UM curators approve fiscal year 2016 budget

By Megan Favignano

Thursday, June 25, 2015 at 7:57 pm

The University of Missouri Board of Curators approved a fiscal year 2016 operating budget Thursday that includes $2 million to hire “high impact faculty” and $1 million to recruit and retain faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows and graduate students at the UM System's flagship campus.

The budget includes $3.1 billion in expected revenue and $3 billion in expenditures across the system's four campuses, and assumes state appropriations for general operations will be “flat.” Fiscal 2016 starts July 1.

The board also heard updates and recommendations on a number of initiatives across the UM System and selected United Healthcare as the new administrator for employee medical benefits.

Currently, Coventry Healthcare administers health benefits for the UM System. UM System Vice President for Human Resources Betsy Rodriguez said it has been eight years since the system last put medical plan administration out for bid. The UM System wanted to solicit bids to ensure it was still getting the best deal.

Before making a recommendation to the board, Rodriguez said staff evaluated three proposals.

Rodriguez told the board the switch to United Healthcare would reduce overall claims administration costs by $1.6 million while having minimal physician or patient disruption. She said 95.4 percent of the UM System’s current provider claims are in United Healthcare’s network.

University and employee contributions fund health care administrative services, which are paid for from a UM System medical plan account. Coventry will continue to administer retiree medical benefits.

The curators reconvene Friday. Up next on the agenda is a vote on fiscal 2017 state appropriations requests for operations and capital improvements.

Also on Friday, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin will highlight the University of Missouri’s strategic plan and UM System President Tim Wolfe will give his state of the university address.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

UM System chooses new health care administrator

ALEXA AHERN, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — The UM System has chosen United Healthcare as its new medical plan administrator, effective Jan. 1.

United Healthcare will replace Coventry/Aetna Health Care for all University of Missouri System employees except retirees.

According to a notice sent to around 19,000 employees in the system, the change will not impact coverage, benefits, deductibles co-payments or co-insurance.

"There will be minimal disruption for employees because it will not affect benefits, deductibles, co-payments or co-insurance," said John Fougere, chief communications officer for the UM System.

The change is the result of a regular assessment of the health care marketplace conducted by the university, Fougere said. The assessment found United Healthcare offers more competitive benefits for employees.

The university is self-insured. As an administrator, United Healthcare will manage the provider network, claims processing and customer service.

Although the network coverage under United Healthcare will expand, Fougere said, it is unsure yet whether existing providers will also be covered under United Healthcare.

According to its website, United Healthcare is an operating division of UnitedHealth Group, the largest single health carrier in the United States.
Further questions will be answered in future emails, on the Total Rewards website and on a blog, the university said.

The Chronicle of Higher Education

It’s On Colleges to Make a Better Pitch for Their Value, One President Says

Watch the video: http://chronicle.com/article/Video-It-s-On-Colleges-to/231089/. The full transcript is included below.

As colleges and their budgets come under attack, higher education needs to do a better job of defending itself, says Timothy M. Wolfe, president of the University of Missouri system. When the public criticizes rising tuition and growing student debt, college leaders need to do more to emphasize the long-term earnings potential that comes with a college degree, he says. Colleges’ importance as an economic asset needs to be emphasized and quantified, too, he adds, to make a stronger case for higher education as a public good, beyond just a private one. Mr. Wolfe talks about how he is trying to turn around negative conversations about the value of higher education in his visits to middle schoolers, civic leaders, and employers across his state.

SARA HEBEL: Hi. I'm here with Tim Wolfe, the president of the University of Missouri system. Thanks for being here.

TIMOTHY WOLFE: My pleasure, Sara.

SARA HEBEL: You have been traveling the state talking about the value of a public research university like yours. What prompted you to do that? And what opinions are you trying to change?

TIMOTHY WOLFE: Well, in 2011, when I joined the University of Missouri system, a lot of the conversation was questioning the value of higher education. A lot of the media was more negative in terms of student debt and students' spending four years of their lives and not getting a job. And that conversation was translating into a decrease in funding from the state as well as some challenges in college participation by high-school graduates in our state.
So to offset some of that negative conversation we decided to go out on the road. And so in the last two years we've been to 20 cities in the state of Missouri, talking to over 7,000 middle schoolers. We were intentional in talking to seventh and eighth graders. Because that's the time in their academic career or academic life where they're starting to think about what happens after high school.

So we talked to 7,000 middle schoolers. Each of the stops also included conversations with civic leaders about the value of higher education in their community. As well as because we're the public land-grant research institution, we touch all the communities. And our mission is to touch six million Missourians through extension and through our health services.

So we met with civic leaders to just try to get a feel on the pulse of how we're doing relative to the community participation. And then we ended each of the stops with a meeting with a business leader who typically hires a lot of our graduates to again assess: Are we providing enough quantity of graduates? And the graduates that you have employed, do they have the right skills? Are there opportunities to collaborate from a research, or internship, or something like that?

So what's happened is we've increased awareness of the importance of higher education, offset some of the negative conversations with some positives. We've got some great inspirational notes from the middle schoolers. That I'm going to go on to college. I didn't think I could afford it. Now I know that I can. And I know I have a better life and more opportunities ahead of me.

So in each of the stops we feel comfortable with the texting and the tweeting that we've gotten back from the middle schoolers that were inspiring students to stay at it. And make sure that they finish high school and go on to college.

SARA HEBEL: This is, of course, a challenge across the country as public support for public higher education has eroded over time. What have you learned in it that you've been seeing about what colleges might do differently in the future or that they've been doing wrong in the past?

TIMOTHY WOLFE: Well, I think we shouldn't as an industry give ourselves a high grade relative to our reaction or our response to the negative publicity out there about questioning the value of higher education. Yes, it is true that tuition and cost of attendance have gone up exponentially. And we all know that, dollar for dollar, it's been the decrease in state funding that has caused that.

But we have not done a great job of messaging the marketplace that, though there are students that graduate with debt, they still will make $1 million more over their life expectancy than a high-school graduate, which translates into $540 more per week. So the earnings potential of a college graduate exponentially offsets the cost of attendance. And that the majority of our graduates do get employed. So we're not highlighting the positive as much as they're reading about the negative.
So from an industry standpoint we haven't done a great job of it. And just the overall awareness in our state relative to the importance of the University of Missouri system as it pertains to the economy and the importance as it pertains to the community culture is absolutely significant. And it could be parochial. But it could be construed as one of the biggest assets, if not the most important asset, in the state of Missouri. So we have got to learn how to have unified messaging, and getting that awareness up, and the importance of higher education.

And the great thing about what's happened with our state is they've responded. The highest funding from the state in over 30 years relative to operating increases as well as capital increases. So the state political leadership has responded with more support relative to the appropriated dollars to the University of Missouri system, which we're very proud of and thankful for.

SARA HEBEL: That was one thing I was going to ask. A lot of the arguments that are easy to make about the value of higher education amount to an individual private good. How do you shift that beyond what you can earn, what job you can get, to talking about higher education as a public good?

TIMOTHY WOLFE: Well, we have to talk about the service and economic-development component of our mission. Obviously, the four legs of our stool are no different than anywhere else, of academic research, service, and economic development. But when you talk about the public good — which is really the service and economic-development aspect of it — we have to talk about our stats and our facts relative to how many products that we've created, how many new companies, how many jobs that has driven. What are we doing in the communities? How many service hours, how many teachers are we educating and put there? As well as the existing teachers, how we're bringing them back for additional education. And so that service and economic development has to be quantified, qualified, and delivered in a very, very meaningful way.

What we're trying to do for every one of the six million Missourians is take that six-degree-separation analogy down to one. We want to connect every Missourian in some way to the University of Missouri system. And because we're in every one of our counties with our extension services, and we have two million contacts a year, it's pretty easy to get to that one degree of separation. So that services and economic development that is a public good versus individual to the student has to be backed up with facts and examples.

SARA HEBEL: And finally I would ask, what's at stake here in these conversations?

TIMOTHY WOLFE: I believe the future of higher education. More importantly than the future of higher education, the future of our economy in the United States and our competitiveness.

When I was in the search process for this, I reached out to a friend of mine and asked him what his advice to me would be. And he said higher education is No. 1 on a global basis. In the United States it's the only industry that can claim global leadership since its inception. But if it doesn't change, then it too will fall by the wayside. It won't be as competitive as some other countries.
So if change is necessary, then we have to change in everything that we do. The demographic that we're serving from a student now has shifted. And so we have to be responsive to that demographic and make sure that we focus on student success.

We have to increase the amount of research that we're doing. Because industry is dependent upon us. And if we don’t have interesting research that creates products, and services, and companies, and jobs, and continues to keep our leadership positions in this knowledge economy, then the United States will suffer because of that. You could parochially say it's just about us. But really it's about the United States. And our important position in the future of the United States is about being better at what we do.

SARA HEBEL: Thanks so much for being here today.

TIMOTHY WOLFE: Thank you. My pleasure.

Video produced by Julia Schmalz

THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

JUNE 25, 2015

Renewable-fuel advocates turn out at KCK hearing, give the EPA an earful on reducing ethanol targets

BY GREG HACK AND KASIA KOVACS

When the Environmental Protection Agency proposed lowering the country’s ethanol-use mandates for this year and next, it set up a public hearing to let people tell it what they thought.

On Thursday more than 280 people showed up to testify at the Jack Reardon Convention Center in Kansas City, Kan., and most had the same message: “Don’t mess with RFS!”
The Renewable Fuel Standard — RFS for short — calls for the use of increasing amounts of ethanol each year, and scores of speakers from corn growers and ethanol producers to governors and rural economic development officials told the EPA not to reduce the targets Congress set in a 2007 law.

In testimony and at a midday rally in Huron Park nearby, Govs. Terry Branstad of Iowa, the top ethanol and corn-producing state, and Jay Nixon of Missouri both made the standard points for ethanol: It helped farmers by creating another market for corn, it created jobs at ethanol plants and in related industries, it reduced U.S. dependence on foreign oil, and it reduced pollution by helping gasoline burn more cleanly.

Nixon said: “A recent report at the University of Missouri found that Missouri’s ethanol industry alone accounted for $1.1 billion of economic output for our state, including about 1,500 jobs. But agriculture isn’t just an important industry. It’s an important part of our way of life. When you hurt agriculture, you hurt families.”

The amounts the EPA now calls for using — 16.3 billion gallons of ethanol this year and 17.4 billion in 2016 — would still be increases from the past, but also 4 billion gallons less this year than Congress legislated and nearly 5 billion less next year. The U.S. used 15.9 billion gallons in 2014, almost all of it blended into E10 gasoline — 10 percent ethanol and 90 percent gasoline.

Branstad noted that corn prices had fallen from $6 a bushel to around $3.45 now in Iowa, making it a particularly tough time to also cut the Renewable Fuel Standard.

The National Corn Growers Association, which has 43,000 members concentrated in the Midwest, was particularly well represented on Thursday. The association president, Chip Bowling, came in from Maryland to testify.

“An important part of our work is protecting existing markets, and that’s why we’re here today,” he said. “We simply cannot afford and will not tolerate efforts to cut the demand for corn, and that’s exactly what your proposal will do. We cannot let this stand. We’ve done our part, our allies in the ethanol industry have done their part, and it’s time for the EPA to side with those of us supporting a domestic renewable fuel that’s better for the environment. It’s what your mission seeks to do.”
The Renewable Fuels Association, representing ethanol plant operators, also was out in force. At the midday Rally for Rural America, which drew more than 200 people, the association’s senior vice president, Jeff Cooper, thanked the EPA for having its hearing in the Heartland, rather than in Washington. And he said the Renewable Fuel Standard had worked well, increasing farm incomes, reducing oil imports and boosting renewable fuel production 500 percent.

“Why would we turn our back on that success?” he asked.

That success is important to secure a future for young farmers, too, said another speaker at the rally, Logan Korff of Norborne, Mo. His father, Rob Korff, raises soybeans and corn, and Logan, a senior next year at Norborne High School, is president of his FFA chapter.

Logan Korff said having two ethanol plants nearby was a great benefit to his family’s farm, in addition to “providing jobs and much needed economic development.”

Chris Grundler, who oversaw the hearings as the director of the EPA’s Office of Transportation and Air Quality, said during a break in the hearings that the EPA’s goals were to return certainty to the industry and to “follow Congress’ intent to grow the volumes of renewable fuels used, year over year.” But, he said, “we can’t ignore basic facts.”

The 2007 law provides for the EPA to revise its targets, which the EPA says is necessary because there has been less overall gasoline use than predicted, and next-generation biofuels, made from agricultural waste such as wood chips and corncobs, have not taken off as quickly as Congress hoped.

Not everyone testifying was critical of the EPA’s action. Bob Greco, a director at the American Petroleum Institute in Washington, said his group favored letting market forces, rather than government targets, have more say in what energy people used.

“Most cars can only operate on a 10 percent ethanol blend maximum,” he said outside the hearing rooms. “As long as the EPA mandates stay below 10 percent, then that’s an acceptable level. Our concern is that by 2016 the mandates would push the ethanol level above 10 percent. At that point we’re faced with very limited choices in what to do with a supply of more ethanol than the consumer wants.”
The EPA now specifies total ethanol targets, rather than gasoline percentages. But there has been consideration of pushing for so-called E15 — gasoline with 15 percent ethanol instead of 10 percent. Advocates dispute that that would cause much disruption, though, as 2001 model cars and newer are supposed to be able to use E15.

Some not tied to big oil also challenged the mandate Thursday.

Melissa Vatterott, with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, said that ethanol actually increases “climate change-causing greenhouse gas emissions” and on balance was not good for the environment.

“Growing corn is profitable. Preserving a wetland or sustainably growing spinach is not,” she said in prepared testimony. “The government-guaranteed market for corn ethanol may be profitable for industrialized agriculture, but the conversion of Midwest land into heavily subsidized corn fields also yields poor air, soil and water quality.”

All the witnesses will know by the end of November whether their evidence and opinions changed the EPA’s proposal. The agency will review all the comments and issue its final standards by the end of November.

Grundler said the EPA “welcomes an honest debate over these numbers,” and made it clear that all the comments would be heard and considered.

“This is one of the most important parts of my job, hearing directly from citizens,” he said. “It’s very humbling and the highest responsibility.”

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Missouri offers first glimpse of new softball stadium

By Tod Palmer
The Curators of the University of Missouri reviewed design plans for a new softball stadium Thursday during a meeting on the Columbia campus.

The board approved the $16 million project during its February meeting with $13.5 million funded by private gifts and $2.5 million in debt financing.

Lempka Edson Architects, an Overland Park-based firm, was commissioned to deliver the designs, which were unveiled for the new 1,700-seat venue.

The new softball facility, which will be built east of the Hearnes Center, replaces University Field.

Opened in 1981, University Field is landlocked, so expansion at that site wasn’t possible. It also lacks sufficient parking for the crowds that attend games, especially postseason games.

Parking won’t be an issue anymore at the new location.

However, the stadium will eat into parking that is critical for football games, displacing 503 parking spots.

Missouri plans a net gain of seven parking spots by building a new 251-space parking lot south of Champions Dr. at the intersection with Providence Point Dr.

A new band field also will be constructed south of the new parking lot, allowing construction of a 217-space lot at the site of the old practice field.

The new stadium will have a full-view concourse and outfield plaza, an outfield lawn area for additional spectators, elevated press box, heated dugouts, team lounge, theater and video room, rehab facility and coaches offices among other amenities.

The new parking lot is expected to be completed by November with the stadium ready to host games by December 2016.
UM Curators look at softball stadium plans

COLUMBIA, MO -- The University of Missouri Board of Curators got a sneak peak of the plans for the new Mizzou Women’s Softball stadium during their meeting on Thursday.

The Curators approved $16 million dollars for the project earlier this year.

$13.5 million of the funding comes from private donations.

The University System covers the other $2.5 million.

The project’s approval comes after Mizzou softball’s success in the last several consecutive seasons.

Construction crews will build the 1,800 seat stadium on the east side parking lot of the Hearnes Center.

MU Assistant Athletic Director Tim Hickman said, “A lot of the people who come to our softball games are standing around because there are no seats left. Just the ability to have more comfortable surroundings in a stadium and the capacity is more appropriate, I think the fan base will increase our attendance.”

The stadium is scheduled to be ready for the 2017 softball season.
UM Curators presented with plans for new softball stadium

Watch story: http://www.komu.com/player/?video_id=29470&zone=5&categories=5

COLUMBIA - On Thursday, architects presented the UM Board of Curators with plans for the new MU softball field, which is slated to be completed by December 2016, in time for the 2017 season.

The board approved the stadium in January, which is estimated to cost the University $16 million.

MU’s Executive Associative Athletic Director Tim Hickman said the stadium will be a noticeable upgrade.

“This is going to be a first class facility. Aesthetically, I think it will be second to none,” Hickman said.

Hickman highlighted several upgrades the new stadium will feature:

- 1600 permanent seats
- Elevated press box
- Better Wi-Fi access
- Outfield grass seating
- 2,000 total capacity (University Field’s capacity is listed at 500)

Hickman said the new stadium should make it so every fan will have a place to sit.

“There’s going to be more opportunities for our fans to enjoy their experience at the games,” Hickman said.

Hickman also said that the stadium will play a big role in recruiting future student-athletes.

“Recruiting is a big deal, and having a top-notch facility is key to that,” Hickman said.

Hickman added that the new press box will lead to more appearances on television.
The new stadium will replace parking by the Hearnes Center, displacing 503 parking spots. Crews will build 516 new parking spots by Providence Point to compensate for the loss of parking.

UM Chief Communications Officer John Fougere said the plans will more than accommodate everyone.

“When it’s done, it’s going to be really impressive,” Fougere said.

Architects presented the plans as a part of the UM Curators Annual meeting at MU.

Thursday, the board members passed the 2016 budget request for the UM system, totaling $3 billion.

The new stadium wasn’t the only notable project scheduled for the 2016 budget; $38.5 million will go toward renovations on Lafferre Hall, MU’s main engineering building. Fougere said the renovations will help train more graduates.

“The renovations are critical to training more engineering graduates that will be critical to our state’s economy,” Fougere said.

The board members also heard proposals for the 2017 budget request, totaling $497.3 million in appropriations.

Friday, the board will vote on the budget requests. If approved, they will be sent to the state legislature for approval.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Thousands in state retain subsidized health insurance with ruling

PHILLIP SITTER, 12 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Thursday’s Supreme Court ruling in the King v. Burwell case spared hundreds of thousands of people in Missouri from paying more for their health insurance premiums, according to experts on the law and its implementation in the state.

The justices ruled 6-3 in favor of Burwell, upholding federal tax subsidies offered under the Affordable Care Act to help eligible people pay their health insurance premiums.

"Today, the Supreme Court affirmed the affordability factor," which along with access and quality, support the health care system, said Rebecca McClanahan, president of Missouri Nurses Association, at a news conference. The conference, held by the Missouri Rural Crisis Center on Thursday evening outside the Central Missouri Community Action office, was in response to the ruling.

What was the issue raised by King v. Burwell?

The Supreme Court was asked to decide whether the subsidies were legal. States that had set up their own health care marketplaces would not have been affected by the decision either way. But for 34 states — including Missouri — that did not establish their own exchanges and where residents must use the federal health care insurance marketplace, the ruling determined whether eligible people could continue to receive federally subsidized health care.

How many people does the ruling affect in Missouri?

With the subsidies upheld, an estimated 198,000 people in the state will not see their premiums more than triple in cost, according to data from the Missouri Hospital Association. In Boone
County, as of May of this year, roughly 5,945 people had enrolled or re-enrolled in insurance offered under the Affordable Care Act, said Jeremy Milarsky of Columbia-based Primaris Healthcare Business Solutions. He did not know how many of those people were receiving subsidies.

What were the insurance subsidies at issue?

The subsidies were created to help people pay for insurance they otherwise could not afford. Subsidies are available to anyone who makes up to four times the poverty level of income, Milarsky said. He said the threshold is unique to each individual or household, based on income and family size. People can use their last tax return or an evidence-based projection of their yearly earnings to determine eligibility, he said. The average subsidy per person receiving them is $278 a month, according to Missouri Hospital Association data.

At the Thursday evening news conference, MU graduate student Harly Moore spoke about her experiences with using the federal subsidies to help pay for her insurance. She first signed up for coverage, offered through the federal insurance marketplace created under the Affordable Care Act, when she was 19. Her parents were then intermittently employed with jobs without benefits, so they did not have insurance she could be covered under, she said.

Without the tax subsidies, she would not have been able to buy her own insurance because it would have cost her $200 to $300 a month, even as a young and healthy individual, Moore said. With the subsidies, it only costs her $20 a month for a silver plan from Coventry Health Care. Other possible medical expenses are greatly reduced under her plan: seeing a primary doctor costs only $5, a co-pay for a specialist is $20, a generic drug prescription is $5 and non-generic is $30, her deductible is $0, and her maximum out of pocket expense is $1,400.

The cost of insurance coverage is still an issue for her father, so she knows that he still does not have coverage, Moore said. She encourages other uninsured people to sign up and to not feel
stigmatized for receiving a tax credit subsidy or hesitate because of the politics surrounding the law.

"People don't want others to know that they're receiving a hand-out, and I think that's what keeps a lot of people from applying to get health insurance through the marketplace," she said.

There are tax credits for education, housing and marriage. "It's the same thing," she said.

Moore has worked two jobs and goes to school full time, "so for people to say that people who receive these tax credits are lazy, or that they don't work is insulting, and it's not true. We're all working. We just can't afford it, and the government is recognizing that, finally, and giving us a way to receive this health insurance that we deserve."

The New York Times reports that 87 percent of people enrolled in federal health insurance marketplaces receive subsidies to help them pay their premiums. Two-thirds of federal marketplace customers make less than twice the poverty level, and more than 40 percent have incomes less than 150 percent of the poverty level, according to the Times article.

Even though she has never suffered a major medical crisis, Moore no longer has to worry about being able to afford her health care in the case of unexpected accidents or illnesses, she said.

**What would have happened if the Supreme Court had ruled that the subsidies in some states were illegal?**

If the court had ruled in favor of King, the subsidies would have ended and premium costs would have risen, though people who could no longer afford insurance could have applied for a hardship exemption that would prevent them from being charged a penalty for lacking insurance, Milarsky said. Unaffordable insurance is defined as costing 8 percent or more of household income, he said.
If more people could not afford insurance, health care costs could have been passed through the system to hospitals, which by federal law have to, at the minimum, stabilize patients who do not have insurance, Milarsky said.

Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster praised the decision in a news release.

“Today’s ruling was a positive step forward,” Koster said. “The subsidies are an important part of building our health care infrastructure and providing affordable care to low- and middle-income families.”

“In terms of our day-to-day operations, the court ruling in favor of Burwell doesn’t change much at all,” said Milarsky of the impact at Primaris, in terms of counseling clients in their situations.

If the court had ruled in favor of King, operations would have continued, but "options available to clients would have changed drastically," he said.

**If the court had ruled that the subsidies were illegal, what would the prospects have been for a legislative solution?**

Congress or states such as Missouri likely would have been given time to find a legislative solution. However, that would not have been possible in Missouri, where legislators passed a law barring the state from creating or operating a health insurance exchange.

That law was voted in as Proposition E in the 2012 November election. Missouri voters endorsed it with more than 61 percent in favor, and Boone County residents voted it into law with 58 percent in favor.

Even with the subsidies still in place, McClanahan said that more work remains to give all Missourians affordable access to health care. There is a Medicaid coverage gap in the state that could be covered by the expansion of Medicaid, she said.

In a news release from Missouri Nurses Association, this gap is described as more than 300,000 people in the state who make too much money each year to qualify for Medicaid, yet do
not earn enough to qualify for the tax credit subsidies for their insurance premiums — people who earn between 19 percent and 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

McClanahan, in the news release, called the Supreme Court ruling Thursday "excellent news, this is not the end of the story."

College's new name credited with raising its profile

By CLAUDETTE RILEY

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (AP) — A decade after being rebranded Missouri State University, the new moniker is widely credited with raising the profile of Springfield's largest higher education institution.

It also has been credited with fueling the university's ongoing push to grow and diversify enrollment, expand academic offerings, and increase private giving — which, in turn, helps pay for better buildings, the Springfield News-Leader (http://sgfnow.co/1GvjM8t ) reported.

"I don't think you can overestimate how important this was," said MSU President Clif Smart. "This was the catalyst that has changed the profile of the university. It would be hard for you to pick a factor that the name change didn't impact." The old name, Southwest Missouri State University, focused on the region while the new name emphasizes statewide reach.

Smart said the hard-fought battle to change the name 10 years ago has paid off with greater prominence — the ability to develop more partnerships, lobby for legislative change and attract more talented students and faculty.

"Students now view us differently, not as a regional university anymore," Smart said. "The interest from St. Charles County, from the greater St. Louis area, from Kansas City — all over the state — is different. It is also different in recruiting international students."
The Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce has long recognized the role MSU, and other higher education institutions, play in attracting businesses and families to the city. Matt Morrow, president and CEO of the chamber, has described the university as a critical part of the economic engine and contends the institution's leverage has only grown with the new name.

"It has meant a lot to the city and to this whole part of the state," he said.

The largest higher education institution headquartered in Springfield traces its roots to 1905 but has only been known as Missouri State University since 2005. In recent months, the campus has celebrated the milestone and reflected on what the change has meant.

"One of my themes the last four years has been 'Let's act out our name,'" Smart said. "We're not a regional campus anymore. Let's think bigger, let's be bolder."

Jim Baker, vice president for research and economic development and international programs, said the university boasted a "significant" number of students, graduate programs and private donations as Southwest Missouri State University but has grown in each of those areas more rapidly after dropping the regional "southwest" from the name.

"There is a status attached to the name. There is a pride that goes with it," Baker said. "I don't think we'd have 24,000 students now if we didn't change the name."

Pressed to say how much impact the new name has made, Baker said: "I'd say we're 50 percent better off than we would have been, but it's hard to judge."

Baker said he believes there is more pride among students, supporters and alumni but that is harder to quantify. He contends "Bear Wear" — maroon clothing carrying the MSU name or logo — appears to be "everywhere," which wasn't the case when he joined the university's staff in 1995.

"The changing of the name created more buzz than anything," he said.

**One of the biggest changes is MSU's strong, collaborative relationship with the University of Missouri system. In the years before the name change, the two were more adversarial and Mizzou supporters, in the General Assembly and beyond, were vocal about opposing the new name.**

In fact, the proposed legislation to change the name at MSU — and a few other higher education institutions — was only approved after MSU agreed to a series of concessions aimed at protecting Mizzou's dominance in key areas.

"Now we are closer to a partner," Smart said. "We are a statewide university and they're much more comfortable interacting with us."
That collaboration was on display during recent legislative sessions, when MSU and Mizzou jointly lobbied lawmakers and Gov. Jay Nixon. United, they were successful in securing funding for MSU’s new occupational therapy program and Mizzou’s new Springfield clinical campus, which will train doctors at Mercy Springfield and CoxHealth.

Morrow recalled a time, at the height of the debate over MSU’s name change, when the two institutions working together seemed impossible. "Today it is a different environment and a lot of that has to do with the leadership," he said.

He said had the two not tied the proposals together and fought for each other's projects, "they would have been competitive and there would have been a winner and a loser. Instead, we have a win-win and it's all here in Springfield."

Smart said he's proud of the progress and the new identity of the university.

"We are a different university now than we were 10 years ago," he said. "The result of that is the state is better, we're better, our relationship with the University of Missouri is better."


University announces award for military personnel

Effective immediately, this award goes toward the cost of base tuition.

**MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and Provost Garnett Stokes announced a new 10-percent tuition award for all military personnel, veterans, their spouses and children effective immediately Wednesday, according to an MU News Bureau news release.**

“We owe so much to those who are serving in our nation’s military as well as their families,” Loftin said in the release. “We are honored that many of them choose to get their education through the University of Missouri. Although we cannot thank them enough, we hope this new award will be both an incentive and an aid as they enroll and work toward receiving a degree at Mizzou in their chosen fields.”

The award aims to reduce the cost of base tuition and will apply to a maximum of 150 undergraduate credit hours and/or 75 graduate credit hours toward a distance degree or certification program through Mizzou Online.

These are the qualifications for the award:
— Be an active-duty service member, veteran with honorable discharge, national guard or reservist. Dependents of these military personnel also are eligible for the award.

—Be accepted to MU as a degree-seeking undergraduate or graduate student who is working on a distance degree or certificate program through Mizzou Online.

—Maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0.

“Mizzou’s commitment to making higher education more accessible through online programs, a full-service Veterans Center and now this tuition assistance illustrates for veterans and their families that they have a place here,” said Carol Fleisher, director of the MU Veterans Center, in the news release. “This tuition award will help those veterans, including their spouses and children, using the various forms of education assistance.

Former UM President remembered at ceremony

Floyd was the only system president to tour the campus in a wheelchair.

Close friends, family and former colleagues assembled Wednesday morning to celebrate the life of American educator Elson Floyd, who died June 20.

Floyd was serving as the 10th president of the four-campus Washington State University at the time of his death. Prior, he was the 21st president of the UM System from 2003 to 2007, and before that he was president of Western Michigan University.

The memorial service was held at 11 a.m. in the Reynolds Alumni Center. Commissioner of Higher Education David R. Russell served as the master of ceremonies. Five speakers, who were also well-known throughout the UM System, shared anecdotes about Floyd’s life.

“Today, the sun is shining brightly, and we yearn to lift up our spirits,” Russell said to a solemn crowd. “Yes, I’m sure we’d all like to do that. But it’s very difficult. We’re all deeply saddened by his passing. But we also want to honor Elson’s memory with our stories and our anecdotes, and to affirm our continuing commitment to the causes of education and opportunity, to which he devoted his life’s energy and talent.”

Then, he requested a moment of silence in recognition and appreciation of Floyd’s services to the entire UM System and the state of Missouri. Save for a few soft snifflies from the crowd, the room was hushed.

“I had the privilege of serving as chief of staff during Dr. Floyd’s tenure as the 21st president of the University of Missouri system,” he said afterwards. “And I will relate to you my very first experience with Elson Floyd: ever since November of 2002, when the Board of Curators announced that Dr. Floyd was their selection to lead the university through what were then some
very challenging times, we had been sharing those amazing stories coming out of Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he served as president of Western Michigan University.”

One of the most popular stories told about Floyd was one where he chanced upon a student struggling to walk across WMU’s snowy campus, and he stopped to give him his own boots.

During his testament at the open mic, Jerry Hitzhusen, the associate professor with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, recalled Floyd’s stubbornness when he tried to teach the president how to hit a golf ball.

“He was an athlete, but he was not a golfer,” Hitzhusen said. “We had a great time.”

Then, he challenged current UM System President Tim Wolfe to do something Floyd was the first and last UM System president – so far – to do:

“Elson Floyd was the only president of a university in the United States to take a tour of his campus in a wheelchair,” he said. “I think you all remember that driveway that goes up to Jesse Hall? After we were done, and nobody was around, he came up to me and said ‘Damn, Jerry, you almost killed me!’”

Floyd urged the deans of all the colleges to follow suit.

“I admire him a great deal,” said Eddie Adelstein, who serves as chief of pathology at the Harry S. Truman Memorial Veterans’ Hospital. “I was extremely sorry when he left and even more sorry that he died at an early age.”

Adelstein, who has been at MU since 1954, said Floyd was the “best we’ve ever had.”

“I’m a medical examiner,” he said. “I don’t grieve other people’s deaths; I’m used to that. I grieve his death. He was really exceptional.”

Floyd arrived at MU in 2003, when the university was struggling through tough budgetary constraints.

“When Elson Floyd came here, I was sort of an institutional dissonant and wrote a big article on the medical center going out of business,” Adelstein said. “And I met with him on the second day he was here and gave him the article and said, ‘I can tell you how to save the university.’ Most people would’ve said ‘Get out of my office.’ He could’ve. Instead, he was quite open, he listened to what I had to say and at one point, he said to me, ‘You know, you’ve given me good advice, it’s gotten me in a lot of trouble. But it’s good advice.’”

By the time Floyd left his post for WSU, he had helped increase total enrollment and minority enrollment on all four college campuses. He had endowed 266 new need-based scholarships and created new tuition guidelines to keep up with inflation, according to prior Maneater reporting in 2006.
“He has worked very hard all across Missouri to build a strong coalition for public higher education that will benefit our state’s citizens and particularly our future students,” former Chancellor Brady Deaton said in a statement in 2006. "Thanks in a large part to his efforts, we have sent a united message to our state government leaders regarding the great value of higher education."

Deaton, whom Floyd appointed as chancellor in 2004, was present at Floyd’s life celebration too.

“He was a man who really believed in the spirit and vision of higher education,” he said Wednesday. “He believed in the ability of the disadvantage of not having the opportunity to study at a university. And we were joined in that sense.”

Wolfe said he only had a “short interaction” with Elson, in which he was fully embraced by his predecessor.

“That short interaction with Elson symbolizes an understanding of the responsibility that comes with being a president of the University of Missouri system,” Wolfe said. “It’s a leadership role that I take personally and it’s really a reflection of who Dr. Floyd was, which was a passionate, great leader.”

June 26, 2015

Lessons From the Education Department’s Ratings Reversal

By Goldie Blumenstyk

NO MU MENTION

Now that the U.S. Department of Education has decided to ditch the ratings part of its college-ratings system in favor of a customizable, consumer-focused website, plenty of big questions remain.

What’s the legacy of the nearly two-year effort? What lessons were learned? What opportunities were lost?

We asked several ratings watchers for their views on the department’s change of course. Here’s some of what we heard.
It may have "poisoned" future efforts for college accountability.

When the ratings were first proposed, they were conceived as a comprehensive system to evaluate colleges of all stripes on a host of measures of interest to both students and policy makers, making the ratings both a consumer and an accountability tool.

Andrew P. Kelly, director of the American Enterprise Institute’s Center on Education Reform, says he’s not surprised the department abandoned that approach. "Elaborate federal accountability systems" like the proposed ratings system and the No Child Left Behind proposals for elementary and secondary schools are often unworkable, he says. But when they fail, they can "poison the well for other ideas that are simpler," such as "skin-in-the-game" proposals that the institute, among others, has suggested.

It may have been a useful threat of action that had some positive outcomes.

Mr. Kelly contends that the role the Education Department will now be playing — using federal authority to marshal data from a variety of sources to create an information system "that doesn’t rely on judgment calls by bureaucrats" — is more appropriate for a government agency than what department officials had initially set out to do. "They could have started there and not wasted so much time and energy," he says.

But Robert Kelchen, an assistant professor of higher education at Seton Hall University who advised the department on ratings, says he’s pleased that the process could result in a new set of useful consumer metrics about colleges.

"If there’s good new data, I’d use it in heartbeat," says Mr. Kelchen, who also helped develop the rankings in the annual college guide produced by The Washington Monthly.

Although the Education Department has not said what data from other federal and private sources it plans to include in its new site, Mr. Kelchen says he’d be especially interested in data on the employment rates of a college’s graduates, the proportion of them who are repaying their loans, and the graduation rates for recipients of Pell Grants.

Some higher-education groups contend that the prospect of a federal ratings system prompted many more colleges to become more publicly accountable about their student outcomes. Mr. Kelchen, for one, doesn’t buy that. "Regardless of what the government does," he says, for one
segment of colleges, actions are driven by a desire to look good in *U.S News & World Report's* rankings, and for another, "the goal is to stay open."

Terry W. Hartle, a senior vice president at the American Council on Education, believes the prospect of ratings did change some colleges’ behavior, but he says some of that activity was as much a product of the times as a response to the proposed ratings.

As for the Education Department, Mr. Hartle says the fact that it continued listening to "anybody with a point of view" throughout the past 22 months and then made "a very rational decision" to change course was a positive sign. Had it pressed ahead with a poorly designed policy, "it would have hurt their credibility," he says.

**It put a spotlight on existing problems with federal data on students and colleges, but it didn’t resolve those problems.**

From the moment the ratings were first proposed, in a speech by President Obama in August 2013, college officials, researchers, and leaders of higher-education associations questioned the accuracy of the data available to the government to create a ratings system, particularly if they were to be used as the basis for a rating that would eventually affect the awarding of federal student aid.

With so much potentially at stake, "it helped to clarify how incomplete and uninformative" some of the federal data are, says Mr. Kelly. He cites data on colleges’ "average net price" as an example of the latter, since most actual students will pay more or less than that amount, depending on their circumstances.

Even without those high stakes, the adequacy of data "will be an issue in the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act," says Mr. Hartle.

It’s not just the data held in the department’s Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, or Ipeds, that will be at issue. With the department planning to integrate data from other agencies, the challenge of assuring the accuracy of that information will be an added challenge. As Mr. Kelly notes, "making new data available that are incomplete or inaccurate is not helpful."

Still, ratings insiders point to a little-noticed part of the process that could yield an important side benefit: In the course of their work, the teams working on ratings discovered that the data in
Ipeds were not sufficient for the kind of system they initially hoped to build. That led to the breaking down of some bureaucratic barriers to allow more sharing of data from outside agencies and from within the department itself.

The experience helped demonstrate the value of using government data from several sources to evaluate the impact of potential policies, says Stephen L. DesJardins, a professor of education and public policy at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, who worked for the department on the ratings. "Maybe," says Mr. DesJardins, that "moves the needle a bit more" toward better government decision making. Ultimately, he hopes that will make it easier for researchers like him to more routinely get access to such data.

**It could create more pressure for the establishment of a student "unit record" data system.**

Ratings or no ratings, many higher-education reformers contend that colleges cannot be held accountable without some system that tracks what happens to their students both during and after college. Congress has so far rejected the creation of such a system. "It’s clear we still need greater accountability in higher education," says Ben Miller, senior director for postsecondary education at the Center for American Progress. States are already collecting better data in many cases, he says.

**It may have emboldened the so-called higher-education lobby, which includes many who oppose such a system.**

David L. Warren, president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities and one of the most vocal critics of the ratings system and other Obama-administration proposals on colleges (he once swore to stand "shoulder to shoulder" with colleagues in opposition to proposals tying federal student aid to colleges’ performance), says the department’s policy shift shows the power of grass-roots opposition.

For months, he says, the department was insisting that it would be imposing a ratings system. "If you stand on principle and you are politically organized," says Mr. Warren, "you can alter the direction of public policy."

**It highlighted the challenges of trying to reform something as complex and diverse as American higher education.**
"Getting a sense of what you want to accomplish at the outset is the lesson," says Mr. Miller. "It’s very hard to reform the entire sector at once." What’s more, he notes, defining, much less measuring, the nature of "quality" in high education "is even more difficult than we thought."

Even with the change in course, the department still needs to show it can create a system that will actually be of use to, and be used by, students. Having better data will be really valuable, says Mamie Voight, director of policy research at the Institute for Higher Education Policy. "The next important step" is getting people to use it, particularly low-income and first-generation students "who most need this information."

Existing department sites, like College Navigator and the College Scorecard, don’t allow side-by-side comparisons, she says. She hopes that’s a feature of the new consumer tool, and that it doesn’t become just another underutilized government website.

June 26, 2015

Spurred by Sex-Assault Concerns, Lawmakers Add Disciplinary Infractions to College Transcripts

By Mary Ellen McIntire

**NO Mu MENTION**

For students who have been suspended or expelled after being found responsible for sexual assault, it is often possible to transfer to another college without the new institution learning of the offense.

So at least two states have moved to require colleges — public and private alike — to note misconduct violations on the transcripts of students found to have committed sexual assaults.
Virginia passed such a law this spring, and New York’s governor, Andrew M. Cuomo, is likely to sign a campus sex-assault bill that the Legislature approved last week.

But many critics are wary of that approach because the definition of "misconduct" varies so widely among institutions, as does the type of information colleges are willing to divulge about their students. Some also worry about running afoul of federal law — specifically the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, or Ferpa, which allows institutions to share a student’s records with the college he or she wishes to transfer to.

Under the New York measure, if a student was suspended or expelled for sexual assault, the college would note on the transcript that the student had violated a code of conduct. The student could appeal the notation a year after the suspension was completed. But colleges could still draft policies limiting the extent to which they will reveal information about students.

‘Gray’ Language, ‘Murky’ Results

Colleges tend to protect student privacy, said Kristen L. Houser, a spokeswoman for the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. That’s probably why state lawmakers have proposed this type of legislation, hoping to encourage more sharing of disciplinary actions, she added.

Still, merely noting that a student has violated a code of conduct could be dangerous territory, she said. It might be more useful for colleges to report when a student is found responsible for an interpersonal violation.

"Using very gray language that could refer to a whole lot of things that are not serious crimes that do not pose a risk to the campus environment — that’s where it starts to get murky," Ms. Houser said.

The New York law would also require colleges to note when a student leaves before a disciplinary decision is rendered.
Laura A. Bennett, president of the Association for Student Conduct Administration, said her organization takes issue with that provision.

"We do feel like it’s pretty important not to designate it until they’re found responsible," Ms. Bennett said.

According to a recent survey by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, about 15 percent of colleges already note whether a student has a code-of-conduct infraction on his or her transcript, said Michael V. Reilly, the group’s executive director. About 40 percent of the group’s members agreed with that policy, he said.

The association, which advises colleges on how to format academic records, has not taken a stance on the issue, and Mr. Reilly said the group was more focused on giving guidance to institutions that already include those notations on transcripts or plan to do so. "So we’re kind of coming from both directions on this," he said, "the issue of providing safe environments on college campuses and balancing that with what’s the right way to do this."

_A Killing Intensifies the Debate_

The debate about whether to mark conduct infractions on transcripts intensified this year after it was revealed that Jesse Matthew Jr., the suspect in the killing of the University of Virginia student Hannah Graham, had transferred from Liberty University, where he had been found responsible for sexual assault, to Christopher Newport University, which did not know of his prior offense. Lawmakers in Maryland considered legislation this year similar to Virginia’s, but it failed in committee.

Lisae C. Jordan, executive director of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Violence, said her group opposed the legislation. Since Ferpa allows colleges to share academic and conduct information with other institutions, she said, leaving a mark on transcripts may be an additional step that could discourage survivors from reporting
assaults. Many sexual-assault survivors want to hold the offender accountable without wrecking the person’s life, she said.

"This is one of the reasons that survivors choose not to pursue criminal charges," Ms. Jordan said. Adding a transcript notation could have the "perverse result of reducing survivors’ options and discouraging reporting because the results of the school’s system would become so harsh."

Others argue, however, that leaving a note on a transcript would hold the offender accountable, which could encourage more students to report sexual assaults. That's the case being made in California, where a similar measure has been proposed in the state Assembly. California last year became the first state to adopt a "yes means yes" law to govern sexual relations on college campuses. One opponent of the transcript notation said it would brand students found responsible for sexual assault with a scarlet letter for life and make it difficult for them to move forward. What colleges label sexual assault can be "inflated," said Susan R. Kaplan, a lawyer who represents accused students and who is also a board member for the due-process advocacy group Families Advocating for Campus Equality.

Ms. Kaplan also said that since colleges can view the disciplinary and academic records of prospective transfer students, marking their transcripts seems like a punitive step that could do permanent harm.

"It seems like the whole point of this," she said, "is to stop this kid in his tracks."