Inside How Missouri’s Leadership Scrambled to Quell a Campus Crisis

As protests over race relations at the University of Missouri threatened to boil over last fall, administrators scrambled behind the scenes to assess threats of violence, mollify demonstrators, and grapple with a social-media frenzy that fed on anger and spread panic across the system.

A review of more than 150 pages of emails, obtained by The Chronicle through a public-records request, provides a window into top-level administrators’ frenetic efforts to restore order at Missouri over a six-day period from November 6 to 11, beginning with the Mizzou football team’s decision to boycott games in solidarity with a graduate student on a hunger strike and concluding two days after the university’s top two officials resigned.

Timothy M. Wolfe, the system president, and R. Bowen Loftin, chancellor of the flagship campus in Columbia, communicated regularly throughout the crisis. Both men had taken some criticism amid student complaints over racially-charged incidents on the campus, though it was Mr. Wolfe who ultimately became the target for protesters, who accused him of being apathetic. Yet, as the emails show, all the administrators felt a growing pressure to respond to a situation that threatened to spiral out of control.

November 6

On the same day that Mr. Wolfe issued an apology to demonstrators, he wrote in an email to Mr. Loftin and others about providing "mental health resources" to the
protesters, who had set up an encampment on the quad. Mr. Wolfe had met earlier that Friday with Jonathan Butler, who at that point was five days into a hunger strike that he said would not end until Mr. Wolfe resigned.

"Please make sure," Mr. Wolfe wrote, "we are reaching out to them and making available the resources required for these passionate protesters."

"Also," he continued, "I heard that the people that are camping out are being harassed or being called names and the request for security or something that would protect their rights and safety is required. Please address this as well."

Mr. Wolfe was, by this point, under scrutiny by the national news media and facing tremendous pressure to step down. But Mr. Loftin had his own problems. A group of nine deans on the flagship campus, upset with Mr. Loftin’s management style, had been working for weeks to force him out.

November 8

Mr. Wolfe’s apologies did little to placate the protesters, who had assembled under the name Concerned Student 1950, a reference to the year Missouri admitted its first black student. On November 8, Missouri officials discussed via email what they might offer up to the group, which had written a list of demands that included hiring more professors from minority backgrounds and improving mental-health resources.

In a draft statement, which Mr. Loftin distributed to system officials, the chancellor pledged to seek more money from the system to improve diversity hiring efforts, and he said that he would "strongly encourage" faculty members to augment curricula to address "inclusion, diversity, equity, and the experiences of marginalized groups in society."
Zora Z. Mulligan, the system’s chief of staff, responded with a number of questions, including what she described as "the big one."

"Do you think this will reverse or slow the escalation of anger and protest on the campus?"

If the Columbia campus was a powder keg, Missouri officials had now come to view social media as a match. Yik Yak, a smartphone application that allows users to post anonymously, became a platform for threats of violence. The messages on Yik Yak and other social media like it were concerning enough to Mr. Loftin that he contemplated whether he could or should shield them from the view of students.

The proposal was never carried out and the statement was never made public, but internally it engendered discussion about whether blocking smartphone apps might infringe on users’ Constitutional rights. In her email to the chancellor, Ms. Mulligan said that she had gotten a note from "Paul," presumably Paul R. Maguffee, the system’s general counsel, who said "it might be a first amendment issue but unlikely to be pursued."

Christian Basi, a spokesman for the campus, said in an email to The Chronicle on Thursday that "our policy is to only block sites that are known to be hosting malware, and thus, pose a direct security risk to our network and systems."

**November 9**

Both Mr. Loftin and Mr. Wolfe announced their resignations on November 9. But tensions persisted. At 3:39 p.m., Charlie J. Parker Jr., coordinator of diversity programs, sent an email to his colleagues in the Office of the Chancellor’s Diversity Initiative expressing concerns for his personal safety. Mr. Parker, who is black, wrote
that he and another black member of the staff had felt threatened by "a white male student who attempted to fight us" while the two men walked across campus.

"He turned around and yelled ‘are you guys talking to me?’ ‘Do you have a problem?’ While saying these things he approached us in a manner as if he was going to fight us. We were both rightfully surprised and extremely upset by his provocation, but we decided to turn away and ignore his advances."

"This is an example of when a person of color states a space is unsafe," Mr. Parker continued. "If we as professional staff of color cannot walk out of our office building without be threatened then we have a huge problem. I say all this to express that my main concern is for the safety of the students, and I would submit that as an office we need to focus on how we can take IMMEDIATE measures to ensure safety of students of color on this campus."

At 8:36 p.m., Noor Azizan-Gardner, chief diversity officer, forwarded Mr. Parker’s email to Henry (Hank) C. Foley, who by now had been designated as Mr. Loftin’s interim successor.

"I fear that the backlash will be coming in full force," Ms. Azizan-Gardner wrote. "We should strategize for possible scenarios."

But Missouri officials appeared genuinely perplexed as to what to do. Minutes later, Mr. Foley emailed Gary L. Ward, vice chancellor for operations and chief operating officer, asking, "What do you think we can do? Can we increase police presence on campus or would that have unintended consequences?"
November 10

By now, a literal and figurative storm was brewing. Campus police worried that a bad weather pattern could threaten encamped demonstrators, and Yik Yak users were spewing racist vitriol. "I’m going to stand my ground tomorrow and shoot every black person I see," one anonymous user wrote.

A counterprotest movement, fueled by outrage that administrators had seemingly bowed to an angry mob, had begun to take shape.

"I am getting calls from all groups of people now saying they are coming to campus to protest the protesters," Maj. Brian Weimer, a public information officer with the University of Missouri-Columbia Police Department, wrote to Mr. Ward, the chief operating officer. "This is going to completely tax all our resources if this occurs in addition to watching out for others on campus due to various threats."

A day earlier, an incident at the protesters’ encampment had intensified the crisis. Melissa A. Click, an assistant professor of communication at Missouri, was caught on video at the demonstration site, where she grabbed the camera of a journalist and called out for "some muscle" to get rid of him. Ms. Click and Janna Basler, the campus’s assistant director of Greek life, who was also seen blocking a reporter in the video, were painted as icons of political correctness, defending the safe space of students at the expense of the rights of the press.

Missouri officials, concerned about how to handle a nationally organized protest movement that might descend upon the campus, consulted with a host of law-enforcement agencies about what to do, records show. The encampment, administrators were told, was a lure for outsiders.

"This is what the FBI is telling us," Mr. Ward wrote, at 1:49 p.m.
"The longer they stay the more likely the professional protesters will be here."

Within a minute, Mr. Foley replied, "I believe they are coming."

Mr. Ward had been skeptical of the encampment from the start. When the protesters requested, through the diversity office, that the university provide a gas generator, Mr. Ward pushed back, suggesting the demonstrators should "move off our quad."

"I very much appreciate our students and their right to protest but they are right now killing the grass and putting stakes in the ground where we have underground sprinkler system," Mr. Ward had written on November 6 to Ms. Azizan-Gardner, the chief diversity officer, cc’ing Mr. Loftin, the chancellor. "No other group or individual have been allowed to set up home on our quad."

But the students prevailed, helped in part by Michael A. Middleton, a veteran civil-rights lawyer and retired deputy chancellor at Missouri’s Columbia campus. "This will be on national news in the next few days," Mr. Middleton, who has since been named the system’s interim president, wrote to Mr. Loftin. "I think we need to do everything humanly possible to support our students in their free expression."

Once the students got power, they asked for more.

"The generator is set up," Mr. Ward later wrote. "They want a fire pit. We told them ‘no.’"

Meanwhile, the threats on social media to the campus had increased, and Missouri officials grappled with whether to cancel classes, sought to comfort students, and fielded criticism for failures to communicate adequately.
The challenge of student safety was so confounding that, on the night of November 10, the chancellor took matters into his own hands, inviting several student leaders to stay in his home.

But this, too, raised concerns. "To your residence?" asked Mr. Foley, when Mr. Loftin told him about the houseguests. "Is that advisable Bowen?"

"I hope so," replied the chancellor, noting that the campus police were monitoring his home. "We will be fine."

Mr. Foley remained uneasy. "Just be aware," he wrote to Mr. Loftin, "that things have a way of whipsawing."

The university, which faced some pressure from lawmakers, parents, and students to cancel classes, never did so. Instead, officials encouraged students to call 911 if they felt they were in any danger, conveying this message through Mr. Loftin’s Twitter account, where he uses the handle @bowtieger.

But many people remained ill at ease.

"Note there is criticism for not communicating," Mr. Foley wrote to Mr. Loftin and other top officials at 10:53 p.m. "Don’t think Bowtieger’s Twitter is adequate."

At 11:16 p.m., James Spain, the vice provost for undergraduate studies, wrote to the group, relating a call he had received from a student’s mother "on my home phone."

"He wanted to leave his dorm and the campus," Mr. Spain wrote. "He indicated white supremacists were on campus — there were riots and threats for shootings."
Mr. Foley assured Mr. Spain that there was no evidence of such threats, but Mr. Spain underscored that "right now, social media is spinning out of control — I think we need to make a statement."

When Mr. Foley passed these concerns along to Ellen de Graffenreid, vice chancellor of marketing and communications, she said, "We are pushing social media."

"AOK," Mr. Foley replied.

**November 11**

To some extent, records show, the university was conscious of the symbolic messages it was sending as well. On the morning of November 11, Mr. Wolfe, the departing president, told a group of vice presidents that he thought it appropriate to cancel a social event that evening.

"Hi guys — In the constantly shifting series of events that is our new normal … let’s hold off on tonight’s gathering," Mr. Wolfe wrote. "Several members of the team are going to be tied up with the board meeting, and with the mood on campus ‘fun’ just doesn’t feel right."

That afternoon, university leaders released a public statement.

"We feel the weight of the world’s eyes upon us," they wrote. "We will not flinch from the work ahead."
Largest autism research study seeks DNA samples

By Michele Munz St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 14 hrs ago

The launch of the largest autism study ever undertaken in the U.S. was announced Thursday, and the University of Missouri will be among 21 institutions taking part in recruiting participants for the landmark research.

The research involves collecting DNA from 50,000 people with autism, plus that of their family members, in hopes of understanding the causes and hasten the discovery of treatments.

“It’s absolutely huge,” said Stephen Kanne, executive director of MU’s Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders. “In order to make advancements, they need numbers of that size to really figure out what is going on.”

The effort will be funded by the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative, and anyone diagnosed with autism can participate at no cost. The goal is to collect information from a large and diverse group that includes all sexes, ages, races, backgrounds and geographic locations.

Families register and fill out questionnaires online before receiving a saliva kit in the mail. A mailer is provided to return the samples, collected by spitting in a tube or swabbing the cheeks and gums. Participants get a $50 gift card.

Until this launch, the largest genetic study had involved about 2,800 people with autism and their families. The Thompson Center also took part in that research, known as the Simons Simplex Collection, which helped identify about 50 genes that play a role in autism.
Scientists estimate an additional 300 are involved. By studying these genes and how they interact with environmental factors, researchers hope to better understand the causes of autism and link them to its spectrum of symptoms.

“If we do have specific questions about what environmental factors may be contributing to this risk, we can go back and perhaps invite families into studies that will answer those questions a little bit deeply,” Kanne said.

Participants will have access to online forums, discussions and expert advice, Kanne said.

The initiative, called Simons Foundation Powering Autism Research for Knowledge, also will connect scientists with participants. Anonymous genetic data will be made available to researchers, and researchers can seek participants for their studies.

Accelerating clinical research in autism is a major goal of the effort, said Pamela Feliciano, scientific director of the study.

Anyone interested in participating or learning more can visit SPARKforAutism.org/MUTC or call Amanda Shocklee at 573-884-6092.

**Editorial: Foley’s condescending rhetoric toward graduate workers is unacceptable**

After months of buildup, the Coalition of Graduate Workers finally held their unionization election and won in a landslide 84 percent victory. **The series of events leading up to the election has been long and messy, but the rhetoric and choice of language on the part of interim Chancellor Hank Foley in the past two weeks has been especially upsetting.** Regardless of whether unionization is the best solution to graduate workers’ problems, the way Foley has addressed this whole debacle has been beyond disappointing.

We never expected the condescending language, the constant misrepresentations and the borderline lies from Foley, who up until recently seemed to have a reasonable grasp on this issue.
In a recent interview with the Columbia Daily Tribune, Foley attempted to calm down the situation regarding the election, but in doing so only further insulted and infuriated graduate workers.

“I am not trying to go to war with these kids,” Foley told the Tribune.

The fact that Foley, after everything that has happened since the original health care debacle in August, could refer to graduate workers as “kids” is stunning. This isn’t just a public relations misstep or some unfortunate slip of the tongue during an interview. The comment perfectly encapsulates the attitude of university officials toward graduate workers, the same attitude that has frustrated them to the point of unionization.

Graduate workers are tired of being treated like petulant children with the UM System acting as a paternalistic figure that knows what’s ultimately best for them. With a median age around 30, the 2,800 graduate employees at MU are anything but children. Graduate students are professional educators and researchers, many of whom have children themselves. It’s long overdue that the UM System recognized this.

Foley goes even further with the condescending language in the letter by implicitly threatening graduate students.

“The decision to unionize carries both significant pros and cons for our graduate students, and we feel it is in your best interest to be fully educated on the ramifications of unionization,” Foley said.

He firmly claims that the decision to pursue unionization has negatives, but never goes on to say what those negatives are. The election allows graduate workers to decide if CGW should act as their exclusive representative for the purpose of collective bargaining. The election itself carries no clear negatives, and the UM system has made no case against unionization. If Foley wants to present an argument against unionization, he should do so.

Foley even lies outright about the circumstances leading up to this election, claiming that it’s “surprising” and that administrators were not consulted on it. Representatives from CGW met with administrators five times between December and early February. During that time, the administration indicated to CGW that they would seek legal counsel if they held a unionization election.

CGW decided, in response, to force this legal action and they made it clear to numerous UM System and MU administrators that they were going through with the election in the near future. If none of this was made clear to interim Chancellor Foley, then it reveals yet another exceptional failure in communication by MU’s administration.

The responses from the UM System and Foley indicate that they are not truly concerned that a union would be a negative for them, rather than a con for the graduate workers themselves. The administration’s primary concern ought to be the well-being of MU’s 2,800 graduate workers,
not their own. Regardless of whether a union truly is the best option for graduate workers, the condescending and misleading rhetoric must come to an end.

Foley opposes graduate student unionization at Faculty Council meeting

COLUMBIA — Graduate student workers this week overwhelmingly voted to allow the Coalition of Graduate Workers to negotiate with the university in collective bargaining, but on Thursday, MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley didn't budge on recognizing the union.

“I think that graduate students should be graduate students first and workers second,” Foley said.

Joseph Moore, a member of the coalition, said the union was willing to sue the university for recognition, but Foley said he wasn’t for further hostility.

“I’m not going to war with the graduate student workers in any way,” Foley said.

Foley said he wished the graduate student workers would have waited before moving forward with the election and taken into account the progress administrators have made on the workers' demands, citing the reinstatement of graduate health insurance subsidies as a first step.

Foley also hit on two other demands, saying more housing for graduate students and their families is in the works and that he disagreed with the high course fees graduate student workers pay.

“I don’t think that’s right. I’d like to fix that, too,” Foley said.

Budget update
Foley applauded the Missouri legislature's vote to reverse some of the cuts to the UM System proposed by the House in February and include MU in a 4 percent increase in higher education funding.

“We’ve turned around some of the pathological negativity that existed in Jefferson City towards us around the beginning of the year,” Foley said at Thursday's meeting.

Foley also said the university's budget gap could dwindle to $26 million, $6 million less than predicted in a March 9 memo, despite a worsening forecast for applications and enrollment in fall 2016.

“That’s why when we set 5 percent (for the general revenue budget cut). We did it pitting hope against hope that something would turn around and it wouldn’t be as bad as some of the earlier predictions would have made it,” Foley said.

In his March memo, Foley said the university expected 1,500 fewer students enrolled for the fall 2016 semester and announced a campuswide hiring freeze and a 5 percent cut to the general revenue budget. The College of Engineering said it faced $900,000 in cuts of its own the next day, and MU Operations said last week it would eliminate 50 positions.

AAUP Melissa Click investigation

Faculty Council Vice Chair Nicole Monnier, associate teaching professor in the department of German and Russian Studies, discussed the American Association of University Professors’ investigation into Melissa Click’s firing conducted in March.

Monnier said the AAUP’s report on the firing will likely come out in May and that there's a possibility MU could be placed on its censure list.

MU has been investigated five times in the past and censured twice, Monnier said.

Other business
The council also approved a statement from the ad hoc joint committee on protests, public spaces, free speech and the press, outlining the limits and freedoms of speech at MU as well as listing some of the university’s responsibilities.

“The University has a solemn responsibility to undertake all reasonable measures not only to promote a lively and fearless freedom of debate and deliberation, but also to protect that freedom when others attempt to restrict it,” the statement read.

A resolution from the Missouri Associate of Faculty Senates in opposition to allowing concealed carry on campus received confirmation as well.

Monnier said the University of Missouri—St. Louis and Missouri University of Science and Technology had already approved the resolution.

Missouri lawmakers send $27 billion state budget to Nixon

The only task the Missouri General Assembly is required by law to accomplish has been accomplished and, for the second year in a row, accomplished two weeks before deadline.

Lawmakers have sent a roughly $27.2 billion state budget to Gov. Jay Nixon that increases spending on higher education as a whole, while specifically cutting funding from the University of Missouri System.

House and Senate Republicans insisted on sending a message to the UM Board of Curators expressing their disapproval over how last fall’s unrest on the Mizzou campus was handled. That message manifested itself in a $3.8 million cut that targets the administration.

It’s a compromise between the House, which sought a much larger cut of $7.8 million, and the Senate, which backed a $1 million cut.
Some Democrats, including Rep. Stephen Webber of Columbia, argued that low-income employees of the university system will be the ones who actually get hurt.

“This retaliatory cut is not negatively impacting any administrators,” Webber said. “It is being felt by the maintenance workers, the folks who actually make the University of Missouri system run.”

He cited plans by the Mizzou campus in Columbia to lay off 50 maintenance workers due to lost revenue from declining enrollment.

Other lawmakers said they were careful to ensure the $3.8 million reduction won’t hurt students.

“We have record funding for higher education,” said Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob. “We were pleased to get the higher education community to commit to not raising tuition this year by giving them a 4 percent (overall) increase.”

**K-12 schools to get a smaller increase**

Missouri’s public schools will get a $71 million boost in spending. It’s a little less than the $85 million increase Gov. Nixon called for in his State of the State Address, and a lot less than the roughly $450 million the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education officially requested.

Rep. Margo McNeil, D-Florissant, says the legislature continually puts education funding on the back burner.

“I don’t know how we become really committed to education until we change our practices and put our money where our mouth is,” said McNeil. “I’m disappointed with this budget, and I’m disappointed with this process.”

But Fitzpatrick, who helped negotiate the final version of the state budget, says the funding formula to determine public schools’ basic aid needs is outdated.

“There have been some things in the existing formula that have been exploited,” he said. “Summer school enrollment has been driven up because it helps districts get more money. (Districts are) pushing as many people onto free and reduced lunch as possible. Some of those extras in the foundation formula right now have really driven the cost up and it’s just been impossible to keep up with.”

That formula was established in 2010 when lawmakers predicted extra lottery and gaming revenue. This week, the House voted to reinstate a 5 percent growth cap on the funding formula.

In a brief written statement, Nixon criticized lawmakers for providing “less funding for our K-12 classrooms than I recommended.”

**Medicaid and Planned Parenthood**
The Republican-led majority in both chambers also barred the use of Medicaid funding by any abortion provider in the state, namely, Planned Parenthood. Democrats argued the move would backfire and lead to even more unwanted pregnancies.

“To defund them means that you’re taking away access to the one thing that we know, outside of abstinence, reduces and prevents unwanted pregnancies, which is contraception,” said Sen. Jason Holsman, D-Kansas City. “I would like to see the numbers next year, (after) this goes through, how many abortions have increased because of the number of unwanted pregnancies that could have been prevented through the use of contraception.”

Other Democrats argued that barring Planned Parenthood from receiving Medicaid dollars would violate federal law. To sidestep that legal roadblock, GOP leaders rejected $8 million in federal funding that would have gone to the Department of Social Services. Budget writers instead increased state funding to that department.

“All taxpayers in the state of Missouri simply are no longer going to fund Planned Parenthood,” said Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia.

**Transportation**

The final version of the Fiscal Year 2017 budget also revives the Department of Transportation’s cost-share program, in which local governments would pay part of the cost of a road or bridge project in exchange for speeding up construction.

The program was suspended two years ago due to MoDOT’s bleak transportation funding outlook, but the picture has improved a bit due to last year’s federal highway bill and recent increases in fuel tax collections.

Lawmakers have allocated $20 million for the renewed cost-share program.

“It’s not going to fix the whole problem,” Fitzpatrick said, “but at least in some of those communities that have projects that they can’t fully fund, we have the opportunity now to help get some of those done.”

Bringing back the cost-share program was one of House Speaker Todd Richardson’s top priorities, who's also opposed to a Senate bill that would raise the state’s fuel tax.

“A tax increase of any kind is going to be very, very difficult to do,” Richardson told reporters Thursday. “(But), we’ve got some (House) members that are interested in giving it a fair hearing…we’ll see where it goes from there.”

As for the 13 bills that make up the state’s $27.2 billion budget, they were passed early enough in the regular session to trigger a requirement that they be signed into law within 15 days. Republican leaders, like last year, chose the earlier target date in order to be able to override any line-item vetoes Nixon may make in the budget.
Legislature boosts money for education, cuts Planned Parenthood funding

JEFFERSON CITY - Planned Parenthood will lose state funding while universities, colleges and public schools will see millions of dollars more under a Missouri budget passed Thursday by the Legislature.

The $27 billion spending plan now goes to Gov. Jay Nixon, who has the power to veto individual budget lines. The budget will take effect July 1.

Lawmakers blocked Medicaid funding from going to any entity that offers elective abortions. State money already is prohibited from paying for abortions, but Planned Parenthood currently accepts Medicaid payments for services such as vaccinations and exams.

“Taxpayers in the state of Missouri simply no longer are going to fund Planned Parenthood,” said Sen. Kurt Schaefer, the Columbia Republican who chairs the appropriations committee.

Medicaid, which covers health care for people with low incomes, would get $10.2 billion, with about half coming from the federal government. The budget passed last year allocated $9.3 billion for Medicaid, and the state’s share of that spending has increased by about $530 million since the 2013 fiscal year.

State Rep. Scott Fitzpatrick, who is vice chairman of the House Budget Committee, called that growth “brutal.”

The budget adds $71 million to the nearly $3.3 billion of existing basic aid for K-12 schools. But that would still leave state funding about $439 million short of what’s called for under the legal formula for school funding. The budget also includes a $2 million boost for the Charter School Commission.
The budget boosts core funding for higher education by about $37 million, or 4 percent. Higher education representatives said that increase will be enough to prevent a tuition increase next year.

The Senate plan had called for a 6 percent increase, while the House originally proposed a 2 percent increase that excluded the University of Missouri, a response to the protests in the fall that caused the chancellor and University of Missouri system president to resign. Fitzpatrick said that item was the biggest difference between the chambers as negotiators worked out the final version of the budget.

The compromise budget halved a proposed cut to the University of Missouri system administration, from $7.6 million to about $3.8 million, and eliminated a proposed $1 million cut to the Columbia campus. Meanwhile, the University of Missouri’s share of the higher education boost will account for almost $18 million, and the budget earmarks several purchases, such as equipment for its veterinary school, that total more than $2.6 million.

Despite the broad increases for the University of Missouri, Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, said he could not support a budget that includes “retaliatory” cuts and money for a commission to review the university system’s rules and structure, which he said will amount to “a witch hunt at the University of Missouri for the next six months.”

The budget calls for $20 million for a program to split the cost of transportation projects between the Missouri Department of Transportation and local governments. Although the final spending plan omitted three road projects added on the House floor totaling $12.3 million, budget writers told the department those projects should be a priority.

**Budget plan includes funding for reactor building, other area projects**

By Rudi Keller

Thursday, April 21, 2016 at 2:00 pm

JEFFERSON CITY — The project to add a 28,000-square-foot classroom and training lab building at the University of Missouri Research Reactor received a boost Wednesday when lawmakers negotiating the final state budget appropriated $2 million to start construction.
Reactors Executive Director Ralph Butler seeks $10 million for the project intended to train workers to handle radioactive materials used in medicine to establish an industry cluster at Discovery Ridge. Butler said reactor officials were pleased to see the item in the budget.

“We understand the budget process is not complete at this time,” Butler said. “We’re continuing to work with our legislators to answer any questions they might have on how this could benefit our region and the state.”

He enlisted the support of Reps. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, and Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce and companies that say they are ready to hire.

“It’s a start,” Kendrick said after the budget conference committee agreed to the appropriation. “We’re happy with $2 million. It is a start in the right direction. We have got to come up with the additional $8 million.”

The money is part of the $27.3 billion state budget that will be up for final votes Thursday in the House and Senate. The negotiators also agreed to several other new items for either Columbia or the university.

The State Historical Society, which will move into a new research center and museum once construction is complete, won a $1 million budget increase. The society received $2.2 million this year and will have to begin paying about $800,000 a year in utility and other costs now covered by the university when the move is complete.

The budget also includes $500,000 for equipment purchases at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine, $2 million for expansion of Missouri University of Science and Technology engineering programs at Missouri State University and $400,000 to Missouri S&T to expand Project Lead the Way in 10 southern Missouri counties.

Before the conference committee began meeting, the House approved a capital improvements spending bill that provides $5 million to expand the Thompson Center for Autism at MU.

The MU reactor supplies several radioactive elements used in medical imaging and treatments and is working to obtain permits to expand its offerings. Northwest Medical Isotopes, an Oregon-based company, plans to hire nearly 100 people for an $80 million processing facility it will build in Columbia, Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Haass wrote in an April 6 letter to lawmakers.

“The training program will directly address the needs of NWMI, and other nuclear medicine companies that have explored relocating to central Missouri, for a specialized technical workforce,” Haass wrote.

The $2 million appropriation will be spent through the Missouri Technology Corporation. Providing the full $10 million was too much to ask in one year, said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia. The $2 million will be enough to get the
State lawmakers pass $27 billion budget

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo - As the legislative session begins to wind down, the Missouri House and Senate approve a $27 billion budget.

The budget includes a 2 percent pay raise for state workers, an additional $71 million for K-12 education and $500,000 for a statewide web portal.

One of the most debated issues this session has been higher education funding. After the protests on MU campus in November, many lawmakers called for cuts to MU and the UM system.

Initially, the House cut nearly $8 million from the UM system, but the Senate restored most of the funding soon after.

In conference committee on Wednesday night, the Senate and House compromised to cut around $3.8 million. On Thursday, lawmakers voted to approve those cuts as part of the budget.

Gov. Jay Nixon's budget called for a 6 percent increase to performance funding for the state's higher education institutions - lawmakers approved a 4 percent increase.

Rep. Caleb Rowden, a Republican from Columbia, voted for the higher education bill that is part of the budget.

"The University of Missouri that has does so much for so many, students, faculty, parents, the job market in our state. Do we stand by them or do we vote no on this bill today and put our foot on their necks and say we don't care about your future?" said Rowden.

Rep. Stephen Webber, a Democrat from Columbia, voted against the bill. Webber said the bill has unintended consequences.
"This retaliatory cut is not negatively impacting any of the administrators. It is being felt by the maintenance workers, the folks that actually make the University of Missouri system run," said Webber.

Rep. Kip Kendrick, a Democrat from Columbia, also voted against the bill.

All state higher education institutions have agreed to a tuition freeze for the year because of the increase in performance funding.

The budget now moves onto Gov. Jay Nixon. He has until May 6 to approve it.

Budget Negotiators Scale Back University of Missouri Cuts

Lawmakers are scaling back reductions to the University of Missouri's budget.

Budget writers from both chambers agreed Wednesday to reduce a proposed $7.6 million cut to the university system's administration to less than $4 million. They also eliminated a proposal to cut $1 million from the Columbia campus.

Budget writers agreed to boost core funding for higher education by about $37 million, or 4 percent. The House had recommended a 2 percent increase and excluded the University of Missouri.

Gov. Jay Nixon had requested a 6 percent increase, saying that would be enough for universities to freeze tuition next year. University representatives said a 4 percent increase would still be enough to hold down tuition.

The state's $27 billion spending plan must still pass both chambers.
In compromise, legislators limit cuts to UM System and MU

Tuition across the UM System will not increase for the 2016–17 school year.

**Missouri legislators agreed Wednesday in a conference committee to forgo any budget cuts to MU and limit a cut to the UM System to $3.8 million.**

Drawing close to their deadline of passing the fiscal year 2017 budget, legislators have been debating in recent months what to cut from the UM System budget, considering at one point cutting $7.6 from administration and $1 million from MU.

Now, the system administration will receive a $3.8 million cut and MU will have no cut. The university system will also receive a 4 percent increase for performance-based funding, a compromise between the 6 percent increase that all other state-funded universities are receiving and a House-approved 2 percent increase.

The committee also decided to no longer require a tuition freeze. Despite this, presidents and chancellors from the 13 state-funded campuses met last week and agreed to not seek a tuition increase because of the performance-based funding increase. UM System spokesman John Fougere confirmed that the UM System’s tuition will not increase next year, but he said a date has not yet been set for the Board of Curators to approve tuition.

Altogether, MU and MU Extension will receive a combined $218 million for fiscal year 2017 compared to fiscal year 2016’s budget of $220 million.

In a statement following the conference, interim UM System President Mike Middleton said he was pleased with the budget, according to the Columbia Missourian.

“We deeply appreciate that the legislative conference committees appropriated $17.12 million for our performance funding, allowing the university to continue the invaluable service we have been providing unabated to the state in terms of education, research and economic development for decades,” Middleton said in the statement.

Middleton also said the $3.8 million cut from the administrative budget means that “much work remains to restore confidence and trust in our leadership, which we will continue to do by being completely transparent, accountable and fiscally responsible in our actions.”

In the budget, $750,000 is allotted to an oversight commission to independently examine the UM System’s structure, proposed by Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia. The resolution has not been passed by the House yet.

Despite the lack of cuts by the legislature to MU, the campus is still making budget cuts of its own due to a $32 million shortfall. The decrease in funds comes from a projected drop in enrollment of 1,500 students for fall 2016.
Research says "mathematics anxiety" higher in girls than boys

COLUMBIA - A team of psychologists has determined girls exhibit more "mathematics anxiety" than boys.

Psychologists from the University of Missouri, University of California-Irvine and the University of Glasgow in Scotland worked together on the analysis.

The study focused on 60 countries around the world (including the United States), and said despite policies and programs, girls are apprehensive to math and STEM fields.

Thomas Hart Benton School STEM Specialist Heather McCullar said this is a topic that has been getting more attention.

"I think just recently we started to look at girls and minorities in STEM fields, so it's become more of a popular topic and people are looking into it more," McCullar said. "At the elementary level we see that not a lot of younger kids are exposed to STEM fields, especially when it comes to girls. A lot of the products aren't promoted towards them, they aren't introduced to those fields, they don't interact with people in STEM fields, so it really comes down to exposure at the younger levels."

First grade teacher Meredith Erikson also said girls aren't necessarily exposed to some of same things boys are that can help stimulate a desire to work in a STEM field at a young age.

"When it comes to math and engineering I just think it's not in our society to have girls be involved in that and just between our culture and society they're not exposed to the LEGOS or the investigation or the critical thinking as much as boys, I feel like."

Erikson said societal norms can play an influential role in discouraging girls from STEM careers.
"In society a teacher is usually a woman, in my mind, and a nurse is usually a woman, and in my mind that's how it relates to the STEM process, because that's not the case at all. I think that's a barrier on why it will affect girls."

McCullar also said she has seen how a STEM education can help make girls more comfortable with topics like engineering and math.

"We do a LEGO robotics club, and when we first started it it was mostly boys, maybe one or two girls," McCullar said. "So we decided to start a girls team and a boys team, and after our first year we actually had to start a second girls team because we had so many girls that were interested in participating."

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Dog walking benefit older adults

ANI | Apr 21, 2016, 05.29 PM IST

HIGHLIGHTS

• Dog walking is associated with lower body mass index, fewer doctor visits, more frequent exercise and an increase in social benefits for seniors

Researchers at the University of Missouri have found that older adults who also are pet owners benefit from the bonds they form with their canine companions.

Dog walking is associated with lower body mass index, fewer doctor visits, more frequent exercise and an increase in social benefits for seniors.

"Our study explored the associations between dog ownership and pet bonding with walking behavior and health outcomes in older adults," said Rebecca Johnson, a professor at the MU College of Veterinary Medicine.

"This study provides evidence for the association between dog walking and physical health using a large, nationally representative sample," she added.
The study analysed 2012 data from the Health and Retirement study sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and the Social Security Administration. It included data about human-animal interactions, physical activity, and frequency of doctor visits and health outcomes of the participants.

Results from the study also indicated that people with higher degrees of pet bonding were more likely to walk their dogs and to spend more time walking their dogs each time than those who reported weaker bonds. Additionally, the study showed that pet walking offers a means to socialize with pet owners and others.

Retirement communities also could be encouraged to incorporate more pet-friendly policies such as including dog walking trails and dog exercise areas so that their residents could have access to the health benefits, Johnson said.

Canine Companionship Can Improve Health
By Rick Nauert PhD

New research finds that for some, owning a dog is linked to improved health. In the study, University of Missouri investigators discovered older adults appear to benefit from canine companions in numerous parameters.

Researchers determined that older adults who also are pet owners benefit from the bonds they form with their canine companions. Dog walking is associated with lower body mass index, fewer doctor visits, more frequent exercise and an increase in social benefits for seniors.
The link between taking your dog for a daily or perhaps twice a day walk is important as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that adults of all ages should engage in 150 or more minutes of moderate physical activity per week.

For adults 60 years of age or more, walking is the most common form of leisure-time physical activity because it is self-paced, low impact and does not require equipment.

“Our study explored the associations between dog ownership and pet bonding with walking behavior and health outcomes in older adults,” said professor Rebecca Johnson.

“This study provides evidence for the association between dog walking and physical health using a large, nationally representative sample.”

The study analyzed 2012 data from the Health and Retirement study sponsored by the National Institute on Aging and the Social Security Administration. The study included data about human-animal interactions, physical activity, frequency of doctor visits and health outcomes of the participants.

“Our results showed that dog ownership and walking were related to increases in physical health among older adults,” said Johnson, who also serves as director of the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction at MU.

“These results can provide the basis for medical professionals to recommend pet ownership for older adults and can be translated into reduced health care expenditures for the aging population.”

Researchers found however, that the benefits of canine ownership occur when the owner has a close bond to the animal. That is, people with higher degrees of pet bonding were more likely to walk their dogs and to spend more time walking their dogs each time than those who reported weaker bonds.

Additionally, the study showed that pet walking offers a means to socialize with pet owners and others.

Retirement communities also could be encouraged to incorporate more pet-friendly policies such as including dog walking trails and dog exercise areas so that their residents could have access to the health benefits, Johnson said.
Floyd honored by renaming of University of Missouri program

Thursday, April 21, 2016 at 2:00 pm

The University of Missouri honored the late Elson Floyd on Wednesday by renaming its Administrative Leadership Development Program in his honor.

Floyd was president of the UM System from 2003 to 2007, when he took a similar post at Washington State University. Floyd died of cancer on June 20.

During his tenure at UM, Floyd expanded the leadership development program — originally designed for faculty development — to include staff leadership training, the university said in a news release. Each year, 30 to 35 administrative staff members receive professional development and ongoing support through the program, the university said.

“Elson Floyd’s legacy in Missouri stems from his passion for improving leadership and enhancing professional development for the betterment of the university,” UM System interim President Mike Middleton said.

Third professor given President's Award

Thursday, April 21, 2016 at 2:00 pm

A business journalism professor at the University of Missouri has been named the third of nine President’s Award winners.

Randall Smith, the Donald W. Reynolds Endowed Chair of Business Journalism, was given the President’s Award for Cross-Cultural Engagement on April 12 when UM System Senior
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs Steve Graham surprised him in class, according to a news release.

The award recognizes faculty who promote cross-cultural engagement, the university said. UM cited Smith’s work for Alfred Friendly Press Partners, among other work, including launching the School of Journalism’s first study abroad experience in South Africa.

Smith will receive a $5,000 prize and will be formally recognized with other President’s Award recipients at a June event. Other MU winners named so far are Chi-Ren Shyu, chairman of the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department, and Michela Becchi, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering.

MU student arrested on child pornography charges

COLUMBIA, Mo. — An 18-year-old Columbia man was arrested Wednesday on charges of possessing child pornography.

Boone County Sheriff’s Department Cyber Crimes Task Force received a tip that someone in Columbia has uploaded child pornography in February to an email account.

Investigators were able to identify the account holder as Aaron Becker who was living on the MU Campus when the pornography was uploaded to an email account through Google.

After looking through records, investigators learned the user was actively using the account to store and transfer child pornography for several years.

Becker was arrested on 3 counts of suspicion of Possession of Child Pornography, 1 count of a Class C felony of less than 20 images and 2 counts Class B felony of more than 20 images or 1 video.

Becker’s bond was set at $4,500 for the Class C felony and has not been set for the two Class B felonies.

Becker’s address is listed as Laws Hall on the MU Campus.