New State Historical Society headquarters included in bill

COLUMBIA, Mo. - A new $35 million headquarters for the State Historical Society of Missouri is included in a bill awaiting Gov. Jay Nixon’s signature.

Preliminary plans call for the historical society to be moved out of the University of Missouri’s Ellis Library and into a new building in downtown Columbia. Funding for the building is part of a bill that includes $376.7 million for capital improvement projects around the state, the Columbia Missourian reports.

“It’s really exciting and wonderful that the state sees this as a priority,” said Doug Crews, permanent trustee and former president of the State Historical Society. “A new building and a place here where the society’s and the people’s collections can be displayed and stored for future generations.”

Mary Ellen Lohmann, the society’s coordinator of publications and media relations, said the collection features paintings by Thomas Hart Benton and George Caleb Bingham. Lohmann said the society displays art in only one room at Ellis Library, which means the artwork must be rotated. The new space would have more room to permanently showcase the work, she said.

The State Historical Society also has over 18,000 editorial cartoons, 6 million photographs and images, 4,000 maps and 6,000 Civil War manuscript pages, Lohmann said.

“We have all kinds of wonderful things that don’t get the light they deserve sometimes,” Lohmann said. “We would like to be able to show them more and more often.”

Crews said there are also preliminary plans to include a 100- to 125-seat auditorium. Lohmann said the society will do independent fundraising to supplement state funding.

The historical society, currently located in MU’s Ellis Library, would be moved to a new building on Elm and Sixth streets. The preliminary plan is to construct the building in the current parking lot next to the Heinkel Building in downtown Columbia.

House Bill 19, which includes $376,694,084 in capital improvement funding projects around the state, was passed by the Missouri Senate on Thursday.

“It’s really exciting and wonderful that the state sees this as a priority,” said Doug Crews, permanent trustee and former president of the State Historical Society. “A new building and a place here where the society’s and the people’s collections can be displayed and stored for future generations.”

He said the location would also create an opportunity to connect the campus with downtown Columbia.

Mary Ellen Lohmann, coordinator of publications and media relations at the State Historical Society, said the society will do independent fundraising to supplement state funding.

Lohmann said the new building would provide space to display more of “Missouri’s treasures” and give people better access to the society’s collection of historical documents.

“We have all kinds of wonderful things that don’t get the light they deserve sometimes,” Lohmann said. “We would like to be able to show them more and more often.”

The historical society’s collection features paintings by Thomas Hart Benton and George Caleb Bingham, including one of Bingham’s masterworks, “Order No. 11.” Lohmann said the society displays art in only one room at Ellis Library, which forces the society to rotate the artwork on display in the gallery. The new space would have more room to permanently showcase the work, she said.
The State Historical Society also has over 18,000 editorial cartoons, 6 million photographs and images, 4,000 maps and 6,000 Civil War manuscript pages, Lohmann said.

In the new space, students would be able to explore history through multiple mediums, Lohmann said. For example, students could look at a Civil War manuscript and see a map from that time in addition to looking at a painting about the war.

“They can get a better idea of what that history was like to live through and what it really meant to those people in that time period and what it means to us now,” Lohmann said.

Crews said there are also preliminary plans to include a 100- to 125-seat auditorium.

The new location is a result of a 2011 agreement between the historical society, MU and the city of Columbia to build on the university-owned land next to the Heinkel Building when funds became available.

Plans at the time called for a four-story building occupying 125,000 to 150,000 square feet with an estimated cost between $30 million and $35 million, according to previous Missourian reporting. The city agreed to let the historical society use a parking lot on Fifth Street between Cherry and Locust streets once the building was complete.

Lohmann said she didn’t think the plans had changed much since then. She said much of the project is still in the planning stages, pending Nixon’s approval, but the historical society is excited about the prospects of the new building.

“We have some space that we’ve been having great programs in, but we feel like the new building will be able to give us more room to really bring our mission to life,” Lohmann said. “Being able to have more than a small percentage of our art on the walls will make a huge difference in being able to connect people to their history.”
MU graduates find jobs despite national unemployment rates


COLUMBIA - With graduation drawing near, students are trading in their research papers for pay stubs.

**According to the MU website, 71 percent of all graduates achieve their post-graduation goals. These goals include either full-time employment or graduate school acceptance.**

The 2011 study conducted by the University reports that 70 percent of MU bachelor degree recipients stay in Missouri, and receive competitive salaries for their work.

Despite the high success rate of MU graduates finding employment, national unemployment for young adults remains a constant issue.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate for April 2015 was 5.4 percent. Nearly half of those people unemployed are ages 16-24.

MU graduating senior Quincey Earls says MU provides its students with enough resources to achieve this high employment rate.

"Mizzou does a great job of preparing us and giving lots of resources for resume help and interview assistance and hooking us up with alumni," Earls said.

Earls has accepted a position in the Park Hill School District as an elementary level special education teacher. She credits the career services department of the MU College of Education for hosting an open interview day for Kansas City schools, where Earls first interviewed with Park Hill. Park Hill offered Earls the job following her second interview with the school and she notices a trend in job acceptance of other education majors.
"Most people I go to school with have jobs," Earls said. "Maybe it's just an education thing, but people are deciding to hire because the school year starts in August."

MU graduating senior Kelsey Boardsen also has a job lined up after graduation. Boardsen is heading to Dallas to begin her job with Southwest Airlines. Following her internship with the company during summer 2014, Boardsen interviewed for a position and plans to begin a full-time position in August.

"Especially for me in the business school, there are so many tools for us to find jobs," Boardsen said. "I feel really lucky and I know that most of my friends all have post-grad plans, which is really great."

Most feel safe, K-State survey on campus climate says

By MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS

Results of the first-ever comprehensive survey to see how students, faculty and staff feel being on Kansas State University’s campus are in, and most said they’re fairly comfortable, but there’s work needed on sexual conduct as well as gender and race inclusion.

K-State is the first of the area’s large four-year public institutions — including the University of Kansas, the University of Missouri, the University of Central Missouri and the University of Missouri-Kansas City — to make public the results of a comprehensive campus climate survey. Each said it is in the process or planning to do a survey.

National leaders began asking about the climate on the nation’s college campuses a year ago after it became clear that a significant number of sexual assaults and rapes were largely going unreported on college campuses in part because of a “blame the victim” culture.

In “Not Alone,” the first report of the White House Task Force to Protect Students From Sexual Assault released last spring, it suggests that campus climate surveys are the most effective way to identify problems on campus.
“The first step in solving a problem is to name it and know the extent of it — and a campus climate survey is the best way to do that,” the report stated. It urged colleges to conduct surveys this year and said efforts would be made to explore legislative or administrative options that would require schools to conduct a survey in 2016.

Then last July, Sen. Claire McCaskill of Missouri championed proposed legislation that, if passed, would require every college and university in the country to do a campus climate survey and make its findings public.

Kansas State had started talking about a comprehensive campus climate survey three years ago and in 2013 began putting one together with the help of the private firm Rankin & Associates Consulting.

“It was a happy coincidence” that our survey also deals with sexual conduct on campus, said Tom Vontz, professor and director of the Center for Social Studies Education at K-State and a member of the campus climate committee at K-State. “We did it to learn about ourselves.”

Given the rising cost of higher education, “I think that it is a reasonable expectation, as a professor and a parent of two college students, for the student to feel comfortable and safe and feel like they are capable of excelling while at the university,” Vontz said.

“The downside is you are exposing all your dirty laundry to the public. But I applaud our administration for having the courage to do that, for recognizing we are not perfect.”

It’s a difficult thing to measure and quantify, he said. “That’s part of the reason why it hasn’t been looked at as much before now.”

In addition to the nation turning a spotlight on campus rapes and sexual assaults, Vontz said he believes that in the last 10 years, more and more universities also have realized “there is more to a student’s education experience than curriculum and the resources available at an institution.”

More than 7,400 people (a 25 percent response rate) responded to the K-State survey from Oct. 14 to Nov. 19.

April Mason, K-State provost and senior vice president, said the survey results “will serve as a great benchmark for future surveys.” However, university officials have not decided how often they will conduct subsequent campus climate surveys.
What this first survey showed is that students — undergraduates and graduates — were more comfortable than were faculty, administrators and staff. Students, for the most part, like their classes and their professors. But nearly half the faculty members aren’t happy about their pay, and those who had seriously considered leaving said it was primarily because of low pay or benefits.

And some people on campus — 19 percent, who tended to be in a minority group — said they have experienced exclusion, intimidation and offensive and/or hostile conduct on campus. Among those 19 percent, more than 200 individuals reported that offensive conduct was based on their gender or gender identity. Some indicated that when a complaint was made to a supervisor, department head or other K-State official, “it was not taken seriously.”

“To have 19 percent say they have experienced some hostile conduct is too many,” Vontz said. He added, though, that Rankin said that percentage is on par with similar universities.

Close to 200 respondents said they had experienced unwanted sexual contact at K-State.

“A high percentage of it happened the first semester in the freshman year, most commonly involving alcohol, occurring off campus,” Vontz said. “I have a daughter here; I want her to have those statistics.”

Although the survey showed 84 percent of those who participated were comfortable on campus, a significantly lower percentage of respondents of color — only 26 percent — were “very comfortable” with the overall climate at K-State. Among multiple-race respondents, it was only 31 percent.

More than 330 respondents elaborated on discrimination, mostly racial, they witnessed at K-State in the past year, the survey report said. International students were one of the main targets of discrimination.

The University of Missouri is in the midst of conducting a campus climate survey, but one focused more on sexual assault. The MU survey was developed by the Association of American Universities and is also being administered at 26 other institutions. Results are expected in September.
“We do think that this (survey results) will provide us with some very important data for federal policymakers,” said Barry Toiv, spokesman for the Association of American Universities.

Some of the other area campuses to conduct campus climate surveys include the University of Central Missouri, which is planning one for fall 2015, led by its Office of Student Experience and Engagement. The University of Central Missouri survey will focus on sexual assault and harassment and include the entire campus community: students, faculty, staff and administrators, said university spokesman Jeff Murphy.

The University of Kansas, which recently received recommendations from a campus task force on sexual assault to centralize sexual violence prevention resources and collect better data, said it's now gearing up to do a campus climate survey.

“The goal of KU's effort is very broad,” said E. Nathan Thomas III, vice provost for diversity and equity. “We define climate to include issues related to safety, diversity, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability and more.”

University of Missouri-Kansas City officials said they also are planning to conduct a campus climate survey next academic year.

Reynolds Journalism Institute names fellows

By THE TRIBUNE'S STAFF

Saturday, May 9, 2015 at 12:00 am

The Reynolds Journalism Institute at the University of Missouri has named its newest class of fellows.

Every fall, the institute invites proposals from people and institutions to collaborate with on innovative ideas and projects to improve the practice or understanding of journalism.

Local recipients are:
The staff of the Missouri Press Service, who will create and test revenue-generating digital services that small newspapers could provide to local merchants. The project’s leader is Mark Nienhueser.

Anne Thompson, an adjunct professor in the MU art department, will conduct “news-art” experiments and continue her nationally recognized “I-70 Sign Show” billboard project.

Brian Hensel, an instructor in MU’s department of health management and informatics, will explore ways journalism can benefit the health care industry.

Harsh Taneja, an assistant professor of strategic communications at the MU School of Journalism, will conduct research using social network analysis on the role of news websites in people’s online lives.

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**Plight of the honeybee draws aid from University of Missouri program**

*22 hours ago • By Tim Barker*

Five years ago, Sam Elia decided to do something about the nation’s troubling honeybee problem, launching his Hinch Creek Apiary near Bourbon, Mo.

It’s not a huge thing in the fight to reverse a dramatic population decline. But it’s something.

“It used to be that every farm had a milk cow and a couple of colonies of bees,” said Elia, whose small operation sells starter hives. “The bees need all the help they can get.”

Elia, 63, is one of a few dozen Missouri beekeepers taking part in a national effort to keep beehives safe from toxic pesticides. Three years ago, he joined DriftWatch, a crop registry website, run by FieldWatch, a nonprofit created by Purdue University.

It’s a site that offers a way for specialty growers to signal their presence to neighboring farmers and companies that might spray pesticides and herbicides on area fields.

*The program received a boost recently when the University of Missouri Extension launched its Missouri Pollinator Conservancy Program, which is pushing state beekeepers to be more visible.*

It urges them to register their hives on the mo.driftwatch.org site. After registering, they can buy bright yellow BeeCheck flags that are used to alert others to the presence of hives. The program also is offering 200 free fiberglass flagpoles, which can be picked up at the Delta Research Center in Portageville or the main extension office in Columbia.

The goal of the extension program is to encourage stronger communication between the agriculture and apiary communities to minimize the risks presented by pesticide drift — when chemicals stray from their intended target areas, often because of strong winds.
“This is not to prevent growers from spraying pesticides. It’s just asking them to be careful,” said Moneen Jones, a University of Missouri entomologist who works at the Portageville office.

But it’s also a proactive move, she said, at a time when pressure is mounting to do more to solve the problem. The prospect is there, she said, for more intrusive involvement from the Environmental Protection Agency.

“We’re showing them we don’t need that type of regulation,” Jones said.

The decline of the nation’s honeybee population started in the 1980s and has been blamed on a variety of factors, including neonicotinoids, a type of insecticide used by Monsanto Co. and other seed producers, and the varroa mite, a parasite that may contribute to colony collapse disorder.

But bees are, in some ways, suffering the same fate as the monarch butterfly, which has seen its population hammered by the loss of milkweed — a key food source — that was once plentiful across the nation. Likewise, bees have lost considerable amounts of foraging area.

“Herbicide use has kind of eliminated that,” said Robert Sears, president of the Eastern Missouri Beekeepers Association.

Whatever the causes, the impact on honeybees has been substantial. There are an estimated 2.5 million honeybee colonies in the United States today, less than half the population found in the 1940s, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

And given that bees are responsible for pollinating a quarter or more of the food that we consume, there could be significant financial costs to farmers — and consumers — if the bee population continues to dwindle.

Programs such as DriftWatch, however, may not do enough to save them.

“It’s a nice idea, and I think it makes us all feel good,” said Michele Colopy, a program director with the Pollinator Stewardship Council, a nonprofit group seeking to protect bees from pesticides. The issue, she said, is that it’s all voluntary. Voluntary to sign up. And voluntary to look at.

“When you have a program that has no enforcement whatsoever, there’s going to be a problem,” Colopy said.

There needs to be stronger communication between beekeepers, sprayers and the farmers who use their services, she said — particularly when you factor in the reality of professional beekeepers who sell their pollination services.

Unlike hobbyists, who don’t tend to move their hives, these professional operations, with hundreds or thousands of hives, are constantly on the move. They’ll stay in an area for three to four weeks before moving on to their next customer.

With each move comes the possibility of running into an unexpected, and unintended, assault by some variation of pesticide.

Still, accidental exposure remains a threat even for urban beekeepers such as Phil Minden, who has 18 hives in community gardens scattered around St. Louis.

Minden has been in the business for six years, though it’s largely a hobby. The honey — a hive can produce 100 pounds or more a year — is sold to Sweet Sensations, a teen entrepreneurship program in north St. Louis. With his hives located in residential areas, Minden isn’t too concerned about errant chemical sprays from nearby farms. But he talks of beekeepers who’ve watched their hives die after pesticide sprays at nearby golf courses.
With that in mind — and the potential for mosquito spraying by the city — he registered his various locations on DriftWatch.

“My hope is they will check the map before they go spraying,” Minden said.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Plight of the honeybee draws aid from MU program

Sunday, May 10, 2015 | 7:19 p.m. CDT
BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
ST. LOUIS — The University of Missouri Extension has started a program that is pushing state beekeepers to be more visible as the number of pollinating insects declines.

Called the Missouri Pollinator Conservancy Program, the program urges beekeepers to register their hives online, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports. After registering, they can buy bright yellow BeeCheck flags that are used to alert others to the presence of hives. The program also is offering 200 free fiberglass flagpoles, which can be picked up at the Fisher Delta Research Center in Portageville, Missouri, or the main extension office in Columbia.

The goal of the extension program is to encourage stronger communication between the agriculture and apiary communities to minimize the risks of pesticides drifting from their intended target areas, often because of strong winds.

"This is not to prevent growers from spraying pesticides. It's just asking them to be careful," said Moneen Jones, a University of Missouri entomologist who works at the Portageville office.

But it's also a proactive move, she said, at a time when pressure is mounting to do more to solve the problem. The prospect is there for more intrusive involvement from the Environmental Protection Agency.

"We're showing them we don't need that type of regulation," Jones said.
The decline of the nation's honeybee population started in the 1980s and has been blamed on a variety of factors, including a parasite that may contribute to colony collapse disorder. Today, there are an estimated 2.5 million honeybee colonies in the United States, less than half the population found in the 1940s, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Michele Colopy, a program director with the Pollinator Stewardship Council, a nonprofit group seeking to protect bees from pesticides, said the issue with the program is that the effort is all voluntary.

"When you have a program that has no enforcement whatsoever, there's going to be a problem," Colopy said.

MU research IDs enzyme tied to obesity-related hypertension

May 08, 2015 2:00 pm  •  Associated Press

COLUMBIA, Mo. •  A study led by a University of Missouri professor has identified the enzyme blamed for obesity-related high blood pressure.

The university says in a news release that researchers compared obese and lean rats. Lead study author William Durante says researchers discovered that obese animals had elevated levels of an enzyme named arginase that breaks down an amino acid named arginine.

As a result, the obese animals were deficient in the amino acid, which is needed to generate nitric oxide. The gas is important because it relaxes blood vessels and lowers arterial blood pressure.

The school says the finding could lead to new treatment options.

Funding came from the National Institutes of Health and the American Heart Association. The study was recently published in the official journal of The Obesity Society.
Former Mizzou player Jeff Warren dies; remembered for loyalty, toughness

May 08, 2015 1:52 pm  •  By Dave Matter

COLUMBIA, Mo. • Jeff Warren wasn’t the biggest star on Norm Stewart’s Missouri basketball teams in the early 1990s, but he was a crucial piece to a program that won 86 games during his four-year career.

“The Antlers had a nickname for Jeff,” former MU teammate John Burns recalled Friday. “They called him ‘War Horse.’ Because that’s what he was. He wouldn’t quit as a player.”

Warren wasn’t about to quit last July when he was diagnosed with an aggressive form of lymphoma. Burns, his former roommate and close friend, spoke to Warren a couple weeks ago.

“He was at peace with (the disease),” Burns said. “But he said, ‘I’m not going to quit,’ even though he knew his time was coming.”

Warren died Friday in Kansas City where he had gone into hospice care. Warren was diagnosed last July 2014, according to updates on a youcaring.com account set up by friends. He’s survived by his wife Susan and their two young sons. Warren was 44.

“He was loyal as could be as a friend,” Burns said. “He could keep going on and on and it wouldn’t matter what was going on with him. That was remarkable about him. He was very kindhearted and very spiritual throughout this fight.”

Warren, a 6-8 forward from Litchfield, Mich., lettered four seasons for the Tigers from 1989-90 to 1992-93. He averaged 6.7 points and 4.4 rebounds for his career, with his most productive season coming in 1991-92, when he averaged 9.6 points and 6.0 rebounds for Norm Stewart’s team. He still holds the team record for 24 consecutive field goals made, set over four games in 1991-92.

Warren and Burns were the only seniors on the 1992-93 team that won the Big Eight tournament in Kansas City.

“Even when he came up as a freshman he was a guy who found his way on the court,” said Burns, the head basketball coach at Battle High in Columbia. “He did all the dirty work. He would rebound. He played defense. I always gave him trouble about fouling all the time. I think he almost broke (Kim) Anderson’s record for fouling out or fouls for a player. He just did everything. He made us better. That’s the type of guy he was personality-wise. He wasn’t, ‘Hey, look at me.’ It was more like, ‘What can I do to get better?’

“Anyone who watched Mizzou basketball knew he was the guy who would do all the dirty work.”

During their senior season, Warren and Burns co-hosted a segment on Stewart’s TV show on KOMU called “The Warren Report.”

“We had a lot of fun with that,” Burns said.
"The Mizzou Basketball Family and Tiger Nation mourns the loss of one of the greatest individuals in the history of our program," MU coach Kim Anderson said in a prepared statement. "Jeff Warren made coaching fun. He was one of the hardest workers and best teammates I have ever been around."

"I am thankful for the time I had with him and on behalf of our current and former players, as well as staff members, we send our thoughts and prayers to his family. We thank Jeff for letting us be a part of his life," Anderson added.

Former teammate Marlo Finner tweeted from his Twitter account @m_finner: "I lost one of my college teammate today to a fight with cancer, JEFF WARREN u will be truly missed. Mizzou Tigers!!"

Former Tiger Jon Sundvold added at @JonSundvold: "Sad news. Jeff Warren lost his battle to lymphoma. Prayers to the Warren family. Jeff was one of the finest to represent Mizzou.#trueson"

Here's a story from the P-D archives about Warren written by Vahe Gregorian from Dec. 23, 1992:

Even after Missouri basketball coach Norm Stewart paid homage to Jeff Warren by visiting him at home in Litchfield, Mich., Warren harbored keen worries about his ability to play major-college basketball.

Sure, Warren was 6 feet 8, would average 27 points and 16 rebounds as a high school senior, and was nimble enough to be able to dribble deftly behind his back. But Warren also was from a town of 1,300, with fewer than 50 classmates in the graduating class that he was president of four times.

Warren, humble by nature, was well aware of the diluted level of competition he had faced. His father, Mike, let on about his son's apprehensions when Stewart made a follow-up call.

"He said, `Hey, if the guy doesn't think he can play here, he probably can't, " Mike Warren recalled. " `If that's the case, we're going to hang up the phone and say goodbye.' "

But Jeff Warren was reassured by blue-collar forwards Greg Church and Mike Sandbothe when he visited MU. He took a deep breath and decided.

"He came in and said, `Is it all right if I go to Missouri?' " his father said.

Warren has proved an ample talent, but it is his demeanor and style that have distinguished him. His game is marked by his savvy, determination, abandon - and utter unselfishness.

That plucky character, Stewart says, may be harder to discern than raw talent. And it makes Warren perhaps as vital to Mizzou's success as marquee players Doug Smith and Anthony Peeler were.

"Over the long, long haul, a player like that goes up there with the great players, " Stewart said.

Not that the unassuming Warren would grant himself such lofty mention. In his persistence, in his hunger, he has no appetite for savoring. Even in practice, he seldom relents.

"We call him `The Terminator, ' " said teammate and roommate John Burns. "You've got to watch those elbows coming through the lane."

When he made 24 successive field goals last season, setting a Big Eight Conference record and falling one short of the National Collegiate Athletic Association record, Warren was almost embarrassed by the fuss.

"I guess maybe I take a little more pride in it looking back, " he said. "But I was taking high-percentage shots."

After clutching 18 rebounds against Nevada-Las Vegas last season, Warren explained his marvelous game thusly: "We boxed out pretty well. The ball just happened to fall into my hands a few extra times."
Warren is just as diligent in the classroom.

"He's not here a lot; he's always at the library," Burns said. "My other roommate says he never sees him. He gets up, eats, goes to classes, goes to practice, eats dinner, goes to the library, comes home and is in bed around 11."

Not last week, though. Warren - who does not wear a slide rule or a pocket protector - was "foggy-eyed" and "slept all of 10 hours" last week, Stewart said, in preparing for finals.

"That's just the way it goes; you have to put first things first," said Warren, who has about a 3.2 grade-point average but nonetheless frets, saying, "Hopefully, I'll still be eligible for next semester."

More seriously, though, Warren is concerned with finding his groove on the court.

Last season, he answered Stewart's challenge to boost his scoring average - then about four points a game - over his GPA by pounding his way to 9.6 points a game despite being hindered by mononucleosis much of the season. This season, he is averaging 11 points but is out of sync.

"I just haven't found my spot, my niche in the offense," he said. But the zealous Warren has multiple dimensions to his play.

When the lights went out at Greensboro Coliseum in Missouri's NCAA Tournament game with West Virginia last season, Warren scooped up the ball and sprinted upcourt because he never heard a whistle. His layup in the dark, presumably good, didn't count, but the moment was vintage Warren.

"He doesn't have to score to be a good player," Stewart said.

Others appreciate those subtleties.

"He's the best man on the team. He does everything - rebounds, strong, good shot, cuts well, gets open. He's just an all-around player," Southern Indiana center Chris Bowles said after a recent game with MU.

Before MU's game with Texas A&M last season, Aggies coach Tony Barone said: "Warren's the kind of guy I love. He just goes out and gets it done. He's not good enough. He can't jump. He can't shoot. But he beats you."

And when Warren beats somebody, the entire community surrounding Litchfield, where fire engines scream when local teams win championships, takes pride.

At Litchfield Drugs, which his father bought five years ago, articles about Jeff's exploits are posted on the walls.

Exploits that once seemed unlikely.

"He wanted to play at the highest level he could possibly play," his father said, "because he knew if he didn't try, he'd always wonder."
It's an improving market for college graduates. Or is it?

May 09, 2015 11:15 pm  •  By Koran Addo

NO MU MENTION

When Genevieve Hotz graduated from community college four years ago, she came up empty in her search for a job.

So she did what many other students do: She decided to go back to school, mostly to make herself a more appealing job candidate, but also to wait out the shaky job market.

“I was expecting to get a lot more interviews,” she said of her efforts in 2011. “It didn’t take long to figure out, I needed to do more.”

Later this week, Hotz, 31, will graduate with a bachelor’s degree in information systems from the University of Missouri-St. Louis. And although she doesn’t have a job lined up, she’s already had three interviews.

“I feel comfortable this time around,” she said. “I’m not panicking.”

Hotz’s comfort level coincides with a U.S. economy that added 223,000 jobs in April, bringing the jobless rate down to 5.4 percent, its lowest since May 2008.

The most recent employment report was greeted with enthusiasm among higher education industry watchers. Even so, there’s a split among economists over whether we should start feeling optimistic about the job prospects for new college graduates.

Employers are expecting to hire nearly 10 percent more new college graduates this year than they did last year, according to a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Additionally, a third of the employers who plan to hire new college graduates plan to offer higher salaries than last year, according to a survey done on behalf of the job searching website CareerBuilder.

But to some economists, the best way to describe today’s job market is tight.

“We aren’t generating the job growth that keeps up with the population and deals with the backlog of unemployed and underemployed people,” said Howard Wall, an economist and director of Lindenwood University’s Hammond Institute for Free Enterprise.

In a truly healthy job market, the United States would be creating 250,000 to 300,000 jobs a month, Wall said, while the St. Louis region would be adding 15,000 jobs a year.

Instead, Wall said, the country and region are getting about two-thirds of that growth. Nationally, about 200,000 jobs are being added each month. The St. Louis region is adding about 10,000 jobs annually.
What it means, he said, is that people who graduated from two to five years ago are still searching for the type of jobs for which they are trained.

Forced to take other, lesser-paying jobs, those people are now looking to climb up both the job and salary ladder, Wall said.

“So now they’re competing with the current graduates” for the same jobs, he said.

The competition for employment could be more fierce than in the past because the stakes are higher. Students have been taking on more student loan debt at a time when opportunities to earn enough to start paying off that debt have diminished.

Nationally, student loan debt has passed $1 trillion, surpassing credit card debt for the first time in history.

In Missouri, 63 percent of college students graduate with an average of $25,000 in student loan debt. In Illinois, the average debt is more than $28,500, with 70 percent of students borrowing.

Inside Missouri’s higher education institutions, however, the outlook is much rosier, especially in the various university career service departments, where administrators help connect students with employers.

Accounting and finance are areas where demand is particularly strong, said Wanda McNeil, director of Harris-Stowe State University’s Office of Career Services.

“Students are much better off than they were even five years ago,” McNeil said. “That’s how I would measure the job market. In the last two or three years, we’ve seen students having an easier time finding success in their job search.”

At the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Director of Career Services Teresa Balestreri said the most important thing students can do is start looking early.

After that, “internships are the best pipeline to finding a job,” she said. “And in your search, students need to take a targeted approach. Employers don’t want to see that ‘I’ll take anything’ approach.”

For Conner Regan, things have worked out about as well as he could have hoped. He’ll graduate from UMSL this week with an economics degree. Shortly after that, he’ll move to Illinois to start his new job with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

But as fortunate as Regan, 22, is to have a job lined up before getting his actual diploma, his search wasn’t exactly easy.

Regan spent the last 12 months applying for internships, researching different jobs, traveling to job fairs working with UMSL’s career services office.

“As an economics major, I’m probably in a better position than a lot of people,” he said. But “I probably applied to a dozen different places over a year before I got an offer.”

While relying on a handful of anecdotes can skew the overall outlook, some economists think the numbers back up optimism by some students.

“What we’re seeing is steady upward momentum in the St. Louis area,” said Charles Gascon, a regional economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Gascon said growth in the job market is about half of the national rate, but that’s wholly consistent with a city like St. Louis that is experiencing slow population growth.
In addition to the financial service industry, Gascon said, health care in St. Louis looks particularly promising.

“I’m optimistic about St. Louis,” he said. “We’re moving in the right direction.”

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The Ph.D. Pay Gap

How unequal stipends foster an unequal education

By Vimal Patel

Houston

NO MU MENTION

For Ksenia Krylova, the years she has spent earning her Ph.D. have been largely worry free, at least when it comes to money. As a doctoral student at the University of Houston’s C.T. Bauer College of Business, she receives $33,000 a year in stipend support. The assistance, which also includes a free laptop while she’s in the program, has helped her to focus on her coursework and dissertation. She is set to complete her program in the summer after five years and has a job offer for a tenure-track position at a university in Paris.

"We’re provided the environment and the equipment necessary to go through our program without any burdens," says Ms. Krylova.

Across campus, Tracy Butler doesn’t feel the same.

When she began working toward her Ph.D. in history in 2010, Ms. Butler received a stipend of roughly $11,000 a year. It forced her to work as a part-time nanny, which distracted her from her Ph.D. studies, she says.
"If I didn’t have to work outside," says Ms. Butler, "I would have had more time to focus on my dissertation and my comprehensive exams. I probably would have been finished with my Ph.D. by now."

Disparities in stipends, at Houston and research universities elsewhere, stem from many factors. They include how nationally competitive a department is, and wants to be, in recruiting students; how much federal research money a program gets; how available university fellowships are; and where university donors put their dollars.

The unequal pay leads to an unequal education.

Students with larger stipends or better access to federal grants and other aid, often in the sciences, engineering, and business, are better able to focus on learning and career prospects, while the rest, more often humanities students, spend much of their time preoccupied with making ends meet.

Graduate-student activists say the disparity in stipend levels and its repercussions aren’t discussed enough on campuses. Little data exist about how programs compare in offering financial support, limiting graduate students’ negotiating power and ability to know just how big disparities are from university to university, across departments within universities, and even sometimes within departments themselves.

While universities are concerned about how long it takes humanities students to earn a degree, the growing debt levels among graduate students, and how best to prepare Ph.D.’s for a rocky job market, the question of what is fair financial support, which affects all of these problems, is rarely dealt with head on.

In an era of tight budgets, universities have struggled to raise stipends, and the trade-offs often bring controversy. At the Johns Hopkins University, administrators wanted to increase humanities and social-sciences stipends by accepting fewer students. At the University of Texas at Austin’s liberal-arts college, officials reasoned they could pay students more, but only if they paid them for fewer years. Graduate students protested both plans.

At the University of Houston, administrators are sympathetic to the financial concerns of Ph.D. students. The university raised stipends in low-paying disciplines in 2013. Ms. Butler, for example, received about $16,000 in 2014.

Some graduate students complain that the changes didn’t go far enough, and the University of Houston shows just how hard it is to balance the needs of students with an institution’s academic goals and financial priorities.
Doctoral students receive a variety of support from universities. Besides stipends, tuition assistance and health benefits are also common. Stipends are typically intended as financial support for living expenses and are often provided as compensation for teaching courses or conducting research. Those Ph.D. students whose stipends don’t go far enough usually have two options: Find a job outside the university, or take out loans. Both can be a gamble.

To make sure students focus on their studies and to help ensure timely completion, the University of Houston, like many others, prohibits most doctoral students from having outside jobs. (The ban includes those whose tuition is covered by a university fellowship, which is the majority of students.)

But many cash-strapped future Ph.D.’s ignore the rule and quietly work around town waiting tables, flipping burgers, and teaching at community colleges.

Zachary D. Martin, a fifth-year creative-writing student at Houston, says he didn’t feel he could go into debt to finance a degree that has bleak job prospects. So to supplement his stipend, which in 2012 was about $11,000, Mr. Martin taught writing outside the university, graded essays for an SAT-prep company, and did editing and proofreading for a publishing house, among other jobs.

Now on the academic job market, Mr. Martin says he has had one on-campus interview at a teaching-intensive liberal-arts college. He didn’t get the job. He worries his résumé looks thin because he didn’t publish enough stories.

In today’s tight market, he says, even colleges that emphasize teaching are looking to hire "unicorns" — those rare candidates with exceptional teaching experience, a major publication history, and a track record of university service. This, he says, stacks the deck against people like him.

"If I didn’t freelance and work as much," he says, "that would have given me more time for writing and publishing."

Giving students that time is partly the goal of the university’s rule against outside employment. Students, however, call it unreasonable given some stipend levels. It’s unclear to what extent the university enforces its work prohibition. Dmitri Litvinov, the graduate-school dean at Houston, says he’s unaware of the university’s ever punishing a student for working at another job.
But the rule does have an impact. Several graduate students who spoke with The Chronicle about their extra jobs didn’t want their names published for fear of upsetting the university or their faculty advisers; one even worried it would look bad to potential future employers.

Critics of the rule say it has another effect: It pushes students into debt.

Not wanting to run afoul of the university’s regulation, for example, Becky Smith took out loans to help her pay the bills. Now in her fifth year of a history Ph.D. program at Houston, she has racked up about $24,000 in debt while in her doctoral program, for about $70,000 total when counting her undergraduate and master’s debt.

That amount will very likely grow. The university, like many others, limits stipend support after a certain number of years, in part to encourage students to finish in a timely fashion. Ms. Smith says she won’t receive any stipend support from the university after this academic year; she still has one semester to go before she completes her dissertation on lesbian and feminist activists in Houston in the 1970s and 80s.

While the loans will affect her future finances, Ms. Smith says she doesn’t regret her decision.

"I’ll deal with the financial consequences of my Ph.D. later because I know from having worked a retail job that I never want to be in that position again," she says. "I’d rather be educated and with a stack of loans than the opposite."

Doctoral recipients are completing their programs with more and more debt. Federal data show the average amount of education-related debt Ph.D. recipients reported completing their programs with in 2013 nearly doubled from a decade earlier to $22,000. (The average includes Ph.D.’s who reported having no debt — about half of the group in 2013.)

The problem hits certain disciplines harder than others, with some observers saying that low stipend amounts are part of the cause. Eight percent of all Ph.D. recipients in 2013 reported student debt totaling more than $90,000. In the physical sciences and engineering, that share was less than 3 percent, but in the humanities and social sciences, it was about 10 and 15 percent, respectively.

Houston and other universities should invest more in Ph.D. students, Ms. Smith says. After all, they are the nation’s future faculty.
By providing better stipends, she says, "you’re not only furthering the education of these students, but also every student who will ever be taught by them at any institution they ever teach at."

For Ms. Krylova, the stipend she makes has helped her focus on her studies, but it doesn’t mean an extravagant lifestyle. Yes, she does most of her grocery shopping at Whole Foods or organic farmer’s markets, she says, but she has also had to wrestle with rising rents in the Houston area, which have increased in some apartment buildings by almost 30 percent in the last five years. "I’m single, don’t have a family to take care of, and don’t have any health issues," Ms. Krylova says. "The money the college and department offer, I’m not sure it would be sufficient in New York or Washington, D.C., but it’s enough to sustain a good living in Houston."

The amount Ms. Krylova receives represents the higher end of the stipend spectrum at the university and nationally. Few Ph.D. students have stipends topping $30,000; even at elite colleges, some disciplines fall short of that. Stipends in humanities and social sciences on the same campuses tend to be lower, often in the $15,000-to-$20,000 range. Precise data are scare. And students in some disciplines have more access to federal money and can improve their finances with grants.

For the first three years in her social-psychology program at Houston, Lindsey Rodriguez struggled. She supplemented her stipend with an extra job and took out loans. She says she was limited in her ability to do work crucial to landing a tenure-track job — writing papers, conducting research, traveling to conferences, and making presentations.

Then, in 2011, she received a National Institutes of Health grant that, at around $21,000 for the year, was about double what she was receiving when she started her program. The extra financial support, she says, "allowed me to focus much more on research and doing those graduate-student activities that I should have been doing from the start but couldn’t because I was so busy working to pay my bills."

She recently completed her Ph.D. and landed a tenure-track job. She is set to begin as an assistant professor at the University of New Hampshire in the fall. Without the extra money, she’s not sure she would have gotten the job.
"Those additional resources," Ms. Rodriguez says, "really were the difference between having a mediocre graduate-student career and having a thriving graduate-student career."

The University of Houston sees itself as a university on the rise. Led by Renu Khator, the president, it’s trying to shed its image as a commuter school. In recent years, it reached the top tier of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, renovated its student center, drastically increased its dorm capacity, and built a $120 million football stadium. The president recently told legislators she wanted Houston to join the invitation-only Association of American Universities. "I’ve seen massive changes to this place since I’ve been here," says Ms. Smith, the history student, as she stood in the shadow of the football stadium. "President Khator has done a good job of transforming the school. But all those changes didn’t really help our lives as much."

Two years ago, such frustrations boiled over.

Stipends in disciplines like creative writing and history were hovering around $11,000 a year, near the federal poverty line for an individual in 2013, and in some cases, hadn’t been increased in 20 years or more. Demanding a living wage, several dozen graduate students staged a sit-in outside Ms. Khator’s office. Since then, the university has tried to bring more equity to its programs — and make them more competitive — by better financing graduate students. Many creative-writing Ph.D. students saw their stipends rise to roughly $17,000 from $11,000. Other disciplines, too, saw increases. In 2014, the university went further and provided additional financial support for graduate students, including paying for mandatory fees like the one for the recreation-and-wellness center, which amounted to an average savings of roughly $1,400 a year per student, Mr. Litvinov says.

These recent changes have improved the lives of students, several said, though working secret second jobs and taking out loans is still common.

The support the university provided, says Wyman H. Herendeen, chair of the English department, "was impressive and decisive, and has made an enormous difference in the morale of graduate students."

But to some, the university didn’t go far enough. Mr. Martin, the creative-writing student, took part in the protest and says he wants a commitment to tie stipends, in
part, to measures like cost-of-living increases. "Without a system in place to
determine what is a fair living wage for the city that you live in," Mr. Martin says,
"there’s nothing that would prevent the need for future sit-ins."

Ms. Butler, the history Ph.D. student, says it’s "almost immoral" that there remain
large disparities in Ph.D. financial support on the campus.

For Mr. Litvinov, the dean of the graduate school, a position that was created after the
protest, disciplinary inequities in stipend support are less a result of university policies
than market forces. Colleges and departments set stipend amounts based in part on
how competitive they want to be in luring the best students, and certain disciplines
like the sciences and engineering have more access to external support because of
federal priorities. Moreover, while the university allocates how much each college
gets in overall funding, declining state support for higher education means there’s less
money to go around at public universities.

The heads of colleges and individual departments say stipend levels are a concern.

Dan E. Wells, dean of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, says some
departments in his college, like biology and biochemistry with its stipend of about
$21,000, don’t offer nationally competitive rates. But if the college doesn’t receive
more money from the university, Mr. Wells says, the only way to raise stipends is to
accept fewer students, which would hamper the college’s growth.

"Our faculty is growing, so most departments would like to have more Ph.D.
students," Mr. Wells says. "We’re between a rock and a hard place."

Even at the business school, setting stipends is a constant challenge, says its dean,
Latha Ramchand. The money provided by the university to the college isn’t enough to
offer the kind of stipends business students get. To fill the gaps, the college uses
payouts from endowed funds, like one created from a $40-million gift that the college
received 15 years ago. Ms. Ramchand says she eventually wants a fund exclusively
designated for doctoral programs.

While most administrators say market forces should play a role in setting stipend
rates, some say more factors need to be considered.

"The free market is not a thing with a soul," says Kevin Prufer, director of graduate
studies for the English department. "It’s a machine that functions, and in its
functioning, some people are going to get more screwed than others."
But the question of what, exactly, is fair compensation for Ph.D. students is complicated, he says. A couple years ago, he would have said the humanities students were getting "really abused." But what they receive now is arguably fair.

"All the professors who are helping you and working with you on your dissertation and teaching your courses," Mr. Prufer says, "that’s not free."

There is, of course, no stipend-setting playbook. Each institution and program must figure out its own rates based on a complex combination of competition, state and federal money, external sources, local costs of living, and its sense of what is fair. Decisions about stipends in Ph.D. programs are largely decentralized, with levels set by individual colleges or departments, but the central administration can play a role. Some universities have set minimum stipend levels, like Ohio State University and Cornell University. Some students at Houston wonder if the university should accept fewer Ph.D. students and pay them better, like Johns Hopkins proposed.

In response, Mr. Litvinov, the graduate-school dean, acknowledges a reality universities are often reluctant to recognize: One of many factors in deciding how many students to accept is how many undergraduate courses need to be taught. It’s one of many disincentives universities have for reducing the number of Ph.D. students they accept. Doctoral students also help bring status and prestige to the university and to individual faculty members.

Mr. Martin, meanwhile, continues to question the university’s priorities. "Build fewer football stadiums and don’t pay Matthew McConaughey to be commencement speaker," he says, referring to the celebrity’s visit to the campus scheduled for this week, at a cost of $135,000.

Mr. Martin’s job search continues. Although he would like an academic post, he is open to other careers, like magazine writing or working for a nonprofit group.

Like almost every student who spoke with The Chronicle for this article, Mr. Martin does not regret his Ph.D., even though it came with financial difficulties. But universities, he says, do need to better appreciate the money challenges facing Ph.D. students, or risk hurting their own futures.

"For the university to survive in the 21st century, we have to tend our own garden. That means responsible stewardship of the field," he says. "You can’t go flooding the market with underprepared, indebted Ph.D.’s and expect the center to hold."
3 Approaches to Raising Stipends

The University of Houston isn’t alone in its effort to raise stipend levels for graduate students as a matter of equity and to be more competitive in attracting applicants. But at times these changes have been contentious and left students dissatisfied.

Here’s what a few universities have done:

- **Pay more, but for less time:** The University of Texas at Austin’s liberal-arts college plans to pay its Ph.D. students more, but over fewer years, with the hope of encouraging doctoral candidates to earn their degrees faster. Some students balked at the idea, writing that the university’s plan "articulates a ‘one size fits all’ model of graduate-student funding and time-to-degree."

- **Pay more to fewer students:** The Johns Hopkins University’s Krieger School of Arts and Sciences decided in 2013 to increase stipend levels for humanities and social-science students to roughly $30,000 from $23,000 with the catch of accepting fewer students. Some graduate students protested the plan, saying having fewer students would hurt the overall educational experience. The school ended up setting the floor for stipends lower, at $28,500, and gave the departments more flexibility in whether to decrease student numbers.

- **Pay a minimum and set up an annual review:** Following a resolution passed by its graduate-student government in 2011, Ohio State University established an annual process to examine graduate-student stipends to remain competitive. A committee of graduate students, faculty, and staff each year prepares a report that compares stipends within Ohio State and at other universities. Like many universities, Ohio State sets a minimum stipend, which since 2011 has increased to $13,500 from $9,000. Cornell University also has a floor for stipends, but its process is different. There the Board of Trustees sets a minimum nine-month stipend rate each year after receiving a recommendation from the provost and graduate school. Increases in the cost of living in Ithaca, N.Y., are part of the calculation.

*Vimal Patel covers graduate education. Follow him on Twitter [@vimalpatel232](https://twitter.com/vimalpatel232), or write to him at vimal.patel@chronicle.com.*
Debt-Free Catches On

May 11, 2015
By
Michael Stratford

NO MU MENTION

After a concerted push over the past several months from liberals and progressive groups, Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign appears to be on the cusp of embracing a debt-free college plan.

The Democratic front-runner’s campaign manager promoted the idea last week during an interview on CNBC.

"What voters are looking for is someone to be a champion for everyday people,” the campaign manager, Robby Mook, said. “For young people, that's debt-free college.”

His comments follow a resolution last month by Congressional Democrats that promoted debt-free public higher education and that won the backing of prominent Democrats like Senators Elizabeth Warren and Chuck Schumer.

Much of the inspiration for the debt-free college plan has come from a Progressive Change Campaign Committee and Demos policy paper that sketches out the concept of making public higher education debt-free across the country.

The idea has already caught on with Clinton’s potential and declared rivals in the Democratic nominating contest. Senator Bernie Sanders, the Vermont Independent, who is running for president, has proposed an $18 billion federal program to make the first two years of public higher education free. And former Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley, a likely contender, has also backed the idea.

Debt-free college, if it does indeed capture a high-profile spot on the Democratic 2016 campaign trail, would be among the most ambitious higher education proposals offered by a presidential candidate in a few decades of election cycles.

Although rising levels of student loan debt have increasingly become a popular topic in presidential and congressional elections over the past several cycles, the solutions have
been less sweeping than debt-free college.

President Obama, for instance, during his 2012 re-election campaign focused largely on promoting more generous income-based repayment plans and reducing the interest rate on federal student loans by several percentage points. And many Democrats pushed the issue of refinancing student loans during the 2014 midterm elections.

The debt-free college plan, as outlined in the Demos paper, is thin on details. But the basic idea is that the federal government would reward states that increase spending on higher education, reducing the need for students to take out loans, and also boost need-based aid programs like the Pell Grant.

Mark Huelsman, senior policy analyst at Demos, said that the debt-free concept relies on what many higher education policy groups have long been saying: that states need to boost their spending on higher education and that student loan debt is crushing some borrowers and a drag on the economy.

“We think there are a number of ways to get to debt-free college, but this is about creating the umbrella for that conversation to take place,” he said. “From a strategic perspective it’s good to have that bold marker in mind that can galvanize people. So many good policies can flow through that.”

"I don't think it's as much of a leap as it may seem,” Huelsman said. "We're talking about reducing unmet need for low- and middle-income students.”

“Debt-free college doesn't necessarily mean free tuition,” he said. “It means that students should face no more in unmet need than they could reasonably make up for over a summer job or a part-time job over the school year.”

Still, Huelsman concedes, "it's not a small ask of states and it's not a small ask of the federal government to reverse decades of public disinvestment." Senator Warren of Massachusetts said that she thinks the debt-free college "is a part of" efforts to reduce the burden of student loan debt.

"Student debt will be a central issue in the 2016 elections, both at the presidential election and the congressional level,” Warren told reporters last month. "There are two problems that have to be solved: the high cost of college education and huge outstanding student loan burden. And we need to go after both of them.”

Senator Schumer of New York, the high-ranking Democrat, called debt-free college “the next big idea” in announcing a resolution by congressional Democrats last month that backed the concept.

**Is Debt-Free the Right Approach?**

Many community college advocates have said that although Obama’s free community college proposal, announced in January, stands a slim chance of passing the current Congress, it has brought unprecedented levels of attention to community colleges and their funding. Shifting the conversation so that, as the Obama administration describes it, two years of postsecondary education are come to be viewed as universal as high
school, has been a victory in itself, many proponents of the plan have said.

But some are concerned that pushing for the level of state and federal investment needed to allow students across the country to earn bachelor’s degrees without taking on any amount of debt would be a bridge too far.

“Some people on the Left think, strategically, they should just shoot for the moon,” said Sara Goldrick-Rab, a professor of education policy at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. “I worry we’re going to lose the conversation about two years of free community college by going way too far. Incremental is very important here.”

The focus, Goldrick-Rab said, should be on funding efforts to make two years of college in the public sector free for everyone, with additional aid to help low- and moderate-income students finish a bachelor’s degree. Such a policy, she said, would be targeted at two key populations: students who currently aren’t attending any college and those who are going into debt but not earning a credential.

“Once a student has had at least two years of colleges, it isn’t unreasonable to consider taking a loan. There’s a lot less risk,” she said. “What’s unreasonable is financing those first two years of college with debt when you have no idea what you’re doing.”