



MU News Bureau

Daily Clips Packet

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ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

In an era of disruption, University of Missouri curators shift the conversation

By Ashley Jost • [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA, Mo. • It used to be that when people thought of the University of Missouri, it was all about black and gold, the rock M in Memorial Stadium and, of course, the columns.

But that was before student protests, an upheaval in leadership, state budget cuts and declining enrollment created a crisis for the state's flagship university, and, to some extent, the entire four-campus University of Missouri System.

This abrupt turn was on full display this week as the system's Board of Curators held a retreat at the Bradford Research Center outside of Columbia to hash out a way forward through several mounting challenges.

Years ago, such gatherings and board meetings were sleepy affairs, with the board — known for its calm, discreet and deliberative approach — engaging in abstract conversation about vision and long-term strategy.

The heavier talks used to happen elsewhere, with the responsibility to interpret and implement strategies falling on system staff and campus leadership.

This week though, the conversation was far more urgent, with candor and tough talk as the coin of the realm. Throughout Tuesday and Wednesday, curators wrestled with how to regain public trust, recast the image of the Columbia campus in particular and reinvent higher education amid mounting financial stress.

Some even wondered aloud whether the state was best served with the system's current structure, in which Mizzou, the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the University of Missouri-Kansas City

and Missouri University of Science and Technology are separate but governed under one umbrella — the University of Missouri System.

Curator David Steelman, of Rolla, is one of a few proponents on the board who believes the word “system” should be dropped. Instead, he argues the schools all operate as the University of Missouri with four campuses.

“I tend to think if we’re one ship, we’re stronger,” he said. “But I can’t get a feel after four years on the board whether the people in this room feel like we’re one ship or four ships or seven ships.”

The logistics on that idea are fuzzy, as each campus has, over time, evolved separately, with differing approaches on everything from human resources to the delivery of online classes. They’re also accredited separately.

Leaders expect to hire a consultant within the week to help identify systemwide duplication.

In the interim, university system President Mun Choi — who was installed in his position in March — has made an effort to address some of that [by merging multiple divisions between the system office and Mizzou](#).

Accountable to taxpayers

Barb Bichelmeyer, provost of the University of Missouri-Kansas City, argued that the events at Mizzou in 2015 demonstrated how the four campuses are tethered together, particularly in terms of public perception.

Bichelmeyer was referring to racist incidents at and near Mizzou, which triggered student protests and, ultimately, toppled campus and system leadership. Those events, she said, “significantly impacted everything I did as a provost in my first year.”

With new leadership in place at the system and [a permanent chancellor coming to Mizzou](#), it was clear during the two-day session that rebranding is the next big effort — but not just of Mizzou, and not just for prospective students.

Curators also spoke broadly about reaching out to the general public to promote the benefits of programs like MU Extension, as well as research that helps the economy. Ideally that marketing would come as students themselves share their stories with the public and with legislators.

System leaders have recently stated the need to prove to legislators that the university is on the path to becoming a good steward of state dollars. In January, Gov. Eric Greitens announced funding withholds to all public colleges, followed by a dip in state funding for the current budget year and finally, more withholds. The cuts affect all public schools, but coupled with a dip in tuition revenue projections at Mizzou, UMKC and UMSL, they add pressure for the system.

Amid that political action in Jefferson City, the Board of Curators has itself undergone a transformation, with three new members appointed by Greitens — two Republicans and one Democrat. The governor is set to appoint two more curators and the student representative in coming weeks, according to multiple sources, meaning his appointees will form the majority on the nine-person board.

The new voices have, in some cases, shifted the conversation on the board, particularly when it comes to making the system more accountable to taxpayers.

Jeff Layman, a senior vice president at the Morgan Stanley investment office in Springfield, is among the new Republican curators appointed by Greitens.

He said the difficult position the University of Missouri faces now cannot be blamed entirely on what happened in 2015. Leaders at recent board meetings have told curators about Mizzou's first-ever strategic enrollment plan. Meanwhile curators are pushing for system and campus leaders to prioritize projects that require funding. Layman pointed to those as examples of a changing tide.

“How do we spend the money” is an issue Layman said colleges everywhere are battling.

“Money is allocated where it's treated the best,” he said, adding that the days of anything else “are over.”

Tough talks

Throughout this week's conversation, it's clear the curators, the campus leaders and the president are seeking new ways to define their roles and how the four campuses are led.

No more does it appear curators will be content with deferring to campus and system leaders to hash out solutions to the biggest issues they face.

Board chairman Maurice Graham, a St. Louis lawyer, wants the public to see the board as a body that will solve problems, not just identify them.

"It's important that the public and those people who care about the university know what the Board of Curators is doing to address some of the issues that we've experienced not just in Columbia but the four campuses," Graham said. "These are issues that all universities are talking about but that have particular significance for us."

The board needs to address problems such as falling enrollment and negative perception "aggressively and with great transparency," he said. Since he took the helm of the board in January, the group has opened part of each meeting's agenda to tackle a pressing issue through public dialogue.

The newest three curators appear comfortable with that approach, which is raw and sometimes uncomfortable. Each played a key role in the conversations this week addressing the system's challenges.

Layman, one of the three new additions, said he volunteered to be on the board because of how important the university system is to the state. It merits the difficult talks, he said.

"The board is very serious about having open and honest conversations about where we currently stand," he said. "I believe that's necessary in order to move forward as we focus on our very bright future."

University of Missouri joins Clemson, Auburn in effort to aid tigers

By Rudi Keller

Wild tigers need a [lot of space](#) and for the humans that live near them, that can be a problem.

It is a problem for tigers when humans cut down forests or build roads through their habitat. And it can be a problem for people when tigers eat their livestock [or family members](#).

How to protect both is one of the issues that will be studied by the U.S. Tiger University Consortium, a joint effort led by Auburn and Clemson and joined by the University of Missouri and Louisiana State University. A project aligned with the Global Tiger Initiative, it will begin with four doctoral students from India – two each at Clemson and Auburn – studying the issues that endanger tigers in the wild.

“The beauty is combining the efforts of these universities based on their strengths,” said Janaki Alavalapati, dean of the Auburn University School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences. “Ours may be ecology. For Clemson, it may be the human dimension of managing tigers in the global communities.”

All four schools use tigers as their sports mascots. After Clemson and Auburn issued a news release about the project, the University of Memphis, another school with a tiger mascot, has become interested, Alavalapati said, and there’s room for more.

There are more than 40 colleges and universities who use tigers as a mascot, including the Lincoln University Blue Tigers.

MU’s full role in the consortium hasn’t been determined but it wants to “contribute significantly to the consortium and its mission,” said Shibu Jose, director of the School of Natural Resources. “We do have the expertise and we have been part of tiger projects in Nepal.”

Healthy tiger populations mean a healthy habitat for all the species that live alongside tigers, Jose said.

“The way I see this, efforts to conserve a majestic species like tigers should help to conserve many other associated species in that habitat,” he said.

The consortium grew out of an April trip to India by provosts from Clemson and Auburn, said Brett Wright, dean of college of behavioral and social health sciences. Clemson President James Clements is a member of the Global Tiger Initiative Council, a group of business and

conservation leaders formed to assist the [Global Tiger Forum](#) to save wild tigers and increase their numbers, with a goal of doubling populations by 2022.

The population of wild tigers is about 3,900, the forum estimates. India and Nepal have seen some success in restoring tiger populations but some of the 13 countries where tigers roam wild have fewer than 10 animals, according to a report about the initiative on the World Bank website.

Candidates for the doctoral program will be chosen from applicants who are professionals with experience dealing with tigers in the forest of India, Wright said. They will do course work for a year in the United States and return home for six months of field work, he said.

Tigers need a stable and healthy habitat for populations to thrive, Alavalapati said. And they need protection.

“Poaching is not a trivial problem in most of these countries,” he said. “In China, a dead tiger is worth about \$100,000. In a way, those kinds of factors are very difficult to control.”

Shannon McKinley, president of the student [“Tigers for Tigers”](#) group at MU, said participation in the consortium should help her organization attract members. Founded in 1999, Tigers for Tigers currently has about 20 members, McKinley said.

A national Tigers for Tigers coalition has become less active, with many individual college groups not participating, she said.

“We can get together and raise awareness,” McKinley said. “We could do a lot more if we came together.”



(Daily Star Journal, Franklin County, Mo. Daily Newspaper)

Piglets aid people?

Jul 20, 2017 Updated 21 hrs ago

Generated from New Bureau press release: [Piglets Might Unlock Keys to In Vitro Fertilization in Humans](#)

Columbia – The cost of in vitro fertilization might drop based on research that started with piglets at the University of Missouri published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science.

Parents seeking to have children through in vitro fertilization spend between \$12,000 and \$15,000 each session, plus the cost of medications, which could average between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

Researchers R. Michael Roberts and Randall Prather worked with pigs to research stem cells and the mechanisms these cells use to proliferate, communicate and grow in the body. During an attempt to improve how they grow these cells, researchers discovered a method that uses a liquid medium and improves the success of IVF in pigs.

“It was a serendipitous discovery, really,” Roberts said. “Generally, there are multiple steps to producing viable embryos that we can then implant in pigs and cows involved in our research; however, it’s costly and sometimes yields very little return. We were seeking a way to do that more efficiently and stumbled upon a method that may have implications in human fertility clinics as well.”

In IVF involving pigs, scientists first extract oocytes, or “eggs” from female pigs, and the “nurse” cells that surround them, and place them in a chemical environment designed to mature

the eggs. The eggs are fertilized to create zygotes, or single-celled embryos that are allowed to develop for six days. These embryos are transferred back into a female pig with the hope of achieving a successful pregnancy and healthy piglets.

“The chance of generating a successful piglet after all those steps is very low; only 1-2 percent of the original oocytes make it that far,” Roberts said. “Normally, researchers overcome this low success rate by implanting large numbers of embryos, but that takes a lot of time and money.”

Ye Yuan, a former research assistant professor in Roberts’ lab, and **Lee Spate**, a senior research specialist in Animal Sciences, worked to increase the efficiency and quality of piglet embryos before implantation.

In one study, the team analyzed various special growth factors used when culturing pig stem cells and added two factors - fibroblast growth factor 2 and leukemia inhibitory factor. This combination, added to insulin-like growth factor, created the special fluid environment the oocytes needed to become competent for fertilization and further development to embryos that could provide a successful pregnancy.

Together, the three compounds create the chemical medium called “FLI,” which could revolutionize both piglet and human IVF treatments; a patent application has been filed through the MU Office of Technology Management and Industry Relations to encourage commercialization of the new method.

“It improved every aspect of the whole process and almost doubled the efficiency of oocyte maturation,” Roberts said. “Whenever you’re doing science, you’d like to think you’re doing something that could be useful. When we started it wasn’t to improve fertility IVF in women, it was to just get better oocytes in pigs. Now it’s possible that FLI medium could become important in bovine embryo work and possibly even help with human IVF.”

The study, “Quadrupling efficiency in production of genetically modified pigs through improved oocyte maturation,” is supported by the National Institutes of Health and the University of Missouri Food for the 21st Century Program.

Missourinet

(Story aired as a two-part series; syndicated to more than 60 radio stations throughout Missouri)

Missouri first lady: Missile defense should not be U.S.'s first line of defense with North Korea

BY [ALISA NELSON](#)

Generated from News Bureau direct pitch

Missouri first lady Sheena Greitens says the U.S. and international community should take several steps to deal with North Korea's growing threats. Greitens, who is a Mizzou political science professor and expert on Korean issues, tells Missourinet that missile defense should not be the U.S.'s first line of defense.

“The reality is, missile defense is expensive,” says Dr. Greitens. “What we should fundamentally be trying to do is to deal with North Korea’s behavior and the North Korean program. That’s the source of the problem and that’s where our efforts should really be focused.”

The U.S. is working on its Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, otherwise known as THAAD. The missile defense program is meant to shoot down North Korea’s shorter range ballistic missiles.

She says the U.S. should offer North Korea a very clear deal about rolling back its nuclear weapons program. Greitens is not confident that strategy will work but she says it’s the best one the U.S. has. Since Kim Jong Un took power in 2012, North Korea has noticeably ramped up its rate of missile and nuclear testing.

The country recently launched an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) test about three years earlier than projected. The missile is believed to have the capability of reaching Alaska and some of the western states. Greitens says the U.S. missed a key opportunity with North Korea in 2012 to apply economic pressure and prevent the country from crossing a threshold.

“Most missile programs, when they begin, have a 50% or greater failure rate. The failure rate that we have seen is not uncommon. What has been fairly unusual is that North Korea has followed each failure with a successful test more quickly than expected,” says Greitens.

She says the U.S.'s military exercises with South Korea must continue no matter what. The training drills by land, air and sea are meant to serve as a show of strength.

North Korea and China once proposed freezing North Korea's nuclear weapons program in exchange for the U.S. halting its military exercises. Greitens says that's not a good trade for the U.S. to make.

"Military exercises are perfectly legal. Tons of countries do them. The United States and South Korea have always done them as part of an alliance that's in U.S. law. The U.S. shouldn't trade its legal activities for a temporary stop to North Korea's illegal weapons program," says Greitens. "What I think we should do is keep doing those exercises and really aggressively look for ways to constrict the money and the material that is flowing into North Korea's weapons program to make sure that it doesn't progress any further."

According to Greitens, China is a very important piece of the puzzle. Money talks. She thinks Chinese businesses should be given a tough choice.

"I think you have to give the banks and the businesses that do business with North Korea a very clear choice and say 'Look. Previously, you've been able to do business with North Korea but put your money in bank accounts that then have access to the U.S. financial system. You can't do that anymore,'" says Greitens.

About 80% to 90% of North Korea's trade is with China. The U.S. has also asked the Philippines and India, which also do trade there, to end those ties with North Korea.

Russia also has a role to play, according to Greitens. She says a two-track strategy might be necessary.

"We're not only talking about constricting normal, legal trade to convince North Korea to change course," says Greitens. "We're also talking about really cutting off illegal sources of money because those could go into a black hole in North Korea and could be used for any purpose, whether it's propping up the regime or funding the weapons program. So Russia, I think, is important both from this legal, economic perspective but also from its illicit economic activities."

Greitens says the U.S. has struggled to understand North Korea's decision making.

"North Korea, I believe, is rational. I believe what it does is geared at ensuring its own survival, but it doesn't make those calculations quite the way that we might," Greitens says.

Her concern is not grasping North Korea officials' train of thought will lead the U.S. to miss a move.

T COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Former UM surgeon sentenced

A former **University of Missouri Hospital surgeon was sentenced Wednesday to probation after pleading to charges of harassment.**

Judge Kevin Crane sentenced Gregory D. McClain, 45, of Columbia to two years of probation and suspended a one-year prison term for two counts of misdemeanor harassment.

McClain pleaded guilty to the two counts Monday in Boone County Court. McClain was originally charged with two counts of aggravated stalking, a felony, for allegedly threatening to kill two people in late 2014 and spring 2015.

According to a probable cause statement an MU police detective filed in the case, McClain or another man, Jimmy L. Thomas, 42, of Houston, called a woman and her supervisor several times between December 2014 and March 2015 and told them both to back off a sexual harassment claim against McClain or he would harm or kill them. Thomas is charged with two counts of aggravated stalking. According to a probable cause statement, the calls either came from Thomas' or McClain's cellphone. Thomas' case is still open.

McClain worked at University Hospital and MU for 18 months.

MISSOURIAN

Composers descend upon Columbia for new-music festival

CONNOR LAGORE, 18 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — **Every inch of the Missouri Theatre will be filled with the sounds of never-before-heard music for the annual Mizzou International Composers Festival next week.**

The festival, which kicks off Monday and goes through July 29, consists of numerous concerts and lectures featuring the music of two distinguished guest composers, eight resident composers and a collection of festival alumni.

This is the festival's eighth year. It started in 2010 under the name "Mizzou New Music Summer Festival"* as a collaboration between MU's School of Music Composition Department and prominent contemporary music ensemble Alarm Will Sound, festival managing director Jacob Gotlib said.

The name of the festival was changed because of how the festival came to benefit the resident composers that were a part of it and their experience of working with an accomplished ensemble such as Alarm Will Sound.

"The name changed to Mizzou International Composers Festival in 2013 to reflect the emphasis on composition and the educational aspect of this festival for the composers we've invited," Gotlib said.

The composers are selected from a group of applicants by faculty from the composition department in the school of music and members of Alarm Will Sound in order to select a group of resident composers that each have a unique sound.

"We try to cultivate variety," Gotlib said, "A variety of aesthetic viewpoints, a variety of artistic practices, sometimes ones that are seemingly in conflict with one another."

Because Alarm Will Sound is working with the composers itself on the composers' original music, the ensemble members input is particularly important.

"That allows them to balance the issues of choosing a set of composers that are both aesthetically varied and can write well for the ensemble," Gotlib said.

These eight composers have from December until May to write an original work that debuts at the festival, but each have only four rehearsals and a dress rehearsal with Alarm Will Sound to perfect their piece. It may not seem like much time to work together, but the experience of Alarm Will Sound goes a long way in perfecting the composers' work.

“You’d be amazed at what musicians of this high-level of artistry and experience can accomplish in just a few days,” Gotlib said.

This year, 260 artists applied to be a part of the festival, which is the highest number of applicants the festival has ever seen. From those, seven composers were chosen, as well as a recent graduate from MU. Gotlib said that the festival typically features a MU student or recent graduate as one of the resident composers.

The guest composers, Dan Visconti and Georg Friedrich Haas*, are already world-renowned members of the field who will have their own music performed by Alarm Will Sound as well as give lectures throughout the week.

The festival, which is funded by the Sinquefield Charitable Foundation, has experienced substantial growth since its inception. Because of this growth, Gotlib said working with the festival and Alarm Will Sound has become much more attractive.

“Composers are very excited to come here,” Gotlib said. “Each year, the festival is gaining visibility, so it becomes easier to invite internationally-renowned names due to the reputation of Mizzou, the festival and Alarm Will Sound.”

A number of presentations and performances are free and open to the public. Others require tickets. [A full schedule and other information](#) can be found on the MU School of Music’s website.

MISSOURIAN



Missouri ordered to pay Planned Parenthood's legal bills

KELLYN ALISE NETTLES, 14 hrs ago

A federal appeals court has upheld a judge's order that Missouri taxpayers pay more than \$156,000 to cover Planned Parenthood's legal bills tied to a lawsuit over a clinic's abortion license.

The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on Thursday affirmed U.S. District Judge Nanette Laughrey's August 2016 decision that the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services must pay the attorneys' fees and expenses incurred by what now is Planned Parenthood Great Plains.

Laughrey also blocked the state from revoking the Columbia clinic's abortion license.

Since the ruling was appealed so many times, the \$156,000 owed to Planned Parenthood is just a base number, says Bonyen Lee-Gilmore, director of communications and marketing for the organization. A final tally is now being calculated.

Lee-Gilmore also said the clinic is waiting for the state to send its new abortion license so it can resume performing abortions in Columbia.

“The ball is kind of in the state’s court, as far as licensing goes,” Lee-Gilmore said.

The legal battle began over Missouri’s “refer and follow” privilege requirement for abortion providers. That law required physicians performing abortions to have referral privileges at a local hospital.

The refer and follow requirement allowed physician Colleen McNicholas to perform medical — but not surgical — abortions at the Columbia Planned Parenthood clinic. On Sept. 24, 2015, McNicholas lost those privileges after a review by MU Health Care, which had been prompted by an investigation by former state Sen. Kurt Schaefer into the relationship between MU and Planned Parenthood.

Two months later, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services attempted to revoke the clinic’s abortion facility license because it no longer had a physician who could perform abortions. Planned Parenthood then filed a federal lawsuit.

In December of the same year, Laughrey granted the clinic a preliminary injunction that allowed it to keep its license while it searched for a physician with privileges to work at the clinic. However, the clinic could not find another physician before the license expired on June 30, 2016.

Before the license expired, Laughrey ruled in favor of Planned Parenthood’s lawsuit, stating that “political pressure led to unequal treatment that violated rights of Planned Parenthood when the state attempted to revoke the abortion license at the Columbia clinic.”

Laughrey ordered state taxpayers to pay Planned Parenthood’s legal bills in 2016, but former Attorney General Chris Koster appealed the ruling.

“Missouri is just an example of how states across the country are having to pay out six figures by defending these bills they know well that are unconstitutional,” Lee-Gilmore said.

The Attorney General’s office, which represented the Department of Health and Senior Services, did not return a call seeking comment.

Associated Press reports contributed to this story.

Similar stories ran statewide.



Proposed Federal Policy Would Cripple University Research

NO MU MENTION

A proposal by the federal Office of Management and Budget would leave higher education research institutions in every state in an impossible situation, write the chief research officers of 12 Florida colleges and universities.

By [12 Chief Research Officers](#)

July 21, 2017

Over the past 20 years, technologies based on university research have launched entire new industries, cured fatal diseases and even put new foods on your grocery store shelves. Since 1996, these technologies have [contributed](#) an estimated \$1.3 trillion and 4.2 million jobs to the American economy. In 2015, Florida's state universities spun out 48 start-ups and achieved a multitude of scientific breakthroughs in health, engineering, agriculture and basic sciences.

The partnership between America's research universities, industry and the federal government is the envy of the world. But a proposal by the federal Office of Management and Budget to severely cut the reimbursement government agencies make to universities for shared research costs threatens to destroy it.

University research expenses are typically divided into two buckets of money. Money in the first bucket pays for the direct costs of the project: salaries for researchers and stipends for graduate assistants, lab equipment and supplies, and travel.

The money in the second bucket funds all the other things researchers need to do their work, like the building itself; electricity; heating, air-conditioning and other utilities; janitorial services;

building security; laboratory safety equipment; and information technology. It also pays the salaries of the support staff members who help scientists develop and submit highly technical research proposals, manage millions of dollars in public funds, and comply with a myriad of federal rules and regulations. These highly trained professionals enable the scientists to focus on what they do best, whether it's finding a cure for diabetes or protecting computer systems from ransomware.

In the business world, these are called overhead costs.

For most universities, such overhead costs amount to about \$1 for every \$2 spent directly on the research. They are determined not by the universities but by the federal government through a rigorous review process.

But the federal Office of Management and Budget proposes to pay as little as 20 cents for every \$2 of research, grossly shortchanging universities and leaving them with the option to either pick up the tab or simply not do the research. You don't need an M.B.A. to understand that any business forced to sell its services for less than its costs is doomed. For the universities within Florida's State University System, this "tab" would be more than \$100 million per year, a cost that would have to be covered with other university revenues. As such, it would place the universities in the state of Florida, and every other state, in an impossible situation -- either subsidize federally funded research with other university money or quit doing research on next-generation technologies and medical treatments.

As the chief research officers for Florida's 12 state universities, we are committed to recovering the costs for services provided to the federal government at no loss to the institution. We urge our representatives in Washington to make every effort to stave off this action by OMB and the agencies. Otherwise, the research efforts at our universities, a shining beacon of American know-how that has been decades in the making, will be crippled. Faculty members at each of our 12 institutions are working each day to generate new discoveries for the benefit of current and future generations in our state and nation. We hope to continue these efforts for many years to come.

Daniel Flynn, Vice President for Research, Florida Atlantic University
Andrés Gil, Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Florida International University
John Kantner, assistant vice President for research, University of North Florida
Elizabeth Klonoff, vice president for research, University of Central Florida
Timothy Moore, vice president for research, Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University
Pam Northrup, vice president for research and strategic innovation, University of West Florida
David Norton, vice president for research, University of Florida
Gary Ostrander, vice president for research, Florida State University
Lee Ann Rodríguez, director of the office of research, New College of Florida
Paul Sanberg, senior vice president for research, University of South Florida
Jeanne Viviani, director of sponsored programs, Florida Polytechnic University
Tachung Yih, associate vice president for research, Florida Gulf Coast University



Education Spending in the Crosshairs

NO MU MENTION

Many cuts proposed by Trump have been avoided in House appropriations bill, but GOP budget resolution could lead to major changes to student aid.

By

[Andrew Kreighbaum](#)

July 21, 2017

Student aid advocates didn't find much to like in a House education appropriations bill released last week -- lawmakers removed billions from the Pell Grant surplus while taking no significant steps to improve college access. But educators could at least find consolation in the fact that the committee didn't follow through on the drastic cuts to many aid programs proposed in the White House budget in May.

Advocacy groups found no such consolation in the House budget resolution released this week. The document calls for a rewrite of the tax code and for hundreds of billions in cuts to federal programs. More significant for advocates is reconciliation language included in the resolution that calls for \$203 billion in mandatory spending cuts over the next 10 years -- \$20 billion of that coming from programs overseen by the House education committee.

Those savings would come on top of cuts already made to education programs through the appropriations process. And if the resolution passes, student aid groups say that would likely mean Congress adopts one or more of the drastic changes to student loan programs contemplated by the Trump budget -- elimination of Public Service Loan Forgiveness, ending interest free undergraduate loans or changing income-based loan repayment plans.

“There’s no way they don’t touch Pell and student loans,” said Jessica Thompson, the policy and research director at the Institute for College Access and Success.

The Republican budget resolution envisions more than \$236 billion in cuts to mandatory spending for education programs over 10 years. Those savings, GOP staff said this week, could be realized through eliminating mandatory funding for Pell Grants and pursuing reforms to student loan programs. The budget also assumes that funding for Pell Grants would be made entirely discretionary, which would put more pressure on lawmakers to find money for the program each year. Instructions for House committees to find additional savings through reconciliation, an expedited legislative tool that allows Congress to pass spending measures with a simple majority, are separate from that budget plan but part of the same resolution.

While the budget outline imagines a drastic change to student aid programs, it is in line with previous Republican budget plans offered by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, the chair of the budget committee before becoming Speaker. But previous Ryan budget plans came under a divided government. Republicans now hold both chambers of Congress and the White House and could look to make ambitious changes to student aid policy, among a host of other federal programs.

“The budget resolution as it was presented Wednesday presents a much more significant threat to affordability and completion than the appropriations package,” said Kelly McManus, director of

government affairs at Ed Trust.

Even if the budget resolution passes, it wouldn't be binding on lawmakers. But the reconciliation language would be and could be passed without the threat of a Senate filibuster. Making spending reductions through that route would allow Republican leaders to offset the costs of big planned tax cuts without the support of any Democrats. That's why advocacy groups are especially concerned about how the education committee would deliver on those required savings.

A spokesman for Representative Virginia Foxx, the North Carolina Republican who chairs the House education committee, said the budget committee had just completed its work and Foxx's committee is currently reviewing the proposed bill.

Jason Delisle, a higher ed policy analyst and resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, said Foxx's committee would have multiple ways of finding the \$20 billion in savings called for in the reconciliation language. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that eliminating Public Service Loan Forgiveness would save \$25 billion, he said. And Delisle argued that move wouldn't make college less affordable for low-income students who have yet to enroll in college.

"All of these claims about how these proposals would harm low-income students and harm access for undergraduates sort of melt away," he said.

Student aid groups have argued that the program is an important policy to make careers in the government, teaching and nonprofit sectors attractive for student borrowers who would otherwise seek out higher-paying jobs in the private sector. Public Service Loan Forgiveness, which was created in 2007, forgives a student's remaining loan debt after they make 120 monthly payments while working at a qualified employer.

The Heritage Foundation also backed eliminating PSLF but said the House budget could have gone further in reducing education spending. Mary Clare Amselem, a policy analyst at Heritage,

said the House should also consolidate existing federal loan programs into a single loan option -- preferably with a borrowing cap.

“Our position is that the best way to improve college affordability is to limit subsidized federal loans, which evidence suggests leads to tuition inflation,” she said. “Private loans by contrast could put some downward pressure on increasing tuition prices.”

The House education committee, which will report back to budget writers with proposed cuts to mandatory programs, would likely choose from policy changes long discussed among Republicans, including those in the White House budget.

Policy changes to student aid programs through reauthorization of the Higher Education Act appear to be a distant possibility with the Senate preoccupied with confirmations, health care-legislation and other higher-priority matters. But Justin Draeger, the president and CEO of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, said the budget process could potentially include real changes to policy via congressional spending decisions.

“Right now, things that are moving are largely budget related. If people are looking for a reauthorization, this is it,” he said. “The size and scope and depth of reconciliation instructions, to me, could potentially be as big as any reauthorization.”