MU News Bureau
*Daily Clips Packet*
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$38.5 million renovations improving Lafferre Hall


COLUMBIA, MO -- Mizzou’s engineering school building is getting a $38.5 million facelift.

Renovations at Lafferre Hall are part of a $200 million state bond project.

University of Missouri officials said the renovations at Mizzou’s Lafferre Hall in the College of Engineering will make space for another 3,300 students. Mizzou engineering student Kyle Dorge said parts of the building are falling apart.

Dorge said, “I think it is much overdue. There is some loose piping and our roof is leaking. It will definitely be a huge help.”

Construction crews replaced the 1935 and 1944 additions to the building. Some faculty and staff members moved their offices to other locations during the renovations. Only 2 labs remain on the second floor.

Lab Supervisor Michael Absheer said, “There is more and more freshman enrollment in this college in general. The needs are great here for expansion.”

The Lafferre Hall project will provide more state-of-the-art classroom and lab space to keep up with Mizzou’s growing enrollment. Engineering professors said the renovations will help prepare more of their students for high-paying jobs in science, technology, and of course, engineering.

The renovations are scheduled to be completed by December 2016.

Board approves bonds for Lafferre Hall renovations
The Board of Public Buildings approved Tuesday the sale of bonds worth $38.5 million to finance renovations at Lafferre Hall, home of the University of Missouri College of Engineering.

The renovation project includes replacing the roof and windows and repairing masonry in parts of the building constructed in 1935 and 1944. The area will also be renovated into experiential laboratory space, and will produce an additional 20,000 square feet for research space, according to a release from Gov. Jay Nixon’s office.

The board that approved the bonds consists of Nixon, Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder and Attorney General Chris Koster.

The General Assembly approved the use of bonding authority for Lafferre Hall last year. The university plans to start work this year and finish by spring 2017.

Second MU dean candidate talks diversity, love of students and leadership style

David Kurpius stressed his commitment to students at a forum Tuesday during his visit at the University of Missouri.

Kurpius is one of four finalists vying for the open dean spot at the MU School of Journalism. His day of interviews and forums was moved to Tuesday after Sunday’s snow closed MU on Monday.

At an open forum focused on students Tuesday afternoon in Hulston Hall, Kurpius spoke to a room full of faculty, staff and students about his background and how he can help the college.

“Students first. Period,” Kurpius said when an alumnus asked him what he would prioritize if hired: student education or boosting MU’s ranking in the Association of American Universities.
But Kurpius still talked about his belief that the journalism school should contribute and support the campus effort to boost MU’s status in the AAU through “strategic hiring” and research.

Kurpius is a professor at the Louisiana State University School of Mass Communication and associate vice chancellor for enrollment management.

“Journalism education, including strategic communication, is in a period of disruptive change,” Kurpius said. “This is causing some people, like parents, to think the field is dying and there are no jobs. I don’t believe that’s true.”

Kurpius also talked about staying ahead of trends and fostering diversity in the student and faculty populations.

When Katherine Reed, associate professor at the journalism school and editor at the school’s newspaper, the Columbia Missourian, asked how Kurpius would get to know his community if he was hired, he stressed his passion for interacting by “showing up” in the newsroom.

“I believe in open, collaborative management, but don’t mistake that for not being a decisive leader,” he said.

The third dean candidate, Esther Thorson, professor and associate dean for graduate studies at the MU School of Journalism, will appear at a forum at 4 p.m. Monday in the great room of the Reynolds Alumni Center.

Gary Myers, MU law school dean and chairman of the search committee for a new journalism dean, said the candidate sessions are taped and will be posted online when all of the forums are complete.

University of Missouri gets new Doppler radar

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Watch the story: http://fox2now.com/2015/02/18/university-of-missouri-gets-new-doppler-radard/#ooid=o5bH2nczrdR2w5fbg6gsCFlAZghD_dFu
Residents in Mid-Missouri are about to get some much needed help scanning the skies for dangerous weather.

The University of Missouri has received a $20-million research grant through the National Science Foundation which includes a new dualpol Doppler radar.

The project will focus on climate, cyber infrastructure and computer, education, plant sciences and community according to Dr. Pat Market, the head of Mizzou Meteorology department.

But besides those research goals, Mizzou plans to make the data available in real-time to the National Weather Service – giving them an unprecedented view of developing Mid-Missouri storms.

Right now, the NWS must rely on weather radars in St. Louis and Kansas City to monitor for severe weather in Central Missouri. The radar beams from both of those radars is more than a mile and a half high by the time it reaches this part of the state due to the curvature of the earth.

“There is an awful lot of real estate vertically—the lowest mile and ½ that very often is where lots of severe weather features within a thunderstorm are occurring that radars never see,” says Dr. Market.

Jim Kramper of the National Weather Service says his forecasters are excited to get their hands on the new data. “While we have the entire state of Missouri covered, naturally as you go further out in range, you’re going to start losing things,” says Kramper.

There is a local connection to this project. The radar unit itself is being built here in metro St. Louis at EWR Radar Systems headquartered in Kirkwood.

Richard Chappuis, the EWR Director of Business Development says his crews are happy to be a part of the project. “We’re really excited about it. We are very proud to be from the state of Missouri and very proud to be working with the University of Missouri.”

If all goes well, the radar will be up and operational later this spring or summer.

Feedback on Ratings, Round 3

February 19, 2015
WASHINGTON -- From the moment President Obama called for a federal college ratings system some 18 months ago, colleges and universities have criticized the idea and lobbied against it.

But as the Obama administration charges ahead with the proposal -- officials just last week said they’d have a first draft ready by summer -- some higher education groups that had been critical of the plan are, to some extent, beginning to play ball with the Department of Education.

Several prominent associations are now offering advice, albeit limited, for how the administration should structure a federal ratings system that they believe, and continue to stress, shouldn’t be built in the first place.

That reluctant input on the ratings system is part of the feedback department officials have received over the past several weeks. Public comments on their 17-page “framework” document were due Wednesday, after the department extended the deadline by a day due to a snowstorm on Tuesday that closed federal offices here.

The thrust of the feedback reviewed by Inside Higher Ed reiterates the wide-ranging concerns of many in higher education about the ratings system. In spite of their opposition, though, some groups offered the type of specific feedback on the particulars of the ratings plan that department officials have sought.

The American Association of Community Colleges, for instance, remains opposed to ratings, but pointed department officials to the Social Security Administration as “likely the best source” for any earnings data. And if the department decides to publish earnings information, the group said, officials should break down that information by academic program rather than publishing aggregate data for an entire college.

Public universities, too, reiterated their opposition to the ratings but said they supported efforts to cut off federal funding to institutions that perform poorly on certain metrics like students’ rates of degree completion, employment and repaying their loans. The comments from the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities echoed an “alternative” to the ratings plan that the group has previously proposed.

The Association of American Universities -- while maintaining that it “is inappropriate for the federal government to rate institutions” -- offered tepid support for evaluating colleges’ ability to produce graduates who find employment that pays above a certain minimum amount.

That approach, wrote AAU President Hunter Rawlings, “could serve to identify bad actors without placing an undue emphasis on salaries.” But he added that the metric would need to be adjusted for variations in living costs across the country. The AAU also cautiously praised the administration’s proposal to include institutional improvement as a metric in the rating system. But the group, which represents the
nation’s elite research universities, worried that “top-performing institutions may have limited opportunity for improvement, for which they should not be penalized.”

A central issue that department officials have left undecided in the ratings proposal is whether the system should assign a singular rating to colleges or publish institutions’ performance on various metrics.

Several higher education associations weighed in on that question, telling the department that they would find more palatable a ratings system that involves multiple data points rather than an aggregate rating. For instance, Rawlings wrote that using “disaggregated data would be more useful for consumers and institutions, and would avoid the tricky issues associated with weighting and combining metrics.”

Still, many other critics of the ratings system did not offer any specific feedback on the various questions posed by the department’s framework document.

Those groups, like the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, which represents private institutions, said that the ratings system was a bad idea when it was first proposed, and remains one today.

“Our member presidents have been consistent in our belief that rating colleges is not possible, whether done by private commercial entities or by the federal government,” wrote David L. Warren, the group’s president.

The American Council on Education wrote that the department’s December draft is “so incomplete, tentative and amorphous that it is impossible to offer the type of critique that this undertaking would otherwise require.”

Unions representing faculty members, like the American Federation of Teachers, similarly spent pages of comments railing against the ratings system.

Proponents Push for Debt Information
Among the advocacy groups and think tanks that support the ratings system, commenters said the administration should include student debt information as part of the rating system.

“It is one of the most common questions students have about an institution and one of the biggest concerns,” wrote the National College Access Network, a collection of groups that advocate for low-income students.

In addition, a coalition of groups dubbed the Postsecondary Data Collaborative called on the department to break down colleges’ graduation rates and other performance metrics by race and ethnicity.

Adjusting for Student Characteristics
The latest round of comments also showed stark disagreements over whether the Obama administration should adjust a college’s performance in the ratings system based on the demographics of the students the college enrolls. Both the AACC -- the community college association -- and the AAU, the research university group, said they opposed such an approach, which is controversial.
The department should categorize colleges, wrote AACC President Walter G. Bumphus, according to “broad groupings of student and institutional characteristics, rather than impose a complex regression-based measure with questionable validity and reliability issues.”

“Rather than increasing transparency, adjusting outcomes risks turning the ratings system into a black box that neither consumers nor institutions fully understand,” wrote Rawlings, the AAU president.

Meanwhile, the United Negro College Fund, which advocates for private historically black colleges and universities and opposes the rating system, said the ratings must include adjustments for student demographics in order to allow accurate comparisons. “Without these adjustments,” wrote Michael L. Lomax, the group’s president and CEO, “a ratings system would create an inaccurate picture of institutional impact, penalizing institutions that serve a high proportion of at-risk students.”

The APLU, the public university group, similarly embraced the risk-adjustment approach in its alternative ratings plan, calling on the department to apply a “student readiness index” to performance metrics like graduation rates and levels of employment.

Next Steps
Education Department officials have said they’ll use the feedback as they produce a first iteration of the ratings -- including names of colleges -- by this summer.

Because the ratings system is not part of a regulatory process with firm rules governing public comments, officials have said they are free to continue to solicit informal feedback on the ratings in the coming months.

Denise Horn, a department spokeswoman, said the agency would release all of the comments it has received on the ratings framework by this Friday.

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Following is a partial list of some of the ratings comments that groups have already made publicly available or that have been obtained by Inside Higher Ed:

American Association of Community Colleges
American Council on Education (with 25 other groups)
American Federation of Teachers
Association of American Colleges and Universities
Association of American Universities
Association of Private Sector Colleges and Universities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Education Reform Now
National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education
First, Do No Harm

February 19, 2015

By
Jake New

NO MU MENTION

More than a dozen student affairs associations, nonprofit organizations and victims' advocate groups are releasing an open letter today urging state legislators to reconsider pending bills in several states that the letter says would interfere with colleges' efforts to prevent campus sexual assault.

The letter, written by NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education, was sent to lawmakers in all 50 states; in several states, legislatures are considering bills that would require college officials to refer all reports of sexual violence to law enforcement or that would give accused students judicial rights, such as allowing a lawyer to fully participate on their behalf, that are not available to accusers.

"While we applaud these legislatures’ desire to assist institutions of higher education in improving their responses to sexual and other forms of gender-based violence that victimize their students, both groups of bills would actually have the opposite effect from the one intended and make it more difficult for campuses to end this violence and its devastating effects on victims’ lives," the letter reads.

The mandatory-referring bills could force colleges and universities to be out of compliance with federal law, NASPA stated.

A provision in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 amendments to the Clery Act, the law that mandates that colleges track and publicly report instances of certain crimes each year, states that institutions that receive federal funds must inform victims of sexual assault that they can decline to notify law enforcement about being
assaulted. Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 also allows certain employees, such as counselors and advocates, to not report incidents of sexual assault.

As recently as last month, the Virginia Senate was considering a bill that would require public colleges to report an alleged campus sexual assault to police within 24 hours.

University employees who fail to report an assault to police would have been charged with a misdemeanor. After hearing from survivors and victims' advocates, state legislators are now retooling the plan to promote what one senator calls "enhanced encouragement" instead. Mandatory reporting bills are also being considered in New Jersey and Rhode Island.

Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA, said that turning all sexual assault cases over to law enforcement would make it difficult for victims, without involving the police, to demand that colleges take action about complaints under Title IX. These proposed laws could also discourage some students from reporting the assaults to campus officials, he said.

"Legislation which mandates the referral of every sexual assault to law enforcement will have a chilling effect on many victims' willingness to come forward," Kruger said.

"While campus-based processes offer room for improvement, requiring all cases to move to law enforcement has the potential to revictimize the victim by removing control over how their own case should proceed."

The letter also warns against legislation that would give students and student organizations accused of misconduct -- but not the accusers -- the right to be represented by lawyers or the right to a judicial review of student disciplinary proceedings. Such legislation, the letter states, would "inject inequality into campus disciplinary proceedings."

Inspired by fears that the federal government’s pressure on colleges to better investigate and adjudicate cases of campus sexual assault is leading administrators to trample on the due process rights of accused students, North Dakota and South Carolina are both considering legislation that would allow attorneys to fully participate in campus proceedings on behalf of accused students. North Carolina already passed a similar bill last year.

Earlier this month, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education called the North Dakota legislation "sorely needed," saying that the bill would provide students with "a powerful new tool to ensure that their rights won’t be trampled on, nor their educations unjustly curtailed."

The NASPA letter argues, however, that "this approach ignores the balance set by the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the scope of accused students’ due process rights" under the Constitution.

"Dozens of cases on accused students’ administrative due process rights confirm schools’ rights to discipline, even expel, students for a wide range of misconduct, including smoking and drinking beer on one end and participating in a failed conspiracy
to shoot several students and school officials on the other," the letter reads.

Kruger said NASPA and many of its member institutions are concerned about a “mounting trend of state legislators’ involvement and intrusion into campus-based judicial systems.”

The letter is signed by representatives of NAPSA, the American Association of University Women, the Association of Student Conduct Administrators, Casa de Esperanza: the National Latin@ Network, the Clery Center for Security on Campus, the Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project, the Education Law Association, the International Association of Law Enforcement Administrators, Jewish Women International, Know Your Title IX, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, National Council of Jewish Women, the National Domestic Violence Hotline, the National Organization of Sisters of Color Ending Sexual Assault, the Victim Rights Law Center and VTV Family Outreach Foundation. The groups included both student affairs associations and also advocacy groups that have regularly called on colleges to do a better job preventing and punishing violence against women on campus.

“We hope states will take a pause and reflect on the extent of how some of the legislation is in conflict of both federal policy and Office for Civil Rights guidelines,” Kruger said. “We assume that this all well-intentioned, but sometimes legislators may not understand the nuance of how campuses must deal with this.”

**THE KANSAS CITY STAR.**

**COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN**

**EDITORIAL: UMKC learns hard lessons about college rankings**

Wednesday, February 18, 2015 | 12:28 p.m. CST

BY THE KANSAS CITY STAR

NO MU MENTION

University of Missouri-Kansas City Chancellor Leo Morton’s public apology for the submission of trumped-up ratings data in the Henry W. Bloch School of Management’s entrepreneurship program was welcome but belated.

Emails obtained by The Kansas City Star show that some faculty in the Bloch School in 2014 were questioning rankings in a professional journal even as the university administration was using them as a recruiting tool.
An email last August from Jeff Hornsby, managing director of the Bloch School's Regnier Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, suggests that administrators outside the Bloch School were made aware of the doubts.

"As I have stated many times to the PR (public relations) team and in meetings, we need to be careful about defending these outcomes," Hornsby said. "Our continued defense continues to deteriorate our credibility and legitimacy."

That assertion turned out to be prophetic. In a related but separate rankings problem, an audit turned up evidence of inflated data provided to the Princeton Review, which recently removed UMKC from its top 25 list of entrepreneurship programs.

On KCUR radio's "Up to Date" program Monday, Morton apologized to students, faculty, alumni and supporters.

"This is a serious issue to me because it is not what we are about," he said.

Referring to pressure within the entrepreneurship program to inflate the data, Morton said, "It's not necessary. These are great programs."

Indeed, it ought to be the case in academia that high quality programs stand on their own without relying on the gimmickry that characterizes college rankings. Unfortunately, schools and prospective students place a great deal of emphasis on the various lists.

UMKC is by no means the first school to get caught gaming the rankings. But the administration's refusal to candidly acknowledge the falsehoods until the Princeton Review took action suggests that its priorities were askew.

What happened in the entrepreneurship program shouldn't define UMKC, or even the entire Bloch School. Faculty, staff and students in the medical programs, Conservatory of Music and elsewhere work hard each day to strive for excellence without cheating.

With false boasting about rankings, the entrepreneurship program told students they'd have access to a premiere education with some of the best scholars in the field. The university is honor-bound to live up to those pledges, but the rankings scandal will make the job much harder.