Long-neglected maintenance at MU drives proposal to cut campus footprint
RUTH SERVEN, Dec 9, 2016

COLUMBIA — Use less space.

That was the message from Gary Ward, the vice chancellor for operations, to MU's Faculty Council on Thursday.

Ward said if he can reduce the amount of physical space he oversees, his staff can keep fixing pipes, repairing roofs and mending wires without worrying about future reductions in his budget.

Since the operations budget began dipping in 1998, Ward said, it's been harder and harder to be proactive about maintenance, and his reduced staff has had its responsibilities pile up. Fixes that could have been simple have grown bigger and more costly.

"Now, 60 percent of our budget goes to repairs," Ward said. "This here is like throwing a rod on your car. It's like a snowball going down a hill."

Currently, facility needs are about $750 million at MU, and the load of deferred maintenance grows by $30 million a year.

While MU has recently rebuilt buildings and has a $38.5 million renovation of Lafferre Hall underway, it's not enough.

By 2024, Ward expects that 40 percent of the campus will need to be rebuilt. Even today, buildings all across campus such as the Strickland, Neff and Middlebush halls and Ellis Library are in dire need of infrastructure overhauls. The top three buildings in most need of repair are Curtis, Noyes and Waters halls.
The buildings being looked at don't include athletics or residential buildings.

Ward's solution is to make the campus smaller by "snuggling everyone up." He wants to cut 250,000 square feet from the physical campus — about the equivalent of the Bond Life Sciences Center or Mizzou North's footprint.

"This is the only thing I've been able to come up with in 30 years that doesn't include a budget increase," Ward said.

Ward's idea, though not a concrete proposal yet, might require some sacrifices, such as temporary moves and smaller offices. Faculty were skeptical.

"Are there buildings with plenty of space for us to move to?" asked Flore Zéphir, a French professor.

"That will take some figuring out," Ward said.

"It feels like Arts and Science buildings will bear the brunt of this," said Jeff Rouder, a professor of psychological sciences. Thirty-five percent of MU's buildings in need of serious repairs are used by the College of Arts and Science.

"It may shake out to where that's true," Ward said.

After his presentation, Ward said he's not aware of any other university that is trying to literally reduce its physical space. However, Stephen Harris, director of strategic design and initiatives for the University of Texas System, said he sees this as an idea that has been floating around higher education for a while.

"Nationally, we see that even though the addition of space is on an upward tick, enrollment is on a downward tick, and eventually that will be a problem," Harris said. "We had a chancellor who said we probably need to tear down more buildings."
A problem is that buildings often focus on peak usage, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Harris said. But after those hours, they're underutilized or sit empty.

"A lab built in the 1970s may no longer be the best place to conduct research; maybe it should be a classroom or an office building now," he said.

According to a 2015 report by Sightlines, a facilities firm that consults for the University of Missouri System, the University of Texas System and universities across the country, 40 percent of higher education buildings were built — often badly — between 1960 and 1970. Those buildings have reached the end of their natural lives and require substantial renovations.

It is possible to "reset the clock" on aging buildings by gutting facilities with a high amount of needs, Sightlines noted, as MU did with Swallow Hall, but those capital campaigns are expensive and can't meet the needs of the whole campus.

Some peer institutions have done a good job holistically reevaluating their spaces by focusing on buildings in need of big repairs and thus reducing deferred maintenance costs, Harris said, pointing to the University of Georgia System and the Pennsylvania State System.

Schools should think about rearranging their space, tearing down more buildings and placing the allotment of space in central, not departmental, control, Harris said.

But that would mean taking some control away from departments and faculty, who may have very different expectations for their space.

"This will require some real behavioral changes," Ward told the council.

Faculty Council has two standing committees charged with discussing use of space on campus. The Campus Space Utilization Committee advises the provost and Ward on matters of evaluating new space, repurposing old space and determining space assignments across university boundaries.
Similarly, the Campus Facilities Planning Committee recommends how capital projects and campus land use can be conducted.

Interim UM president tells curators he’s ‘optimistic’ diversity plan will bring change

With a new system president arriving in March and the diversity plan that was initiated days before his appointment in place, interim President Mike Middleton told the University of Missouri curators Friday the year since his appointment in the wake of protests at the Columbia campus had been productive.

“If you think about where we were last December and where we are today, we have much to be proud of collectively,” said Middleton. He was appointed to take charge of the four-campus system last November after former president Tim Wolfe was criticized for how he handled racial issues on the Columbia campus.

“With (the diversity task force) recommendations and the commitment from our campuses and our campus communities, I’m optimistic the culture we will continue to see cultivated across our great university system will improve greatly,” Middleton said during his report to the UM Board of Curators meeting Friday at the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus.

Asked after the session what would be sign that the university system is better serving students of color, Middleton said in large part the plan’s success will come down to putting money behind the recommendations.

“The more of those recommendations that we can actually fund and implement, it sets up the structure to make us a much better university, a more hospitable university. But culture change, which is what we really need, takes time,” Middleton said. “I have to say, there probably isn’t a good measure of that. But when people feel engaged and welcomed and not threatened, that’s the sign that we’ve made some progress.”

Middleton said the UM system has provided all four campuses with a little funding to to start implementing the recommendations, and all four have supplemented that with money from their budgets.

“We’re going to have to continue to find funding to maintain and build on these initiatives,” Middleton said. “That’s going to be a problem with the ... expected declining revenue from the
state. But if it’s important then you have to find the resources. And it is important. And I assure you that (incoming president) Dr. Choi thinks it’s as important as I do.”

**Finances don’t 'look promising'**

Middleton acknowledged the university’s finances are in limbo with Republican Eric Greitens headed to the governor’s mansion, noting that the system’s economic situation “doesn’t look promising.”

“I understand projections on state revenue looking forward are down, and of course a good portion of our funding comes from the state. So we don’t expect significant growth in revenue, which then means we’ve simply got to find more efficiencies. And we’re working on doing that,” Middleton said.

“It’s not going to be easy, and it’s a shame. Higher education is so important to the future of our society that we’ve got to find ways to grow it and make it better. And that’s what we’re trying to do.”

Middleton said he met Greitens once a few years ago, and was “quite impressed with him.”

He and Choi will be having dinner with the governor-elect on Sunday.

Last year, state legislators upset with the system’s response to protests on the Columbia campus threatened to cut funding. But the system ended up with a budget increase.

**Board officers**

Also at the Friday meeting, Curator Maurice Graham of Clayton was selected to be the board’s new chair. He heads the law firm Gray, Ritter & Graham. He replaces Pamela Henrickson of Jefferson City, whose term on the board expires Jan. 1. John Phillips of Kansas City will become vice chairman.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Middleton, Henrickson offer final words to curators**

KATIE KULL, Dec 9, 2016
COLUMBIA — In its last meeting of the year, the UM System Board of Curators heard the final presentations from the interim president and the board chair. The board also approved the first phase of a construction project for a new music building at MU and heard a presentation about a new compliance program.

Concerns about a likely decline in state funding arose again Friday at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, but the curators expressed optimism for the year ahead.

Here are three highlights from the meeting:

Middleton: 'I'm optimistic'

Mike Middleton, who has led the system as interim president since November 2015, encouraged campuses to act on recommendations from a diversity audit released last week by the IBIS consulting firm and recommendations issued by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force.

After receiving the report and weighing the recommendations, "I'm optimistic that the culture we will continue to see cultivated across our great university system will improve greatly," he said.

He also touted the benefits of the four-campus system and its efficiencies, referring to a report about the system's savings from consolidated resources such as administrative costs and information technology services.

In a year when budget cuts are likely, Middleton noted more money-saving measures will be necessary.

"I understand projections on state revenues looking forward are down," he said in a news conference after the meeting. "We don’t expect significant growth which then means that we simply have to find more efficiencies, and we’re working on doing that."

Middleton and incoming UM System President Mun Choi plan to meet with Missouri Gov.-elect Eric Greitens for dinner this weekend.
Middleton said in a news conference that he and Choi hadn't planned on what they would talk about, but said "I think the budget situation is something that ought to be discussed."

Board chair reflects on tenure

At the end of a year of protests, resignations, a presidential search and a budget battle, Pamela Henrickson reflected on what she and the board accomplished as well as her shortcomings.

"I'd like to say that public education is one of the things that makes this country unique, and one of the things that makes this country great," she said. "I regret that I was not able to focus on the value of public education while I was chair."

Henrickson also talked about her efforts to create a "culture of respect" on the four campuses. She said the presidential search committee — which included six curators, one faculty member from each campus and student representatives — was an example of the cultivation of different perspectives she hoped to cultivate.

Following her address, the board recognized Henrickson and Donald Cupps for their contributions to the board as they each retired. David Steward, who resigned earlier, also was recognized.

Maurice Graham was elected as board chair and John Phillips as vice chair.

First phase OK'd for MU arts building

Funding for the project comes from $16 million in gifts and $8 million in university money. Construction is expected to be complete by July 2019, according to the plan.

The new building will be at Hitt Street and University Avenue and will house the School of Music and the Art and Theatre departments.
Although design plans haven't been submitted yet, the curators had opinions about what it should look like.

One curator called the yellowish color of the brick used on the Fine Arts Building "ugly."

“There’s no ugly brick, it’s just the perspective of some people,” curator David Steelman said.

New School of Music building approved for University of Missouri

ST. LOUIS, Mo. - The University of Missouri Board of Curators approved plans Friday to build a new School of Music building on the Columbia campus.

Board members unanimously approved the project during their meeting in St. Louis.

Friday's approval will allow the University to start Phase 1 of the project. Fundraising for Phase 2 of the project will continue, which includes a 500-seat concert hall.

"I'm grateful to the Board of Curators and to our generous donors who support this project," said interim Dean of the College of Arts and Science Patricia Okker. "This building will be a destination venue for our campus and community."

The current Fine Arts Building was constructed in the 1960s and houses the School of Music, the Department of Art, and the Department of Theatre.

Right now, the School of Music is spread across six buildings. The new building will centralize the department into one facility on the northeast corner of Hitt Street and University Avenue.

Jeanne and Rex Sinquefield helped fund the project by donating a $10 million gift to the University of Missouri to construct the new building. It was the largest donation ever given to Mizzou to support the fine arts.
University of Missouri System curators elect a new chairman

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
mdwilliams@kcestar.com

St. Louis attorney Maurice B. “Marcy” Graham is the newly elected chairman of the University of Missouri board of curators.

The board, at its meeting Friday in St. Louis, chose Graham to serve the one-year term as chairman and elected Kansas City attorney John Phillips as vice chairman during that time.

Both posts are effective Jan 1.

Graham, president of the law firm of Gray, Ritter and Graham, P.C., was appointed to the board of curators in January 2015 and now serves as chairman of the board’s audit committee. He’s also a member of the executive, compensation and human resources committees.

Graham is past president of the Missouri Bar, the St. Louis Bar Foundation and the University of Missouri Law School Foundation. He has served as a member and chairman of the Supreme Court Advisory Committee, which oversees attorney discipline in Missouri.

He attended Central Methodist University and obtained both his bachelor’s degree and juris doctorate from the University of Missouri.

Phillips, who practices law with the Husch Blackwell LLP law firm, was appointed to the UM board of curators in 2013.

He has served as an adjunct faculty member at Rockhurst University and Washburn University School of Law. He is the former chairman of the American Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section and the Missouri Bar Alternative Dispute Resolution and Labor and Employment committees.
Phillips also is an MU alumnus, having received his bachelor's and law degrees on the Columbia campus. In Kansas City, Phillips serves on the board for Saint Luke’s Health System and Saint Luke’s Hospital and is legal counsel for the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

All but two of the members of the UM System’s board are lawyers. Only the most recently appointed members of the board, Jon Sundvold of Columbia and Thomas R. Voss of Eureka, are area businessmen.

The board of curators is the governing body of the four-campus University of Missouri System and consists of nine members, all appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

**University governing board picks Clayton attorney as chairman**

By Ashley Jost St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Dec 9, 2016

BELLERIVE ACRES • The University of Missouri Board of Curators unanimously approved a new board chair Friday morning during its meeting on the St. Louis campus.

Maurice "Marcy" Graham, a Clayton resident and president of the law firm Gray, Ritter & Graham, P.C., will lead the board during 2017.

Graham is a Central Methodist University and Mizzou alumnus. He was appointed to the board in 2015 by Gov. Jay Nixon and approved earlier this year by the Missouri Senate.

At his law firm, Graham focuses on business and commercial litigation and injury and death cases.

John Phillips, a senior attorney with Husch Blackwell LLP in Kansas City, was unanimously approved as the board's vice chairman.
University of Missouri System curators elect a new chairman

ST. LOUIS (AP) - A St. Louis lawyer has been named chairman of the University of Missouri board of curators.

St. Louis attorney Maurice B. Graham is the newly elected chairman of the University of Missouri board of curators. Graham was selected Friday at the board's meeting in St. Louis to serve the one-year term as chairman. Kansas City attorney John Phillips was selected as vice chairman.

The Kansas City Star reports both posts are effective Jan 1.

Graham was appointed to the board of curators in January 2015. Phillips was appointed in 2013 to the board of curators, which is the governing body of the four-campus University of Missouri System and consists of nine members, all appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.

University enrollment drop follows decade-long increase

Dec 9, 2016

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — Enrollment in the four-campus University of Missouri system increased 19 percent over a decade before losing ground after last year's protests at the Columbia campus and a drop in high school graduates in the state.
An end-of-year report shared Thursday at the University of Missouri Board of Curators meeting showed that enrollment across the system increased from 48,434 in fall 2005 to 57,785 in 2015, The Columbia Daily Tribune (http://bit.ly/2htqOpu) reported.

But from 2015 to this fall, enrollment on the Columbia campus decreased 6 percent, and enrollment at campuses in St. Louis, Kansas City and Rolla was mostly flat.

Officials at the University of Missouri have chalked up the decline to several factors, including a dip in the number of high school graduates in Missouri and damage to the campus' image after protests over racial issues in fall 2015 toppled system President Tim Wolfe.

"We're right in the trough right there where there's a significant drop in high school graduates in Missouri," said Steve Graham, the system's senior associate vice president for academic affairs, adding that the number of people graduating high school in the state is expected to increase by 2020.

Asked about how to appeal to higher-achieving students, Columbia campus' interim chancellor, Hank Foley, said the university has to find a way to compete with regional universities that have honors colleges with bigger endowments, because those universities can offer more full-ride scholarships.

"Right now we are losing top-ranked high school students with high ACT scores, frankly, to Arkansas and Alabama," Foley said. "I hear that daily."

College culture

By Hank Waters
The University of Missouri and every other college in the land is dedicated to promoting diversity, inclusion and equity on campus. Protests bemoaning lack of progress cause everyone in authority to take notice. Policy statements, task forces and laws proclaim allegiance to these goals, particularly on the campuses of the University of Missouri System and most prominently at its campus in Columbia, which has become an example for the nation.

On Nov. 9, 2015, the very day then-UM System President Tim Wolfe resigned under pressure, the UM Board of Curators called for a survey of diversity and inclusion for the entire system. Earlier this week IBIS Consulting Group issued its report for the flagship MU campus containing familiar recommendations that will continue to frustrate those with unrealistic expectations.

IBIS held 100 focus groups on all four campuses including 148 faculty, 264 staff and 93 students. You and I and your cat could have written the conclusions: In every category underrepresented groups are … underrepresented. Stated goals for diversity, equity and inclusion are not being met in student enrollment or in faculty and staff positions. Minorities are underrepresented among tenure track faculty and on tenure review committees. People in charge of hiring and recruitment need more awareness of discrepancies and must try harder to change the ratios.

One need not study every facet of the IBIS recommendations. Given its charge, the consultant performed as expected. The easy part was finding disproportion. The impossible part is listing effective corrections.

Universities face impossible tension between calls for increased diversity and maintaining standards. Every official would love to enroll and hire well-qualified minorities in greater numbers, but such applicants are not available. Achieving minority ratios that reflect the general public is impossible, so consultants and campus officials are left with demonstrations of effort. Good effort is a necessary prerequisite but is not the same as achieving numerical success. Yet task force recommendations always must sound as if unreasonable numerical advancement is possible.

I’m not blaming anyone here, merely trying for more reasonable expectations.

I do think jawboning is needed and can help. Mizzou and other campuses should be places where minorities have an equal chance, but equal outcomes can’t be assured. Prospective students must be enrolled based mainly on institutional standards of academic readiness, faculty on ability to teach, and staff on non-demographic attributes related to the job at hand. When these basic criteria can be met, minorities should receive special attention. When adverse selection or attitudinal negativity is found, it should be countered immediately.

To hold out unreasonable expectations is to court disappointment. I can see why consultants and curators produce task force reports, and maybe they are bound to propose perfect solutions, but we need to remember what’s possible. When consultants suggest campus managers fail if they don’t produce minority constituents in unrealistic proportion, the consultants’ reports become only marginally helpful.
Meet the Ma family: How millennials are changing the way China thinks about money

Generated from News Bureau press release: Chinese Credit Card Usage Growing Quickly, MU Study Finds

Ma Yiqing, 24, is typical of China's younger generation - he uses his credit card frequently and borrows from online platforms to fund his shopping habits. In a pinch, he is happy to fall back on a lender closer to home - his mum and dad.

Interviews with Ma, a single-child, his mother and grandmother, show how rapidly attitudes toward credit are changing as the millennials generation - roughly those aged between 18 and 35 - embraces debt like never before.

The frugal attitude of previous generations produced the bedrock of China's credit worthiness - household savings equal to some 50 percent of GDP, one of the highest levels globally.

Ma and his cohorts are changing that equation. Their willingness to borrow has driven up household lending – the fastest growing area of China's debt. They are among the most indebted of their peers in Asia, taking on debt 18.5 times their income, significantly higher than their parents’ generation, a report from insurer Manulife shows.

While their spending and borrowing is an opportunity for lenders, brands and economic growth, it is also a risk as they add to China's fast-growing debt.

Right now, Ma has a safety net - well-heeled and doting parents who can pick up the tab. He lives in a one-bed flat in Lhasa, the capital of China's Tibet region. His parents are in nearby Shannan.

"I'll generally turn to mum and dad. They've always been able to help me financially," said Ma. In May, he asked his parents for financial support to open a restaurant. "I just need to ask and they'll give me (money)."

CLEAR GAP
Parents paying off the credit card bills of their millennial children is not unusual in China, but it could have ramifications, said Rui Yao, an associate professor in personal finance at the University of Missouri.

"They don't see the consequences of not paying. The thinking is 'my mom has it covered'”, she said. "They're not prepared for an economic downturn for sure."

The next generations may not be so lucky either. They will have to support longer-living parents and potentially more children as China relaxes its one-child policy. China's aging population is already shrinking, which means greater financial pressure on those working to support those who are not.

Ma says he is more frugal than his friends. He uses his bank card and Ant Check Later, a popular online lending platform owned by tech giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd (BABA.N).

This is a far cry from his parents' generation. Ma's mother, who is 49, only started using a credit card three years ago.

"They couldn't spend on overdraft, so they really didn't squander any money," he said.

The gap is clear: consumer credit is up nearly 300 percent over the last six years alone, hitting around 23.5 trillion yuan ($3.41 trillion) in October.

This is set to more than double over the next five years to nearly 53 trillion yuan, according to consultancy Mintel.

While mortgages are the lion's share of household debt, credit card and consumer loans have shot up from just 4.6 percent of household debt in 2015 to 16 percent now, BMI Research shows.

"The young generation today has a totally different attitude to my generation," said Ma's grandmother, Wei Chunyin, 76. She grew up in the 1960s and said she was in debt just once - for 100 yuan, the equivalent today of $14.50.

"We were very economical and hardworking," she said. "Clothing was just to wear, and we wouldn't even really eat snacks, just food from our unit," she said, referring to her workplace.

GROWING FORCE Ma's generation is the first in China's modern history to be raised in relative prosperity and social stability.

They are better educated and already more affluent than their elders. Boston Consulting Group and AliResearch said they are expected to drive 65 percent of consumption growth until 2020, when they will make up around 53 percent of total consumption spending, up from 45 percent now.

"Understanding their mindset is critical and anybody ignores them at their peril," Yum China Holdings Inc (YUMC.N) head Micky Pant said in an interview.
Their potential has not been lost on the banks, with some specifically targeting them for loans.

"Internally our appraisals are skewed toward the young consumer groups. For example, frontline sales staff get a bonus 1.3 times the normal level if they sign a young customer," said a banker in the credit card department of China Merchants Bank, a leading credit card provider.

"So everyone is out looking for youngster to sign up."When asked about the strategy, CMB said it has many credit card products that are welcomed by young people.

Bankers said lenders often know millennials have doting parents to fall back on in a pinch.

"Taking a darker read on it, the parents of the post-90s generation - who were born in the 60s or 70s - haven't yet retired, and are financially pretty secure," said a debt collector in the credit card department of a listed city bank.

Like other parents in China, Ma's mother and father, a nurse and government officer at the local Meteorological Administration respectively, are resigned to supporting their son financially for now - even if he defaults.

Ma's mother, Zhen Yinchun, said that when she was young she saved around one-third of her income because there was little to spend it on, in contrast to her son. It is a running joke in the family whether Ma will return any money he has borrowed, she said.

"I'll say it's a loan and he'll agree. But up to now he's never paid anything back," she said.

Feds: Columbia plant would have little environmental impact

Dec 10, 2016
COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) — A proposed medical radioactive isotope plant in Columbia would have little environmental impact, although it does pose a small threat of increased runoff into nearby water systems, according to a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission report.

The plant, which would be operated by Northwest Medical Isotopes, would partner with the University of Missouri Research Reactor to produce Molybdenum-99, an element used in nuclear medicine to diagnose life-threatening diseases, The Columbia Daily Tribune reported (http://bit.ly/2htIwJn). Mo-99, which is used to perform about 50,000 procedures daily in the U.S., has been imported for the past two decades because of the lack of a domestic source. There also is a global shortage of Mo-99.

David Drucker, a senior project manager for the regulatory commission, reviewed the environmental impact statement at a recent public hearing. Public comments can be made online until Dec. 29. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will consider the public's response while drafting its final environmental impact statement, which is expected in May.

Drucker said the commission plans to recommend that a construction permit be issued for the plant, which would be on 7.4 acres northeast of U.S. 63.

Tom Lata, vice chairman of the Osage Group of the Missouri Sierra Club, said his organization is concerned the plant site's clay soil will cause rapid runoff into the environmentally sensitive Gans Creek watershed and affect other important ecosystems near Rock Bridge Memorial State Park, which includes the Devil's Icebox cave system. He also believes the project could potentially disturb populations of the Indiana bat and gray bat, which are endangered species.

The environmental impact statement acknowledges the plant could create a small threat to the watershed by converting open fields to impermeable surfaces such as rooftops and paved roads, which increases runoff. The statement says the runoff "could affect offsite aquatic
resources by damaging downstream aquatic habitat and functions. For example, runoff can increase turbidity or introduce various chemicals or other pollutants that decrease water quality.

But the commission's report said Gans Creek and other bodies of water are far enough from the plant site to make significant impacts unlikely. And Northwest Medical Isotopes will be required to control runoff and pollutants.

At the public hearing, Columbia Mayor Brian Treece supported the proposed plant. He said Columbia is an ideal location for a plant that is important because of the global need for Mo-99. He estimated the plant would provide $76 million in tax revenue.

Dave Griggs, of Regional Economic Development Inc., said the construction would require up to 180 workers, with the plant offering 98 full-time jobs.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will submit a draft safety evaluation in the summer. The project cannot be approved until the final safety evaluation report is completed next fall.

MU Researcher Develops Allergy Treatment Toothpaste

Generated from a MU Heath press release

Watch the story: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=2435998c-daf5-46e7-bc51-88a8fb8b11ac
**Nurse residency program aims to reduce turnover**

When she graduated from Avila University in Kansas City with a nursing degree, Laura Stimpson wanted to work at an established hospital where she could continue learning — and be part of a “family atmosphere.”

Stimpson said she checked off those objectives when she was hired at Boone Hospital Center, where she also will be part of the hospital’s first-ever cohort of nurse residency participants when the program begins in January.

The program will use a model established by health system Vizient and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing that has been successful in St. Louis and Kansas City, said Monica Smith, vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer at Boone Hospital. Smith, who has repeatedly sounded the alarm over the prospect of a worsening nationwide nursing shortage, said the nurse residency program is vital for several reasons, not the least of which is retaining “qualified, competent nurses.”

The hospital invested $125,000 for startup and first-year costs, said Ben Cornelius, Boone Hospital’s marketing manager. On the upside, he said, hospital officials expect it to save more than $1 million in the first three years because of an expected decrease in new graduate nurse turnover.

Velvet Meers, nurse residency program coordinator at Boone, said the program includes mentoring new nurses for 12 months after they graduate from college, combining classroom and clinical settings and helping new nurses transition from an academic setting to a professional vocation.

Boone already has a preceptor program to help new nurses orient to the units where they are hired. The nurse residency program will enhance that effort.

Smith said evidence shows these programs allow nurses to become more competent and confident, which translates to increased employee retention.

“That’s very important — that connectedness,” Smith said.
She said an employee survey helped determine the need for the nurse residency program. “The first year is scary” for a new nurse to learn the position and the intricacies of a health system, she added.

Meers said the first cohort of residents will help make recommendation for future aspects of the program. The program also has an advisory board that includes representatives from Boone Hospital, Columbia College, the University of Missouri’s Sinclair School of Nursing, Missouri Hospital Association and others.

Michelle Zvanut, Boone’s vice president of human resources, has lamented the cost of recruiting new nurses versus the lower cost of retaining trained nurses. She said recruiting is a challenge without a nurse residency program.

“They’re being selective because they can be,” Zvanut said.

Zvanut said nursing residents are employees but also must commit to stay at Boone Hospital for a minimum of one year after the 12-month residency. She said from 50 to 75 residents will participate in the first year, and the success of the program will help determine the number of future slots.

University of Missouri Health Care, which includes University Hospital, Women’s and Children’s Hospital and Ellis Fischel Cancer Center, has had a nurse residency program for more than a decade, said MU Health spokeswoman Mary Jenkins.

Both Boone and MU Health, which held incentive-laden nursing job fairs this past summer, draw from area nursing programs, including Sinclair School of Nursing. Sinclair graduated 74 nurses in 2015 and will have 81 graduates this month, Jenkins said. Columbia College now is offering a bachelor’s degree in nursing and most area nursing schools offer accelerated degree programs for students who have other degrees or already have met coursework and other admission requirements.

New graduates of area nursing programs can’t come soon enough, Smith said, considering that almost half of the nation’s nurses are expected to retire in the next 10 to 15 years. With an aging population and increasing life expectancy — coupled with an increasing incidence of chronic disease — she said the need for additional nurses becomes clear.

“We have to have a stronger, supportive system for them,” Smith said.

Deanna Powers, patient care manager at Boone, is optimistic about the nurse residency program’s benefits to nurses, patients and the hospital.

“The goal for the long-term,” she said, “is to retain our nurses longer.”