduce their monthly payments, so that student debt doesn’t derail anyone’s dreams,” he said.

It’s unclear which proposal, in particular, Obama was referencing, as his administration has said it will move ahead without Congress to expand federal income-based repayment programs to more Americans. Obama earlier this month said he wanted to work with Republican Sen. Lamar Alexander on simplifying federal student aid.

GOP Reaction

Republican leaders in Congress who oversee higher education policy were quick on Tuesday to dismiss some of the Obama proposals.

Alexander said in a video that much of the president’s speech outlined “partisan proposals that don’t have any chance of becoming law.”
“We need to hear more about proposals that Congress might actually work on with the president,”
Alexander said, suggesting that Obama work on simplifying “student aid forms so more community
college students can take advantage of Tennessee Promise.”

Rep. John Kline, the Republican who leads the House education committee, said Obama “described the
same tired agenda we’ve heard about countless times before.”

Kline said in a statement that Obama "still believes more mandates, more spending, and more programs
will solve the problems we face," adding that “more government isn’t the answer.”

But even as they have criticized the Obama community college plan in recent days, Republicans have
still sought to highlight community colleges.

House Speaker John Boehner, who earlier this week mocked the president’s free college community
college plan with a series of Taylor Swift animations, invited an Ohio community college president as
one of his guests to the speech.

Clark State Community College President Jo Blondin said in an interview that she jumped at the chance
to represent her college at the State of the Union address, even convincing her board to push a
scheduled meeting Tuesday night.

Asked whether she agreed with Boehner’s criticism of the Obama community college proposal, Blondin
said she was waiting to hear more details about it.

“It’s too early to tell how this will impact community colleges,” she said. “At this point, I don’t know
what the funding process would be, so I can’t say one way or the other.”

Still, Blondin said that the plan had certainly generated a lot of interest on her campus. She said she had
20 to 30 calls and emails from students and faculty the day after it was first announced.

“It’s exciting to hear community colleges in the news,” she said.