Nixon budget proposes 1.3 percent increase for University of Missouri

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 7:14 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon is proposing a “modest” budget with a 1.3 percent increase for the University of Missouri and $50 million more for public schools that holds out the promise of much bigger increases for education and other programs if lawmakers expand Medicaid eligibility.

For the third consecutive year, Nixon asked lawmakers to accept federal aid under the Affordable Care Act to provide public-paid health insurance for 300,000 Missourians. With a larger Republican majority than he faced in the previous two years, when GOP leaders rejected the idea as well as other proposals from within their own ranks, the wish is likely to be unfulfilled.

The budget offers no pay raise for state employees, no rate increases for Medicaid providers and drops Nixon’s call, issued last year, to fully fund public schools through the foundation formula. Budget Director Linda Luebbering said the budget struggles to maintain current services while providing a modest increase for education.

At this time last year, Nixon and lawmakers expected a small increase in revenue to finish the fiscal year. Revenues fell, and Nixon is withholding more than $500 million in general revenue spending for the current year.

“The fact that we are so heavily over appropriated this year dampens the ability to add funds,” Luebbering said.

The budget recommends that the University of Missouri receive $434.3 million, up from the current appropriation of $428.5 million. If lawmakers would accept Medicaid expansion, generating savings and new revenue estimated at $117.5 million, Nixon recommends adding another $6.2 million to the university’s budget.

The spending plan also calls for nearly $353 million for capital improvements funded by bonds. Nixon wants lawmakers to add those projects, $161.5 million for repair and maintenance projects on college campuses and $191.9 million for repairs to state buildings.
School groups, while thanking Nixon for the proposal, said it was inadequate. The public school foundation of about $3.19 billion is $490 million short of the amount set by law and a new law requiring funding of early childhood education in unaccredited districts means some districts will see declines even as the pool grows, Mike Londewegen of the Missouri Association of School Administrators said in a statement.

“In order to treat all school districts the same, a $125 million increase in the foundation formula appropriation is needed,” the association said. “Anything less than this amount will result in an inequitable distribution of state aid to schools, with some communities winning at the expense of others.”

Tough budget fights possible amid new restrictions
by Garrett Bergquist

JEFFERSON CITY -- New restrictions approved by voters last November mean Gov. Jay Nixon's budget depends more than ever on the Republican-dominated legislature.

Education and healthcare remain among the top priorities in the budget Nixon's office released on Wednesday. Budget Director Linda Luebbering said the proposed Fiscal Year 2016 budget comes in about $57 million slimmer than the previous year's budget. That's because state lawmakers are using a more modest state revenue estimate. An overly optimistic estimate for Fiscal Year 2015 ultimately led to Nixon withholding roughly $700 million from this year's state budget. Luebbering said it is unlikely Nixon will release that money.

Nixon's administration envisions an extra $50 million for K-12 education this year. Colleges and universities would get an additional $12 million in performance-based funding. $5.7 million of that would go to the University of Missouri, while Lincoln University and the State Technical College of Missouri would get $216,000 and $65,000, respectively. The budget would send an extra $43 million to services for people with developmental disabilities and $10.6 million to substance-abuse programs.

As a result of Amendment 10's passage in November, Nixon can no longer include money from proposed legislation in his revenue estimates. That money has to be proposed separately. This year, Nixon wants lawmakers to pass legislation that would bring in an extra $178 million in
revenue. That money would go toward additional K-12 funding ($79 million) and more higher education performance funding ($13 million), among other programs.

Nixon is unlikely to get that additional revenue because $117 million of that money would come from Medicaid expansion, something Republican lawmakers have already said is a non-starter. That means Nixon can hope for at best an extra $61 million from tax amnesty and tax collection reform.

Next year's budget eliminates 217 state government jobs, bringing the total number of positions cut since Nixon took office to 5,009. Luebbering said state employees will not get a pay raise this year.

Budget hearing highlights difference between Nixon, lawmakers on spending

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 9:45 am

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon’s proposals for supplemental appropriations will receive a skeptical review as lawmakers attempt to find money for things they supported last year but could not get past Nixon’s fiscal roadblocks, Sen. Kurt Schaefer said after an afternoon of hearing pleas for state money.

The Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday heard from students, educators, and advocates for people with disabilities and those who are mentally ill or have been physically and sexually abused. Their requests were as little as $500,000 for programs to assist victims of sexual violence and as large as $10 million for new campus buildings.

Hannah Chen of Rock Bridge High School asked for the $550,000 Nixon is withholding from the Missouri Scholars Academy and Missouri Fine Arts Academy summer enrichment programs for gifted students. “It gives students a chance to meet students who share their love of learning,” Chen said.

Wendy Sullivan, CEO of Easter Seals Midwest, asked lawmakers to remember that direct support workers helping the disabled are paid $8 to $10 an hour in private industry and $11.50 to $13.50 an hour when employed by the state. When state employees are given a pay raise, she said, contractors should receive an increase as well.
“All we are asking is the funding to do the same,” she said.

Nixon will announce his spending proposals for the year beginning July 1 on Wednesday evening before a joint session of the General Assembly. He will also send lawmakers his proposals for additional spending in the year that ends June 30, with Schaefer, R-Columbia, expecting a large supplemental appropriation for Medicaid and several other costly items.

Nixon is withholding $245 million in general revenue spending approved by lawmakers for the current year.

Schaefer said Brian Kincaid, director of the Missouri Department of Social Services, told him to expect a supplemental funding request for about $300 million in state and federal funds. With lottery and casino revenue — money dedicated to education programs — running $50 million to $70 million short, Nixon is likely to ask for general revenue to replace it as he did last year.

Most of the witnesses testifying over the course of about three hours were asking for money that Nixon either vetoed or froze in the current budget. Others, such as Beth Tankersley-Bankhead, sought money that found some legislative support but not enough to pass last year.

**Tankersely-Bankhead is executive director of the Missouri College Advising Corps, a program that places recent University of Missouri graduates in high schools to counsel students on their future educational choices.** Last year, the House approved $500,000 to expand the program, but the Senate did not.

The program expanded to 37 schools with the aid of an AmeriCorps grant, Tankersley-Bankhead told the committee. She is seeking state money in the coming year to add another 19 schools.

This year’s budget action will test a new legislative power to force a governor to release money, but when that power can be used is uncertain. Schaefer would like to use it to force Nixon to release money currently being withheld, but he also sees the supplemental budget as a way to achieve the same result.

Cuts to supplemental requests would make money available for other items, Schaefer said.

“I think we are going to look at everything in its totality when it’s presented to us,” Schaefer said.

Lawmakers have been especially critical of Nixon’s decision to withhold $1.5 million for cybercrimes task forces, which operate on the Internet to catch sexual predators. Emily Van Schenkhof of Missouri Kids First said the task forces were among the most effective weapons for preventing the sexual exploitation of children.

“I am told we do not have enough money in the budget to protect children,” she said. “Missouri should be the best state in the nation for protecting children.”
Why Nixon or his advisers thought withholding the money was a good idea “is beyond me,” said Sen. Dan Brown, R-Rolla.

“It’s like peeing in your pants,” Brown said. “You get a nice warm feeling for a while, but it doesn’t last.”

Nixon proposes 'modest' budget with more education money

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon says he is asking for relatively few funding increases in his $26 billion budget proposal for next fiscal year.

State budget director Linda Luebbering calls the budget 'modest' and says the state is recovering after revenues fell significantly short of expectations last year.

Nixon's proposed budget includes a $50 million increase in basic aid for public schools and $12 million more for performance-based funding for public colleges and universities. He's also asking lawmakers to approve more money for services to people with disabilities and programs to help the aging.

The Democratic governor said even more could be spent on education and other programs if lawmakers would approve several measures that could enhance revenues, including an expansion of Medicaid. Republican lawmakers have previously declined to do that.

Gov. Jay Nixon grapples with GOP majority in annual address

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 | 8:36 p.m. CST; updated 6:56 a.m. CST, Thursday, January 22, 2015
BY MISSOURIAN STAFF

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon repeatedly struck notes of unity — among Missourians as well as state lawmakers — in his seventh State of the State speech
Wednesday evening, but he continued to stake out positions that Republican majorities in the legislature deeply oppose.

"Rumor has it I don’t spend enough time on the third floor," he said at the beginning of the address, referencing the floor of the Capitol that houses both legislative chambers. "I'll be coming around more often. Be careful what you wish for."

Nixon spent long parts of his speech outlining his vision for Missouri’s schools and universities, its business community and celebrating the growth of Missouri’s workforce since he took office in January 2009.

He touted the steps his administration has taken to mend Ferguson, but he didn’t outline any new proposals. Nixon also touched on the need for ethics reform, calling Missouri’s ethics laws the weakest in the nation.

**Education**

Nixon recommended the state invest an additional $11 million for early childhood education. He also proposed a $150 million increase in K-12 education, which could include $129 million toward the formula used to distribute state funds to public schools. **He also proposed allocating $25 million to colleges and universities based on performance standards.**

"Education is the best economic development tool we have," Nixon said.

Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee, said the governor wasn’t actually proposing to spend more — just to withhold less. Citing a budget imbalance, Nixon in June withheld more than $700 million from the budget.

Rep. Caleb Jones, R-Columbia, said the legislature has funded education to record levels for the past five years.

"Every year the governor’s withheld money for K-12 education and also higher education," Jones said. "So I find it pretty disheartening now that he’s using this as platform to demand more funding."

Other legislators weighed in on Nixon’s proposals. During his campaign last fall, Rep. Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, talked about the need for each child in Missouri to receive an education.
"You can’t argue with some of the stuff he said about funding education," Basye said.

Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, said Nixon had the right priorities in his K-12 and higher education proposals. Webber also said he would like the state to take on a particular educational issue or challenge, like producing more engineers than any other state, and then follow up by making a significant investment in it.

"I think the path to success is going to be finding an educational issue that we can be the best on," Webber said.

Nixon’s proposed budget might not be an ultimate solution for Missouri’s underfunded school formula, which would still need about $361 million to reach the level set by law, said Linda Luebbering, director of the Division of Budget and Planning, during a meeting with the media before Nixon’s address. In the 2013-2014 school year, Boone County schools were underfunded an average of $800 per student, according to The Missouri Budget Project, a nonprofit public policy analysis organization.

**Natural resources**

During his speech, Nixon announced he will travel to Havana, Cuba, in March with Missouri Department of Agriculture Director Richard Fordyce to promote the state’s agriculture exports.

"For many in my generation, trade with Cuba was unthinkable," he said. "All we need is an open door, and Missouri’s innovative, hard-working producers will do the rest."

He lambasted Kansas' "harebrained" proposal to build a 360-mile aqueduct to siphon water from the Missouri River. "We can’t let that happen," he said, also mentioning water issues in the Dakotas. "As long as I am governor, I will not let states upstream divert Missouri River water."

He also proposed $1.2 million in cattle research, noting that Missouri loses "more than $1 billion every year" from exporting cattle to other states before they’re mature and slaughtered.

**Infrastructure**

Nixon bemoaned the condition of Missouri’s roads and proposed two ways to fund more roadwork: increasing the state gas tax and establishing a toll on Interstate 70.
He said the toll would ensure out-of-state vehicles pay for a substantial share of the roadwork, and he noted the state’s gas tax has remained flat for 20 years.

Schaefer said both options were non-starters. He said that for a toll to raise enough money to make a difference in the budget, it would have to charge $20 or $30 — which he called an undue burden on mid-Missouri residents. He also noted revenue from gas taxes had declined over the last decade, and he doubted an increase would solve that.

Schaefer said the interstate system is a federal project, so if Nixon wants highway money he should look to Washington, D.C.

Jones said that while the tolls warrant discussion, they might not best way for Missouri to fund its infrastructure projects.

Nixon also promised to invest $2.5 million on West Florissant Avenue, the epicenter of last year’s Ferguson protests.

**Medicaid**

Nixon said that one of the greatest opportunities Missouri has this session is the expansion of Medicaid.

The governor said Missouri sent $2 billion to Washington in the previous year for reformed Medicaid systems, with the same amount at stake this year.

"If we keep standing still, that’s $4 billion Missourians have lost to other states by the end of this year," Nixon said.

Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said Nixon’s statement that the lack of expansion in Missouri is funding Medicaid expansion in other states was "factually inaccurate."

Missouri isn't losing money to other states, he said. "For every dollar we send to Washington, we (currently) get $1.30 back," Rowden said.

Webber said Nixon made a strong case in his speech that some Republican governors had welcomed Medicaid expansion in the past year.

"At this point, there are just so many good arguments for it, and they’ve been made so many times by so many people that I’m sort of at a loss for what we can do to convince the Republican majority to expand Medicaid," Webber said.
Jay Nixon calls for building plan, municipal court reform, change in use-of-force law

By Virginia Young, Alex Stuckey

JEFFERSON CITY • Facing a Legislature firmly in Republican hands, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, a Democrat, used his seventh State of the State address Wednesday night to strike a conciliatory chord.

He jokingly acknowledged that for the last six years, he had avoided participating in legislative give-and-take.

“Rumor has it I don’t spend enough time on the third floor” of the Capitol, where the Legislature meets. “I hear you. I’m going to come around a little more often. Just be careful what you wish for,” Nixon said.

Nixon wants the state to embark on a major building plan. Using bonding authority approved by legislators last year, he detailed $353 million in projects, including improvements at college campuses, the state Capitol, state parks and veterans homes.

His $26.1 billion operating budget proposal would invest “record funding” in education, the governor said, while downsizing the state bureaucracy by 217 jobs.

But there was a catch:

More than half of Nixon’s proposed $129 million increase in basic aid to elementary and secondary schools hinges on the Legislature’s expanding Medicaid to cover the working poor, a move GOP legislative leaders have called a nonstarter.

And that wasn’t the only contingency in his plan: If legislators expand Medicaid, pass a tax amnesty bill, and change tax collection policies — then Medicaid providers would get paid higher rates, adults on Medicaid would get dental care, and public colleges and universities would get twice as large an increase in funding.

Those initiatives face a difficult path.

Rep. Mark Parkinson, R-St. Charles County, tweeted that Nixon “is hoping for money in the budget that isn’t there yet, to fund programs we can’t afford now. Smart budgeting???”
Overall, his speech drew scant applause, with legislators showing the most enthusiasm when he talked about being proud of law enforcement officers “for all they do, each and every day.”

In a vague reference to the turmoil surrounding the fatal shooting last year of unarmed teen Michael Brown, Nixon said the “legacy of Ferguson” would include making changes to reform municipal courts, “foster racial understanding” and update the state’s deadly force statute so it reflects U.S. Supreme Court rulings.

Brown’s death, and a grand jury’s announcement that the officer who shot him would face no criminal charges, set off protests and looting. It also focused attention on St. Louis County’s 81 municipal courts, some of which have been described as debtors’ prisons that hit the poor with large fines for minor traffic offenses.

Whether Nixon can accomplish any of the goals he sketched out is questionable.

First of all, Republicans strengthened their grip on the Legislature in the November election and have solid veto-proof majorities — they control the House 117-45 with one vacancy and the Senate 25-9. And Nixon’s aloof style hasn’t cultivated friendships there.

George Connor, a political science professor at Missouri State University, said legislators “have always bristled” at Nixon’s style “but they didn’t have much they could do early in Governor Nixon’s tenure.” This year, “I think the Legislature is in a better position to thumb their nose at the governor and potentially undo some of the things that he proposes,” Connor said.

Even some Democrats were troubled that Nixon recommended only $50 million, free of contingencies, as an increase for K-12 schools. At that level, education would still fall $433 million short of full funding as called for under the state foundation formula.

Rep. Margo McNeil’s face dropped in shock when she heard the number.

“I don’t understand,” said McNeil, D-Florissant, adding that “the foundation formula is the key” to maintaining excellent education.

In Nixon’s proposal, $79 million out of a proposed $129 million increase for K-12 schools would be available only if legislators shifted some low-income people to federally paid health care under the Medicaid expansion.

Hazelwood School District is in McNeil’s House district and could lose about $1 million if the formula is not fully funded. Because of a little-noticed law passed last year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education estimates that about $30 million could be shifted among school districts.

Linda Luebbering, Nixon’s budget chief, said the governor “put as much as he could in the formula.” She said the current year’s budget was “over-appropriated,” which put a “dampening effect” on finding money to increase programs next year.
Nixon and legislative budget leaders have agreed to base next year’s budget on projections that state general revenue will grow 3.6 percent — to $8.67 billion — above the pared-back expectation — $8.37 billion — for the current fiscal year.

General revenue comes mainly from state income and sales taxes and is the main pot of money that legislators control. The rest of the budget comes from federal and earmarked funds.

While Republicans say Missouri can’t afford Medicaid expansion, Nixon portrayed it as a money-maker for the state.

Under the Affordable Care Act, Congress offered states federal money to add working-age adults who make up to 138 percent of the poverty level, which is $16,104 for a single person or $32,913 for a family of four.

The Nixon administration estimates that 300,000 Missourians would gain coverage under the expansion. The federal government would pick up the full tab for the new participants through 2016, when the federal share gradually would begin dropping to 90 percent. Some form of the expansion has been adopted in 27 states.

Nixon said Missouri had missed out on $2 billion in federal funds in the last year because legislators rejected Medicaid expansion. He ticked off the states where Republican governors are currently exploring expansion: Utah, Tennessee, Indiana, Wyoming and possibly, Alabama.

“Let’s work together,” he said, to “rise above the same old partisan fights of years ago and strengthen and reform Medicaid this year.”

Legislative leaders have said adding 300,000 people to government-paid health care is financially unsustainable for the state and federal governments. They also said Missourians weighed in against it in November by electing Republicans who campaigned against the Affordable Care Act.

“It’s not going to happen,” said Senate Majority Leader Ron Richard, R-Joplin, even though Nixon tried to entice legislators with promised education funding boosts.

On other topics, Nixon said Missouri had “the weakest ethics laws in the nation.” But he was not specific on how to fix that, simply calling for legislators to send “a meaningful ethics reform bill to my desk.”

He said implementing tolls on Interstate 70 deserved “serious consideration” and that increasing the state’s 17-cent gas tax, which hasn’t gone up in 20 years, merits “a very close look.”

Missouri voters rejected a proposal in August that would have increased the state sales tax rate by three-quarters of one percent, which would have funded road, bridge and transit projects across the state.

Without more revenue, the Department of Transportation recently showed what a construction and maintenance budget of $325 million in 2017 would look like: Only 8,000 of its 34,000-mile highway system
would be kept in good condition, and the remaining 26,000 would received “limited routine maintenance,” such as patching pot holes and plowing snow.

One potential area of common ground: capital improvements funded by bonds.

Nixon wants legislators to sign off on $161.5 million of construction and repair projects at college campuses. Included in the plan is $13.6 million to provide modern classrooms and other renovations at 50-year-old Benton Hall at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

Richard, the Senate leader, said he was not surprised at Nixon’s bonding proposals because “he’s working toward his legacy.” “He’s withheld so much from higher education he’s probably trying to get back into their good graces.”

Legislators will try to wring some concessions.

Nixon still is withholding $500 million in general revenue that he slashed last summer from the current year’s budget, including $17.8 million for adult dental benefits.

This session, lawmakers could exercise a new constitutional power by overriding any of Nixon’s withholds with a two-thirds majority in each chamber.

Nixon’s budget would not give state employees a raise, but it would continue one he released on Christmas Eve — a 1 percent pay raise that cost $5.6 million in general revenue. It took effect Jan. 1.

That drew criticism from organized labor. In a news release, Michelle Mason, an aide at Bellefontaine Habilitation Center in St. Louis County and member of AFSCME Council 72, said: “The budget proposed tonight by Gov. Jay Nixon promises to keep Missouri workers stuck at the bottom of the pile.”

**Faculty Council spring agenda eyes diversity, Title IX, raises**

Issues like cultural competency remain an important topic, but council members believe mandatory cultural competency courses are unrealistic.

**MU Faculty Council will kick off the spring semester at its first public meeting of the year Thursday.**

Council members said they plan to continue discussions on a myriad of issues impacting faculty and students throughout the semester.
Advancement of Diversity

The council will discuss the advancement of diversity and cultural competency on campus over the next semester.

One of the major ideas students time and again voiced during the Dec. 1 Ferguson Listening Session was a mandatory cultural competency course.

Angela Speck, chairwoman of the council’s Diversity Enhancement committee, said the idea is not new to Faculty Council and she believes it is not realistic to implement.

“We already voted (against) that a couple years ago, it’s not going to happen,” Speck said. “But that doesn’t mean we can’t do something that is in the spirit of what is being asked for.”

Speck said one way to address this issue is by enhancing cultural competency on campus.

Speck said MU students have taken a number of voluntary surveys over the past few years and the results indicate a stable level of cultural competency over four years. Speck said the results show incoming students are relatively culturally competent, but move through MU’s curriculum without significant improvement.

“We can do better,” she said. “But we have to think outside the box.”

Speck said MU needs to not only bring cultural competency to its students but also to its faculty. She said this may be a difficult task.

“Faculty are often completely unaware that their students are not like them,” she said. “Or if they are aware, they go about trying to be inclusive in a way that actually calls out the minority rather than including them.”

Cultural competency training and improvement is possible, although it will take some creativity, Speck said. She said that with such a sensitive issue, educators need to be careful about how they approach teaching.

“If I came to you and said, ‘you’re racist’, regardless of if you are or not, you’d be upset,” Speck said. “Nobody wants to be told that they have prejudices. You have to be subtle.”

Faculty Council Chairman Craig Roberts said he agrees race relations need to be addressed in a thorough and meaningful way in 2015. He said the events in Ferguson brought a litany of pressing social issues to light.

Roberts described the listening session as particularly moving.

“Students spoke into open microphones about mistreatment they suffered because they were black. I believe them,” he said in an email. “They were all saying the same thing. It was
disturbing to us — the faculty who were present. It was also disturbing to the administration, including the chancellor, who wants to see this addressed soon.”

**Title IX reforms**

Faculty Council will continue its deliberation on Title IX policies, which protects students from sexual discrimination in public institutions.

Roberts said the council and the UM System Board of Curators are currently working on a new executive order that will modify and improve the university’s mandatory reporting policy and ways campuses handle Title IX cases.

Roberts said the next executive order, expected to come out during the Board of Curators meeting in February, has been discussed heavily and will likely be the most complete version of the policy to date, complementing previous changes to Title IX policies.

Prior to this discussion, UM System President Tim Wolfe implemented Executive Order 40, which mandates all faculty members who witness or learn about an incident of sexual harassment to report the nature of the incident in full detail, including the names of the victim and perpetrator.

Wolfe introduced this policy after ESPN’s “Outside the Lines” report alleged that MU officials mishandled a 2008 sexual assault case involving former Missouri running back Derrick Washington.

The mandatory reporting policy came about very quickly with little faculty input, Roberts said.

“We’re kind of sprinting when we probably need to jog a little,” Roberts said. “I can tell (Wolfe) wants to do the right thing, he’s just plowing so far ahead that the discussion is not there.”

Speck said she would like to see room for confidential reporters in the newest version of the policy.

Speck said such a provision would mean that a victim of sexual harassment could talk through his or her ordeal with a faculty member without having to file an official report.

“Say you want to talk about a sexual harassment issue,” Speck said. “You can’t talk to a professor unless you want to report it. I’m looking for ways to make it so there are more places you can have that conversation safely.”

**Raise Distribution**

Faculty Council will also spend time discussing the use of Association of American Universities metrics in evaluating faculty performance and allocating raises.
Harry Tyrer, chairman of the council’s Faculty Affairs committee, notes a perception among faculty that some highly productive teachers have been overlooked in the evaluation process when using AAU metrics.

AAU metrics consist of two distinct phases, according to its website.

Phase I indicators are a measure of an institution’s prowess based on faculty awards, citations in published research, membership in national academies and federal research grants.

Phase II indicators consider the number of doctoral degrees awarded to faculty, the quality of an institutions undergraduate curricula, the number of postdoctoral appointees and the amount of agricultural, state and industrial research funding an institution receives.

Tyrer said the university’s abrupt switch to the use of AAU metrics in faculty assessment left many short-changed.

“This is like telling students, ‘we’re going to give you grades and if you guys get high grades we’re going to give you scholarships,’” he said. “And then somebody turns around and says, ‘yeah, but we’re going to give the better scholarships to only those who take physics.”

Raises were given in different pools last year and the 2 percent merit pool, which awards raises to highly productive faculty outside the top 20 percent, was the source of dissatisfaction, Roberts said.

He said many hardworking faculty members in this pool didn’t receive a raise that was big enough to keep up with the cost of living adjustment. In effect heir real salaries went down.

“It’s like you’re penalizing people for doing good work,” Roberts said. “They’re productive, everybody knows they’re productive, but they lose money.”

In order to identify those faculty members who were slighted, Faculty Council created the Ad Hoc Committee on Raise Distribution. The committee is expected to finish its work during the first weeks of March, at which time more information will be available.

Roberts said he doesn’t believe the committee’s findings will affect MU’s future use of AAU metrics.

“AAU (is) here to stay,” Roberts said in an email. “It is an indication of excellence which sets us apart from other colleges and universities. I am told that AAU membership gives MU faculty ‘a place at the table.’”
MU journalism professor Loory dead at 82

By Ashley Jost Wednesday, January 21, 2015 at 2:00 pm

Stuart Loory, longtime journalist and professor emeritus at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, died Friday.

Described by longtime colleague, leader and friend Dean Mills as a “legend across print and broadcast journalism,” Loory, 82, died of lung cancer in his home in Brooklyn, N.Y.

“He was among the best in national and foreign correspondence,” Mills, the journalism school dean, said of Loory. “He was a role model of what a good, rigorous journalist is like. He had high standards of getting information that’s needed to do good journalism and presenting it in ways that are accessible and interesting to audiences.”

Loory served as the first Lee Hills Chair in Free-Press Studies at the MU School of Journalism after decades of working in broadcast and print.

He was the editor of Global Journalist, the magazine for the international news business, as well as the moderator of the “Global Journalist” weekly radio show for KBIA-FM, MU’s National Public Radio member station.

Loory spent 17 years with TBS/CNN, including stints as the company’s vice president and a correspondent in Washington and Moscow. He also spent 28 years in newspapers, as the Moscow bureau chief for the New York Herald Tribune and the White House correspondent for the Los Angeles Times during Lyndon Johnson’s and Richard Nixon’s administrations.

Nina Kudriavtseva-Loory, Stuart Loory’s wife, said he always tried to maintain a balanced and independent mindset, which benefited him in his career.

“He had the same ideas in education as in journalism,” Kudriavtseva-Loory said. “He thought high quality was very important. He was always very careful and checked all the details, the names, the dates, and he expected that of his students.”

A funeral service was held Tuesday in Brooklyn.

Ex-Missouri Tiger Phil Pitts joins Gary Pinkel’s staff as defensive analyst

BY TOD PALMER
THE KANSAS CITY STAR
Missouri’s Gary Pinkel on Wednesday added another former player to his staff, hiring former offensive lineman Phil Pitts as a defensive analyst.

Pitts, who played 40 games with the Tigers from 2001-04, spent the last four seasons as the head coach at Helias High School in Jefferson City.

Pitts went 40-15 with four district championships and a Missouri Class 4 runner-up finishes in 2012 and 2013. He was an assistant at Helias for six seasons before that.

“We’re excited to have Phil join our coaching staff,” Pinkel said in a release from the department. “Here’s a guy who came through our program during our building phase, and he demonstrated great leadership in some difficult times, and clearly had a passion for the game of football. He’s done great things at a first-class program like Helias, and we are looking forward to Phil adding his skills to our team.”

Pitts’ role in the newly created defensive analyst position will be to assist first-year defensive coordinator Barry Odom.

“My time at Helias has truly been amazing and the people I have met, coached, and worked with will forever have a special place in my heart,” Pitts said. “Coaching college football has always been a dream of mine and I am so excited to join coach Pinkel and his staff at Missouri.

“Mizzou has always been home to me and I couldn’t be happier to be a Tiger. I have the utmost respect for the entire program and I can't wait to get started.”

Odom, who played at MU under Larry Smith, was hired in late December to replace Dave Steckel, who left to become the head coach at Missouri State on Dec. 14.

Soccer adds goalkeepers coach

Missouri also announced Wednesday that Molly Schneider was returning to the women’s soccer team as goalkeepers coach.
Schneider, who had been working for Sporting KC as manager of camps and special projects, is a former All-Big Ten goalkeeper at Minnesota. She served on Tigers coach Bryan Blitz’s staff in 2007 and 2008.

Missouri added Don Trentham as associate coach last week.

Trentham is a former head coach at Montana State, but most recently served as an assistant at Colorado and Wyoming.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Missouri football adds Phil Pitts to defensive staff

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 | 9:19 p.m. CST; updated 10:04 p.m. CST, Wednesday, January 21, 2015
BY MISSOURIAN STAFF

COLUMBIA — Missouri football head coach Gary Pinkel is adding a familiar face to his staff.

Phil Pitts will leave his head coaching job at Helias High School in Jefferson City to become a defensive analyst for his alma mater, as announced by MU on Wednesday. He totaled 36 tackles in 40 games as a defensive lineman for the Tigers from 2001 to 2004, beginning a season after Pinkel arrived in Columbia.

"Here’s a guy who came through our program during our building phase, and he demonstrated great leadership in some difficult times," Pinkel said in a news release. "He’s done great things at a first-class program like Helias, and we are looking forward to Phil adding his skills to our team."

In four years at Helias, Pitts went 40-15, won a district title each year and twice finished as the Class 4 runner-up at the state championship. Over that span, the Crusaders featured Alabama commit Hale Hentges, ranked by ESPN as the nation’s No. 3 tight end. With national signing day approaching Feb. 4, Missouri has continued to recruit Hentges since his verbal pledge to the Crimson Tide last May.

"My time at Helias has truly been amazing and the people I have met, coached and worked with will forever have a special place in my heart," Pitts said in the news release. "Coaching college football has always been a dream of mine and I am so excited to
joining Coach Pinkel and his staff at Missouri. Mizzou has always been home to me and I couldn't be happier to be a Tiger."

According to the release, Pitts "will focus on assisting new defensive coordinator Barry Odom with a day-to-day evaluation of the Tiger defense, which includes self-scouting, as well as various other duties related to the operation of the football program."

With Pitts, Missouri fills a staff position left by three graduate assistants who joined the Missouri State staff of former MU defensive coordinator Dave Steckel.

Missouri has yet to hire a full-time defensive position coach after the departure of safeties coach Alex Grinch, who took the Washington State defensive coordinator job earlier this month.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Avenue of the Columns construction enters next phase

Wednesday, January 21, 2015 | 8:55 p.m. CST; updated 6:39 a.m. CST, Thursday, January 22, 2015

BY LAURA WELFRINGER

COLUMBIA— The third phase of the Avenue of the Columns construction and beautification project received unanimous approval from the Columbia City Council Tuesday.

Phase three is focused on the reconstruction of several sidewalks along Eighth Street from the south side of Walnut Street to the north side of Cherry Street. It also calls for the removal of traffic signals at the intersection of Walnut and Ninth streets, the installation of stop signs on Walnut Street and the creation of decorative street "bump outs" to reduce pedestrian crossing distance and increase safety.

The Avenue of the Columns project was developed in a 2005 downtown master plan. It is meant to enhance Eighth Street and create a corridor to link the columns of the Boone County Courthouse to the MU Columns.
"We started this project, believe it or not, in 1992," said Mary Wilkerson, chairwoman of the Avenue of the Columns committee. "It is now 2015 and it is a very exciting process. This next phase is going to be really significant."

Several Columbia residents spoke against the project at the meeting.

Glyn Laverick, owner of The Tiger Hotel, said he worried that the project would put benches too close to diners at Glenn's Cafe and unnecessarily tear up sidewalks in front of the hotel and other businesses.

"Really one of the things I'm most concerned about is that you're going to have a bench that is 6 feet away from a diner's table," Laverick said. "Work with us to find a way to integrate the other corners that you do want to put benches on that make sense ... but don't do it carte blanche and say that's the way every corner should be."

Fourth Ward Councilman Ian Thomas said he was concerned Laverick didn't support the project and said he hoped city staff could work with him on a compromise. Columbia resident Emelie Henzel, who studied architecture at MU, said she understood the project's goals but thought Columbia should prioritize road resurfacing and other sidewalk repairs.

"I think it is great that we tie the columns together and celebrate it for what it is ... but I think there are a lot of other issues that could be addressed to better use the money," Henzel said.

The project will cost $750,000, according to city council documents. It will be funded through 2010 enterprise revenue funds.

The first two phases of the project were completed in 2010 and 2012, and the council has made 15 previous legislative actions on the project, according to Mayor Bob McDavid.

"That shows either we're diligent or we can't make decisions, I'm not sure which," McDavid said.
$1 million judgment against charter school operator

By: Catherine Candisky

A federal judge in Missouri ordered Imagine Schools, one of the nation’s largest charter-school operators, to pay nearly $1 million for forcing a lucrative lease agreement on a school it operated.

Under the complex deal, Imagine Schools negotiated the pricey lease with SchoolHouse Finance and presented it to the school board of the Renaissance Academy for Math and Science for approval. Imagine Schools owns SchoolHouse Finance and directly benefited by the agreement.

“This clearly constituted self-dealing,” U.S. District Judge Judge Nanette K. Laughrey wrote in a blistering 29-page ruling.

Sound familiar? The Dispatch in October reported about a North Side charter school spending more than half of the tax dollars it receives on rent in a very similar lease deal with Imagine Schools and SchoolHouse Finance. The board of the Imagine Columbus Primary Academy asked Imagine to renegotiate the lease but that has not happened.

Other Ohio charter-school operators use similar lease deals, and while apparently legal, supporters and opponents complained that they wasted tax dollars and lawmakers pledged to take a look.

"Legislators who are working on charter school reforms should make prevention of these types of abuses a top priority," said ProgressOhio Executive Director Sandy Theis.

Charter schools are privately operated with public tax dollars and many contract with management companies to handle day-to-day operations.

ProgressOhio recommended placing a cap on state money used for rent, requiring the Ohio Board of Education to sign-off on leases, requiring charter-school boards to have independent attorneys and financial officers and other changes.

In the Missouri case, the school board of the now-closed Kansas City school sued its former management company, claiming it had manipulated the board and failed to act in the school’s best interest.

“While the Renaissance Board theoretically had authority to act independently on some limited issues, it was in fact a captive of Imagine Schools by both design and by operation,” Laughrey wrote. “While this changed over time with the assistance of the sponsor, the
University of Missouri, intervention came too late to save the school, which operated consistently with too few expenditures for instruction and low student performance.”

Laughrey found no evidence that Imagine Schools discussed the market rate for similar leases with the Renaissance board or informed members that SchoolHouse calculated the rental rate based on a 12 percent return on investment regardless of the market rate. They also neglected to mention that the higher-than average rent would result in lower-than average expenditures on books, supplies and teacher salaries.

“For example, in 2007-2008, Renaissance spent 27.9 percent of its funds on instructional costs while the national average was 65.8 percent and Missouri was 64.6 percent,” the judge noted.

Laughrey also had some interesting findings about how Imagine gets board members to go along with these not-so-sweet deals. Imagine recruited inexperienced school board members and one who had received political contributions from the companies and had family members working there.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Missouri Democrat chides Obama over college savings

By Jim Gallagher

A prominent Missouri Democrat chided President Barack Obama on Wednesday over the president's plan to tax the earnings on college savings accounts.

“I do not believe raising taxes on families saving for college is the right way to go,” said Missouri State Treasurer Clint Zweifel, who runs the state's college savings plan, called MOST.

At issue are so-called “529” college savings plans run by the states. Savers — often parents and grandparents — contribute to the plans and their investment earnings are never taxed if used for higher education.

Obama's plan would reduce that tax break. The investments could grow without being taxed year by year. But the earnings would be taxed when used.

Administration officials complain that most of the tax benefit is going to people who earn over $150,000 a year. They would use the extra tax collections to fund other increases in college aid, including free tuition for
two years of community college. Also, low-income people who owe no income taxes could receive a $1,500 refund under the American Opportunity Tax Credit for college expenses, up from $1,000 now. Zweifel wants college savings plans left alone.

“There is no question we should ease the burden on the middle class, but we should not do so at the expense of their higher education savings,” he said in a press release.