Governor announces $4.2 million grant to MU for crop research

By ALAN BURDZIAK

Amid controversy surrounding the University of Missouri and the General Assembly’s barrage of cuts to the institution’s budget, Gov. Jay Nixon was on hand Thursday as he and other officials touted a $4.2 million grant the MU Interdisciplinary Plant Group received to fund crop research.

Shortly after a tour and roundtable discussion with students and the leaders of the project, Nixon fielded questions from reporters and said he hopes the Senate will restore a $56 million increase in higher education funding that House lawmakers axed from his 2017 budget draft.

“I’m disappointed that they’re not joining us in working together to keep tuition down, move this state forward and improve the opportunity for higher education,” Nixon said. “That’s so important.”

During the 2016 legislative session that began in January, lawmakers have sought to punish the UM System’s flagship campus for unrest that led to the November resignations of UM System President Tim Wolfe and MU Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

Student group Concerned Student 1950 brought international attention to MU through demonstrations over racism on campus that sought Wolfe’s ouster. At the same time, faculty members and deans called for Loftin’s dismissal and said he created a “toxic environment through threat, fear and intimidation.”

Some legislators and other politicians have been critical of the university’s response to the protests in November.

The Missouri House on Thursday approved a higher education spending bill that would cut $8.6 million in funding to the UM System, taking $1 million from MU and the rest from system administration. The bill has been sent to the Senate.
Nixon said he thinks interim UM System President Mike Middleton and his staff have done a good job. Asked whether the unrest and its aftermath have hurt MU’s image, Nixon said Middleton and officials are “doing a lot of things to address those challenges.” He deflected a question of whether he is concerned about a projected decrease of 1,500 students at the Columbia campus.

“Students from around the world are choosing” MU, Nixon said. “Faculty members from around the world are choosing the Show-Me State for their careers. … We shouldn’t have a bad week in November slow down the significant progress that this institution and higher education in the Show-Me State are making.”

The governor appeared with Middleton and several other university officials at the Bradford Research Center, 4968 S. Rangeline Road, to announce the grant from the National Science Foundation. Changes in climate and precipitation in the world over the past few decades have made it difficult to grow enough food to feed the Earth’s population, Nixon said. Students and faculty who specialize in plant sciences, biochemistry, biological sciences, computer science and journalism will collaborate on the research project, which will study how the roots of some plants respond to drought conditions.

“The goal is really to understand, get a much more detailed comprehensive understanding of how root growth adapts to drought,” said Robert Sharp, a professor of agronomy at MU and director of the MU Interdisciplinary Plant Group.

Drought has the largest effect on crop yields worldwide, he said, and the four-year project will examine the roots of plants such as wheat, corn and sorghum in simulated drought conditions.

“The work we do should be fundamentally important to helping crop performance in drought both in Missouri and globally,” Sharp said.
MU receives $4.2 million grant to study corn

Watch the story: http://www.komu.com/news/mu-receives-4-2-million-grant-to-study-corn/

COLUMBIA - University of Missouri researchers in the Interdisciplinary Plant Group received a $4.2 million grant Thursday from the National Science Foundation. It will fund a four-year research project on how corn roots grow during drought seasons.

Gov. Jay Nixon toured the Bradford Research Center in Columbia and met with faculty and students from the agricultural school to discuss the grant and how they're working to combat the issue of world hunger.

"The work being done here at the Division of Plant Sciences is a prime example of why investing in higher education is a smart investment with a big return for our state," Nixon said.

This comes a day after MU chancellor Hank Foley announced the school would faces a $32 million budget shortfall, due, in part, to a drop in enrollment ahead of the 2016-17 school year.

Possible cuts in state funding, proposed by some legislators, could also play a part.

"I'm disappointed they're not joining us and working together to keep tuition down and move this state forward and improve the opportunity for higher education," Nixon said. "This is exactly the kind of thing that makes a difference for our a state and a difference for our students and gives a chance to continue to move forward."

Foley said in a statement the university has the resources to attract multi-million dollar federal funding for projects like the corn research.

"The University of Missouri has the strengths of our scientists, undergraduate and graduate students, the facilities and equipment as well as the communication teams to attract multi-million dollar federal funding for this type of project," Foley said.
In addition to research, the project will use funds to hold workshops in which journalists will work with scientists to come up with effective ways to inform the public about research findings.

MISSOURIAN

Nixon calls on lawmakers to restore MU cuts, praises plant research

DAVID SOLER CRESPO, 14 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon urged state lawmakers Thursday to reconsider budget cuts for the four-campus University of Missouri System. Otherwise, he said, students will bear the costs and "difficult decisions will have to be made."

Nixon made the remarks during a roundtable discussion with students, faculty and administrators at MU’s Bradford Research Center east of Columbia. Three students explained their work in the field of plant science, and Nixon applauded their efforts.

"Quite frankly, the scientific insight achieved by these students and faculty are our best hope for increasing food, water and health security," Nixon said.

Before the roundtable, Nixon announced that MU received a $4.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation to work on how corn responds to and resists drought. Robert Sharp, a professor of agronomy and director of MU’s Interdisciplinary Plant Group, will lead four other plant scientists over the course of the four-year project.

According to the National Science Foundation's website, the grant is the second-highest award it has given to MU in the past five years. All told, MU received about $24 million from the foundation in fiscal 2015 out of about $62 million given to universities across the state.

"This is great news for Mizzou and a testament to the outstanding work being done here at the department of plant sciences," Nixon said.
The Missouri House of Representatives approved a budget Thursday that includes $7.6 million in cuts for the UM System and slices an extra $1 million from MU's appropriation, according to The Associated Press. MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley announced Wednesday that MU's decreased enrollment would lead to a $32 million budget gap and necessitate a hiring freeze and a 5 percent cut to MU's general revenue budget in the next fiscal year.

Nixon on Thursday said he had included a $56 million increase for higher education performance funding in his budget and that the House's decision goes against his efforts.

"We need to support the school, we need to support it now when we have the resources because we're a growing economy," Nixon said.

Thomas Payne, vice chancellor and dean of the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, echoed Nixon on the cuts.

"We need to minimize or prevent any budget reductions because it's just going to translate to an impact on what we do and are here for, and that's servicing our students in research and extension work," Payne said.

After the roundtable, Nixon answered questions about recent events at MU including the budget, decreasing enrollment and the university's image and reputation.

He said he was impressed at the efforts by UM System Interim President Mike Middleton and his team to restore the brand of the university after protests in the fall semester that called for racial tolerance and more diversity.

Middleton attended the grant announcement but did not speak publicly at the event.

"We shouldn't have a bad week in November slow down the significant progress that this institution in higher education and the Show-Me State is making," Nixon said.
MU's budget shortfalls were predicted because the campus expects about 1,500 fewer students to be enrolled by next fall, according to previous Missourian reporting. Nixon said he believes the predicted decrease in enrollment is a national trend.

Nixon appointed a nonvoting student representative to the Board of Curators earlier in the day, but three voting positions on the board remain open.

When asked about the remarks made by Senate President Pro Tem Ron Richard that legislators were not in a hurry to appoint new curators, Nixon said interviews had been conducted and "we're working to get those appointments in line so we can get a full board."

If appointments were not made during the regular legislative session, Nixon said he would appoint curators himself, "so we can get a full board for the important decisions they have to make in the coming months."

**Governor Nixon weighs in on higher education funding**

**Columbia, Mo. -**
Governor Nixon spoke out about college funding in Columbia Thursday. He said the Missouri House of Representatives made the wrong decision when it voted to strip an increase from his budget plan.

Gov. Nixon went on to say the state is heavily invested in education and now is not the time to stop. Higher education is the best way, Gov. Nixon explained, to ensure continued economic growth in the state.

Gov. Nixon was at MU's Bradford Research Center Thursday. Researchers at the center study crops. Gov. Nixon announced a more than $4 million research grant for the center.

The Governor also took time to talk about higher education funding.
His 2017 budget calls for a $56 million increase in performance funding for higher education, including a tuition freeze.

Colleges and Universities have agreed to the freeze if they get the $56 million. However, this week the Missouri House of Representatives approved a budget that didn't include an increase.

Gov. Nixon says it's important for the state legislature to support higher ed, "The best economic development tool we've got and the best guarantee that we'll continue growth in our economy, an unemployment rate far lower than national average and investment from around the world here is education and especially higher education."

Gov. Nixon says if the Senate doesn't put the funding increase back into the budget, tuition for students across the state could go up, and that the state has money for the increase.

The state legislature must approve the budget by early May. The latest version from the Missouri House of Representatives also blocks Medicaid patients from Planned Parenthood.

$27B budget that includes UM System cuts approved by Mo. House

JEFFERSON CITY • The passage of next year's $27.1 billion budget Thursday by the Missouri House once again was host to legislative concerns about the University of Missouri System.

"I have watched for seven months as (Mizzou) was dragged through the muck in the national news and I think a large part of it was UM's doing," said Rep. Jay Barnes, R-Jefferson City.

Missouri House members signed off Thursday on the 2017 budget that begins July 1, which includes an $8.7 million cut to the university. About $7.7 million of that cut was taken from the UM System administration, which includes the president's office and the board of curators. An additional $1 million was taken from the UM-Columbia campus and redirected to Lincoln University to boost its ability to match federal land grant funding. The 13 budget bills now move to the Senate for further debate.
Lawmakers have been threatening to punish the UM System after racial turmoil on the Columbia campus led to a leadership shake-up last fall. Members of the House and Senate have threatened special audits and called for the removal of Melissa Click, who was recently fired after she was caught on video in November trying to block journalists from recording student demonstrations.

"In the real world, employees get fired for the behavior Professor Click did," said Rep. Denny Hoskins, R-Warrensburg. "MU is going to learn a hard lesson. I think everyone in this body wants the university to succeed but the problems are out of control at the MU campus and need to be fixed."

The budget approved Thursday is based on an estimated 3.1 percent revenue growth, a pared back estimate from Gov. Jay Nixon’s 4.1 percent projection. To make up for this difference, House Budget Leader Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, plans to implement a surplus revenue fund, where money would be funneled if the state exceeds the House’s revenue projection. Dan Haug, Nixon’s budget director, estimates the state will reach Nixon’s projection with about three days left in the budget year.

A $9.4 million increase for public higher education institutions based on performance funding is housed in this fund. The UM System was shut out of this potential increase as well.

Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, said lawmakers should be rallying behind the UM System now more than ever.

"While a lot of things have happened in the last six months at (the university), the important thing that is happening is that we’re addressing something that has been an issue for many centuries in our nation," Kendrick said. "I encourage you not to do any more damage to the university and restore the budget cuts in the future."

For the surplus revenue fund to come into play, lawmakers must approve a measure instituting it. There was some concern in the chamber about what will happen to that
measure after Senate Republicans used a rare parliamentary maneuver, known as a previous question, to shut down a more than 37-hour Democratic filibuster on a same sex marriage proposal. Angry Senate Democrats spent Thursday delaying any action in the Senate and likely will continue to do so in the final two months of session.

When asked about the Senate being able to pass the surplus revenue fund, Flanigan said he has "no idea what the Senate will be able to do or not be able to."

Also dependent on the surplus revenue fund is $30 million for a cost sharing program meant to offset some of the transportation department's funding woes. The program would allow the department to split the cost of transportation system projects with local communities. The department suspended its cost-share program in 2014 as its construction budget continued to decline.

Legislative leaders have noted this program would not fix all the monetary problems facing the department, but they say it could help. Republican House Speaker Todd Richardson previously has said he'd rather find money within the budget for the department rather than increasing the state's 17-cent-per-gallon gas tax, which has not changed in 20 years.

Republican lawmakers also stripped $380,000 from the Department of Social Services budget, which oversees the state's Medicaid program, for Medicaid funding for Planned Parenthood services. That amount, based on 2014 budget year expenditures for Planned Parenthood, includes cervical exams, human papillomavirus vaccines and birth control. Rep. Robert Ross, R-Yukon, spearheaded this move because he said he doesn't want state dollars going toward abortion.

In that vein, Ross also added wording to the budget prohibiting state funds from going to any entity that counsels women to have abortions or provides non-emergency abortions.
Rep. Stacey Newman, D-Richmond Heights, said she believes this wording would directly impact Medicaid funding for hospitals in the state.

"There are all kinds of medical situations hospitals deal with daily and yet this political amendment is tying their hands," Newman said.

Rep. Marsha Haefner, R-St. Louis, disagreed and said voters "do not want their taxpayer dollars going to abortion services."

Other details of the House’s 2017 budget proposal:

• $71 million increase for the Foundation Formula, which funds K-12 public schools, and leaves the formula $438 million underfunded. Nixon recommended an $85 million increase.

• $54.1 million for a 2 percent pay raise for state employees. Nixon recommended the same amount.

• $5 million increase for K-12 transportation. Nixon recommended the same amount.

• $4 million increase for the need-based scholarship, Access Missouri. Nixon recommended the same amount.

• $2.5 million increase for the A+ Scholarship. Nixon recommended the same amount.

• $500,000 increase for the Bright Flight scholarship. Nixon recommended the same amount.

• $500,000 for the Urban Education Institute at Harris-Stowe State University.

Lawmakers have until May 6 to complete the budget.

*The bills are House Bills 1-13.*
House vote sends bill with University of Missouri cuts to state Senate

By RUDI KELLER

JEFFERSON CITY — The Missouri House approved a higher education spending bill Thursday that cuts $8.6 million from the University of Missouri as punishment for the outcome of campus protests against racism and missteps on several other high-profile issues.

The 108-46 vote came after about an hour of debate that saw lawmakers question the costs of the Columbia campus student center, faculty teaching waivers and the participation of the Tiger football team in Concerned Student 1950 protests.

“We cannot reward bad behavior,” House Speaker Pro Tem Denny Hoskins, R-Warrensburg, said. “We cannot reward lack of leadership.”

Defenders of the university found their arguments had no impact. State Rep. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, tried to reverse the cuts on Tuesday but did not speak about the bill Thursday, he said, because he has hopes the money will restored in the state Senate.

“The fight’s not over so I don’t want to burn bridges unless I have to,” Rowden said.

The announcement Wednesday that the Columbia campus faces hiring freezes and department budget cuts of 5 percent due to a projected loss of $32 million in tuition revenue had no impact on lawmakers, Rowden said. He spent dozens of hours on the phone over the weekend trying to enlist support for the university, he said.

“I am not sure we are dealing with 163 people with open minds,” he said. “I think it was an uninformed, foolish and ignorant vote.”

Rowden and state Reps. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia and Chuck Basye, R-Rocheport, voted against the bill. State Rep. Caleb Jones, R-Columbia, was the only Boone County lawmaker to vote for it.
Jones has been highly critical of the university’s delay in firing Assistant Professor Melissa Click and the administrative turmoil that resulted from the fall protests, which caused UM System President Tim Wolfe to resign and contributed to the resignation of Columbia campus Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin.

“The cuts to the University of Missouri definitely do affect our land grant system, but the University of Missouri should count their lucky stars that they weren’t zeroed out,” Jones said.

Black lawmakers were critical of the university for long-standing racial problems on campus, with some supporting the cuts and others opposed. Rep. Karla May, D-St. Louis, said the cuts were the price lawmakers were imposing on the university for listening to the Concerned Student 1950 demonstrators.

"We are punishing them because they didn’t stop the rise," May said.

Under the appropriation bill, the university would receive $426 million in state support in the year that begins July 1. The bill divides the university’s appropriation into seven line items, one for each campus as well as lines for the system administration, Extension and multi-campus programs. The cuts take $1 million from the Columbia campus allocation and $7.6 million from the system administration.

During the debate, supporters of the cut found numerous issues to name for their displeasure with the university. State Rep. Rick Brattin, R-Harrisonville, pointed to the university’s student center, recently ranked the best in the nation by Best Student Reviews website.

“MU has invested money in a resort for students, for their jungle gym, their Tiger Lair,” Brattin said. “We have rock walls, we have lazy rivers. It’s absurd.”

The student center was built with fees paid by students and enacted after a student election. Rowden said confusion about how facilities are funded contributed to his inability to reverse the cut.

“You have people who get up and talk about things, these outlandish expenses that are paid for with student fees, the same person who filed a piece of legislation to take scholarships away from athletes we obviously have no power over,” Rowden said, referring to a bill to punish athletes Brattin proposed and promptly withdrew in December.
Rep. J. Eggleston, R-Maysville, said he was upset with the university for allowing almost half of tenured and tenure-track faculty to teach less than a standard load and because it gave privileges to a doctor who performed abortions at Columbia’s Planned Parenthood clinic.

“They are there to instill the occupational skills and knowledge to enable our children to get a job,” Eggleston said. “That’s it.”

Kendrick argued on the floor that the cuts would not hit their intended target. He also questioned whether anyone cared about the long-term impact.

“At a time when we feel like damage has been done to the university, when damage has been done to an integral part of the economic engine of the state, our response is to do damage,” Kendrick said. “I think we have spent more time over the last four months talking about Melissa Click that the issues that are important to our state.”

Webber was standing at a microphone to speak when the House voted to shut down debate. He said he’s frustrated because the House is outraged over events at the university but silent about scandals that toppled House Speaker John Diehl last year and forced Rep. Don Gosen, R-Chesterfield, to resign.

“This 163 people, we don’t have the same speaker we started with because of a scandal, we don’t have all the people we started in January with because of a scandal, and nobody is proposing to cut the House budget,” Webber said. “They want to hold tens of thousands of students and employees to a standard they are unwilling to hold themselves to.”

**State House votes to cut University of Missouri funding**

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — The House voted on Thursday to cut funding for the University of Missouri system following months of criticism from state lawmakers over how the institution’s leadership dealt with student complaints about racial issues on the Columbia campus.
The state budget passed by the Republican-led House cut $7.6 million for the Missouri system and $1 million for the Columbia campus. While this is a small portion of $428.6 million allocated to the system this fiscal year, the state provides about 15 percent of the university’s funding. House Speaker Todd Richardson said those cuts are targeted at administrators, and there’s no reason why they should impact students.

University officials have said a drop in enrollment in the Columbia campus could also lead to a loss of at least $20 million in revenue.

"MU is going to hurt," said Rep. Denny Hoskins, the Warrensburg Republican who serves as House Speaker pro tem. He added that budget cuts might be the only way to make the school change course.

Rep. Kip Kendrick, a Columbia Democrat whose district includes the University of Missouri, said the campus does need to address its racial issues, but acting like racism is unique to the school is disingenuous.

"I hear a lot about the lack of leadership at the University of Missouri. And while I don't necessarily disagree with that, I encourage each and every one in this body to take a long, hard look in the mirror," Kendrick said.

The cuts to the university were part of a $27.3 billion state spending plan which also budgets more money K-12 education.

The relationship between the University of Missouri and lawmakers became strained after November protests over racial issues, which included a graduate student going on a hunger strike and some members of the football team threatened not to play a game in support. The turmoil culminated with the resignations of the former system president and campus chancellor. Some Republican lawmakers said campus leadership let the protests get out of hand and did not respond firmly enough.
Missouri also came under scrutiny for the actions of an assistant professor of communications, Melissa Click, who was fired after she barred student journalists from interviewing and photographing protesters during the unrest. Her actions raised questions about freedom of speech on the campus.

And Republicans have accused the Columbia school of aiding a local Planned Parenthood clinic in getting a state license to provide non-medical abortions.

The budget passed on Thursday renews the fight over Planned Parenthood by barring the Department of Social Services — which administers most of the state's Medicaid program — from making any payments to organizations that provide nonemergency abortions. Current law already prohibits state money from paying for abortions.

Planned Parenthood is still assessing whether other state funds will be affected, spokeswoman Sarah Felts said Thursday.

Basic aid for K-12 schools would get a $70 million boost from their appropriation of nearly $3.3 billion this fiscal year. But that would still be about $440 million less than what is required to fully fund public schools under a state formula.

The House has based its budget off a lower growth estimate than Gov. Jay Nixon. So if the state's revenues grow higher than 3.1 percent — the House's more conservative projection, compared to Nixon's 4.1 percent estimate — the extra money will go into a surplus fund, which will pay for items such as performance-based funding for public colleges and a cost-share program for transportation projects.

The budget will next head to the Senate. Lawmakers have until May 6 to pass a final spending plan.
Missouri House passes $27 billion spending plan

JEFFERSON CITY (AP) — The Missouri House has passed a budget with more than $27 billion in spending for the next fiscal year.

The Republican-led House passed 13 appropriation bills Thursday over some Democrats’ objections.

The budget includes wording to block Medicaid patients from getting any health care services from Planned Parenthood when the fiscal year starts July 1. It also includes about $7.6 million in budget cuts for the University of Missouri system and a further $1 million cut to the Columbia campus.

Basic aid for K-12 schools would get a $70 million boost, but that would still be about $440 million less than what’s needed to fully fund public schools.

The budget will next head to the Senate. Lawmakers have until May 6 to pass a final spending plan.

House approves more than $7.6 million UM System budget cuts
Jefferson City, MO — The Missouri House Thursday afternoon approved a $27 billion budget that boosts education funding by less than the amount recommended by Governor Jay Nixon.

But, the spotlight is on more than eight million dollars in cuts to the University of Missouri System.

House budget writers have talked for weeks about using the budget to send a message to the university.

Many lawmakers are still upset over the administration's handling of the campus demonstrations last fall and the controversy surrounding Professor Melissa Click.

The budget cuts about $7.6 million from the UM System and another one million from the Columbia campus, specifically.

House leaders insist University of Missouri students should not suffer as a result of cuts to university administrators.

They said the legislature's commitment to higher education has not diminished.

"We have a higher education budget that's, I believe, higher than it's ever been. This legislature has always invested in higher education. When there have been reductions or cuts or withholds, those have always come from the second floor and not from the legislature," Representative Todd Richardson (R) House Speaker said.
The House plan increases basic aid for K-12 education by $70 million, but that's still about $440 million less than what's needed to fully fund public schools.

The budget now moves to the Senate.

Lawmakers have until May 6th to pass a final spending plan.

Missouri House of Representatives talk University of Missouri budget cuts


** Millions of dollars for the University of Missouri were on the chopping block Thursday as the Missouri House of Representatives voted to approve $8.6 million in cuts to the system. **

After months of controversy and unrest within the college system, the Missouri House decided it was time to take drastic measures.

State Rep. Jay Barnes, (R) of Jefferson City said, "What I've watched for 7 months is my double-alma mater dragged through the muck on the national news ... and I think a large part of it was the university's own doing."

State Rep. Karla May, (D) of St. Louis: "We have a responsibility to lead them to eradicate inequality on any campus in this state."

Instead of the usual increase of state funds, the House approved slashing the UM system's budget by $8.6 million. That's about 2% of what the system gets from the state.

"They think that changes need to be made," said Speaker Pro Tem Denny Hoskins, (R) of Warrensburg, “One of the ways to do those changes here in the general assembly is through power of the purse. So, we are the ones who decide how to appropriate those funds."
The UM system is now facing more than a 2% cut in state funding. It anticipates next year's enrollment to be about 1,500 fewer students than this year. Some lawmakers say all that lost revenue will affect the wrong people.

State Rep. Chuck Basye, (R) of Rocheport said, "These budget cuts are not gonna hit the intended target. Lower-paid employees and the students I think they're gonna feel the worst of it."

"They're gonna be felt by students in the way of decreased educational opportunities they're gonna be felt by the low lower income university employees, there's gonna be a hiring freeze," said State Rep. Stephen Webber, (D) of Columbia.

Many representatives on both sides of the aisle believe that $8.6 million budget cut could manifest itself in higher tuition rates.

This year, the UM Board of Curators postponed their tuition discussion that usually takes place in February.

**State House lawmakers ok cuts to MU, university system**


JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -

**ABC 17 News has confirmed state lawmakers in the House voted Thursday to approve $8.6 million in cuts to the University of Missouri system, including Mizzou.**

ABC 17 News has reporters at the capitol in Jefferson City, speaking with budget leaders.

Approval is still needed in the Senate in order to finalize the state's funding for the UM system.
Low enrollment at MU brings a hiring freeze and no raises

Racially charged protests may be partially to blame for drop

Decrease contributes to projected $32 million budget gap

Some students fear Missouri will increase fees, slash services

BY MARÁ ROSE WILLIAMS
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Still dealing with fallout from last fall’s racially charged protests at the University of Missouri, more bad news swirled on the Columbia campus Thursday.

Freshmen enrollment will drop for fall 2016, a hiring freeze is on and faculty won’t be getting pay increases this year.

Interim Chancellor Hank Foley announced late Wednesday in a memo to MU employees that the university will implement a campuswide hiring freeze and a 5 percent cut to its fiscal year 2017 general revenue budget because of a “sharp decline in first-year enrollments and student retention.”

Faculty and university leaders reacted to the announcement with resolve to get through the latest crisis. But some students and administrators expressed concern about the possibilities of reduced services, higher fees and the elimination of classes some seniors could need to graduate.

“I think if we cut funding too much, students might not have those same resources we have this year,” said Annie Vilks, a sophomore journalism student. “Right now, Ellis Library has 24-hour (access), but they’re stopping that in the future because they just don’t have the funding to keep it going.”
The university expects about 1,500 fewer students will enroll in the fall. That and spending on new campus commitments, such as the new Division of Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, and health benefits and increased stipends for graduate students, will leave the university with a projected $32 million budget gap, Foley said.

Much of the gap — $20 million to $25 million — is expected to be lost revenue from the enrollment decline.

MU officials attribute the drop in enrollment to increased competition from other colleges and universities, a decrease in the number of high school graduates in the region and, to some degree, the fallout from November’s protests, led by a predominately black student group demanding inclusion, equity and an end to systemic oppression on the Columbia campus.

Vice Chancellor Gary Ward estimated that because “most of our expenses are people,” the cuts could affect “hundreds and hundreds of positions.”

But, for the most part, faculty are ready to “pull together and make the best of a bad situation,” said Ben Trachtenberg, chairman of MU’s Faculty Council. “Nobody likes budget cuts, but we have to work together to keep the university up and running.”

The 5 percent cut would eliminate about $20 million of the shortfall, Ward said, leaving the university with a $10 million gap. He stressed that the revenue drop was independent from threatened legislative cuts to state funding.

Missouri House lawmakers have proposed chopping $1 million from the Columbia campus and shifting those funds to Lincoln University, the historically black college in Jefferson City.

The cuts proposed this week for Missouri’s flagship campus would be on top of $7.6 million in cuts that Missouri lawmakers had earlier proposed for the entire university system’s budget. The Columbia campus expects to shoulder the bulk of those cuts.

The House on Thursday approved a $27 billion budget bill, including the cuts, and sent it to the Senate.

But hearing Thursday about the budget issues and enrollment decline at MU, some Republican lawmakers expressed little sympathy for the university’s plight,
given its recent problems with racial climate, leadership resignations and its handling of fired assistant professor Melissa Click.

“We cannot reward bad behavior,” said House Speaker Pro Tem Denny Hoskins, a Warrensburg Republican. “We cannot reward a lack of leadership.”

Officials at other campuses in the four-campus system said they are not seeing the same dip in enrollment.

“We project our enrollment to increase by 1 percent to 2 percent over last fall’s totals,” said Andy Careaga, spokesman at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla.

The University of Missouri-Kansas City appears to be on “solid financial footing this year,” said John Martellaro, a UMKC spokesman. “Our enrollment outlook for fall semester 2016 is stable — we’re projecting flat enrollment.”

He said that overall UMKC applications for admission so far for this fall “are up 6.1 percent compared to this time last year. First-time college applications — excluding graduate school and transfer applications — are up 18.2 percent compared to this time last year.”

At the Columbia campus, applications for enrollment as of March 1 were down 1,258 from the same time last year.

To pump up enrollment, “we are reaching out to admitted students who have not yet enrolled and to their parents with phone calls, Skype calls, videos and a text campaign,” Foley said in his memo.

The university is hosting a Preview Mizzou Day recruiting event Wednesday at Arrowhead Stadium.

On campus, students are worried the cuts could hinder student organizations or services, such as the campus tutoring center.

And Vilks, the journalism major, said she was more worried about a rise in new student fees than a tuition spike.

“I think if they won’t raise tuition, they might implement more fees, and I think a lot of students might be concerned or upset with those changes,” she said.
On average, the University of Missouri System has raised tuition and required fees the past five years 2.4 percent annually. Last year, MU’s tuition went up less than 1 percent to $9,335 for Missouri resident undergraduate students.

By state law, tuition hikes are limited by increases in the Consumer Price Index, or 0.07 percent. The university can’t cover its projected financial gap with a tuition hike.

“If a tuition increase were approved by the board of curators, it will account for only about $2 million in new revenues,” Foley said.

And, as Vilks said, students aren’t keen on paying more fees. In November, the university asked students for additional fees to fund renovations for Ellis Library, the campus’s largest library, and hoped to raise up to about $13 million a year. The fee was shot down, with 54 percent of student voting against it.

Gunnar Johanson, a senior political science major who led an initiative against the library fee, said he fears the budget cuts could mean the university might again turn to students to fill the coffers. He’s worried, too, that a shrinking university budget might undermine the value of his degree.

“What bothers me is the reputation of Mizzou after the budget is continuously slashed and how that degree is going to hold up whenever I compete in a global market like we have today. I don’t think the Missouri legislature realizes that,” Johanson said.

Although the hiring freeze wasn’t absolute, Foley said any exception would have to be “absolutely critical to the mission.” The freeze raised concerns about some programs, especially those with extensive vacancies, being able to provide all the classes that next year’s juniors and seniors will need.

In the department of communication, for example, five of 16 faculty posts are vacant, and it’s always possible more will leave after this school year.

The department chairman, Mitchell McKinney, said, “Like many departments, we already feel that we’re stretched thin and doing as much as we can with the resources we have available. We’ve already increased class sizes, combined classes, asked faculty to each teach more.

“So fewer faculty next fall will mean fewer classes we can offer. At a certain point, it’s difficult for upperclassmen to get the classes they need to graduate.”
McKinney said enrollment had been rising in recent years, until the decline projected for next fall, without significant increases in financing.

“So we’ve been handling more students without increased funding,” he said. “And now we face a double whammy, of declining tuition next fall along with the possibility of further cuts from the legislature.”

Tom Hiles, MU’s vice chancellor for advancement, acknowledged that the budget cuts and hiring freeze were “one more challenge, one more obstacle to overcome.” But fundraising, which he oversees, remained a bright spot for the university.

The university raised a record $164 million in fiscal year 2014, he said, and an additional $150 million in fiscal year 2015. And this budget year, which will end June 30, has seen gifts and pledges “at $114 million through February, about $7 million ahead” of 2014’s record pace.

“Our leadership donors are hanging in there,” he said, and the university expects to announce another seven-figure gift Friday.

MISSOURIAN

College of Engineering faces $900,000 in budget cuts for 2017
JILL DEUTSCH, 10 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — The College of Engineering will face about $900,000 worth of budget cuts — 5 percent of the college’s total budget — for fiscal year 2017, Dean Elizabeth Loboa announced at a faculty open forum in Lafferre Hall on Thursday afternoon.

The cuts come a day after MU Interim Chancellor Hank Foley announced hiring freezes and 5 percent cuts to MU’s total 2017 fiscal year budget.

The engineering dean’s office announced the open forum Monday and said there would be both human resources and benefits representatives present. The announcement and Foley’s “bummer memo” made staff and faculty members fear massive layoffs, Loboa said.
Loboa said one faculty member joked: “Are you going to have security at the meeting?” But she reassured the group at the meeting that there’s “nothing like that going on.”

Instead, Loboa listed 11 cost-saving measures and goals amounting to roughly $500,000 to $700,000 in cuts. The college still has to come up with between $400,000 or $200,000 more to meet the $900,000 mark.

Six non-tenure-track faculty members were told prior to the meeting that their contracts would not be renewed, Loboa said. Even after those, “we may still have to do layoffs,” Loboa said.

Loboa said she hopes to have concrete numbers for layoffs in the next month.

She added that if anyone else was already thinking of transitioning out of the college, they could speak with the human resources representatives and a benefits representative. The HR representatives discussed a transition assistance program for staff members providing a week of pay for every year they’ve been at the university from five to 26 weeks.

Loboa also said the college is still hiring the 15 non-tenure track faculty members promised in her offer letter when she was hired as dean in August. The six faculty members who received notice of non-renewal Thursday are eligible to apply for those 15 positions. She said the new hires will reduce the growing teaching workload on research-focused faculty.

Currently, the college has about a 40:1 student to faculty ratio, while most schools in the Association of American Universities, of which MU is a member, have a 20:1 ratio, Loboa said.

Jill Ford, the college’s executive director of student programs, said she anticipates the incoming freshman class will bring 550 students to the college. Currently, enrolled classes have between 650 and 770 students.

Loboa also told the crowd that she had been creating a data-driven strategic plan for the college long before receiving Foley’s announcement about budget cuts and hiring freezes across campus.

Because of the planning, “we’re better off than most colleges,” Loboa said.
The UM System is already in the process of an internal audit of the College of Engineering, and the college will complete an efficiency and efficacy analysis at the end of April.

Loboa said she’ll have numbers and recommendations from those reports and more information about cuts and layoffs before May 1.

Faculty raised plenty of other questions, though.

Fifteen minutes into the meeting, Galen Suppes, an engineering professor and president of the MU chapter of American Association of Universities Professors brought a formal “Request for Transparency and Respect” related to a proposed workload policy discussed by Loboa and department chairs in early February. The policy would allow professors with higher research expenditures to teach fewer courses.

Suppes told Loboa that if enacted, the college would have 30 percent more faculty than needed to teach its students. Once the 15 non-tenure-track professors are hired, that number would rise to 50 percent, Suppes said.

“Something is not transparent when the above workloads are put forward, an inspection of funding is performed, and an existing request is in place for more NTT (non-tenure-track) positions,” Suppes’ request reads.

After the meeting, Loboa said she hadn’t seen Suppes’ request but said she and department heads have data to support the proposal.

Another faculty member asked if the non-tenure-track jobs had been listed publicly, and Loboa said they’d been posted wherever was most beneficial to finding the best candidates.

Loboa acknowledged that the cuts came at a politically difficult time when the university is fighting for money with the state legislature.
“We got here because of the protests and the backlash and Melissa Click,” she said. “This university is a 177-year-old institution. We’re a great university, and we’re going to survive that.”

Endowed professor Curt Davis said after the meeting that a lot is still uncertain.

“I don’t know enough yet to understand,” he said. “There’s still a lot in the air about where the cuts are coming from.”

THE TRIBUNE'S VIEW

University budget

By HENRY J. WATERS III

Fallout from the student protests includes reductions in state funding for the university. The university is taking heat because managers are seen as too willing to recognize prerogatives of students and faculty even though the UM Board of Curators took the unusual step of firing Associate Professor Melissa Click for her unruly actions in support of student protesters.

So now university managers are facing assaults from all sides. Protesting students roam Jesse Hall. Conservative lawmakers propose outlandish budget proposals. Faculty members and their lobby group, the American Association of University Professors, officially complain about the way Click is treated, yet many faculty do not support her actions.

Everyone needs to take a deep breath. Events of recent months are to be expected on college campuses. Similar eruptions have occurred elsewhere. Ours achieved top billing mainly because of the solidarity expressed by black football players and their coach. Leaders on other campuses exhaled, thankful that good old Mizzou absorbed this issue.
I have opined here several times the university will emerge from all this in a better place. To undergo a public argument of this magnitude without forcible confrontation is a major accomplishment. (Click’s antics don’t qualify.) We patrons at large need to support all hands as they work it out, or at least leave them alone.

I see no indication anyone in authority on campus wants to ignore the issues raised by students. I see no way every demand made by students can be met. What’s reasonable to expect? That’s the big question the parties must be willing to negotiate. The “parties” include us.

A reasonable process is at hand. Let’s use it.

**Faculty Council discusses larger than expected enrollment drop**

ABC 17 News was at the University of Missouri’s Faculty Council Meeting at Mizzou Thursday. This came hours after the Missouri House of Representatives voted to approve $8.6 million in budget cuts for the UM system.

However, the main focus was the larger than expected drop in enrollment ABC 17 News uncovered Wednesday.

The Faculty Council discussed drop in enrollment and how it will affect the different schools and colleges. They also discussed several reasons for the enrollment drop. One reason? There are less students to recruit - less high school seniors.

The campus protests from from the fall were not mentioned in the meeting as a reason for the drop, but legislators passed additional cuts in the House Thursday.

One faculty member that deals with financial issues that face the University tells ABC 17 News that since the University is really the only research school in the state, it's a way to generate
entrepreneurs and new jobs.

“I's a very important institution,” said John Gall, the Faculty Council's Fiscal Affairs Chair “and I'm hopeful that the legislation will understand that this is an issue with regard to economic development within the state to help and support research intensive universities, which in Missouri, is primarily Mizzou.”

CS 1950
Student protest tactics

By HENRY J. WATERS III

Concerned Student 1950 has had astonishing success so far. The University of Missouri student protest group has been instrumental in changing top-level University of Missouri leaders, who formed new committees and appointed new officers to deal with complaints. CS 1950 got the support of black MU football players and their coach, Gary Pinkel, who retired shortly thereafter, citing health reasons. It triggered statewide enmity for university leadership, particularly in the Missouri General Assembly.

It’s enough to make young heads swell with excitement. They have fair reason to think they are doing some good, but it is nearly inevitable they will go too far, turning their positive fame into counterproductive notoriety.

They took a step over the line Monday when they marched uninvited into Jesse Hall insisting top leaders meet with them on the spot. Vice Chancellor Chuck Henson did step into the hall to face protesters but retreated after about five minutes. Chancellor Hank Foley locked his office door. The students accused the leaders of not wanting to hear them.

Henson has been appointed the campus official to deal with issues of “inclusion, diversity and equity.” Henson is a well-regarded black member of the law school faculty whose efforts can help
the students’ cause if they will let him. Their cause won’t be aided by ad hoc arrivals at Jesse Hall office doors. It can be helped by active participation in the working group set up by Henson.

Giving the students all the due they can expect, after a reasonable amount of time spent with Henson & Co. they might still not be satisfied, but their persistent disappointment will have more credibility if they get as far as they can in serious negotiation.

And serious negotiation is what Henson, Foley and UM President Mike Middleton are offering. Perhaps the most important concession the students have received is the expressed attitude of Middleton and the quick formation of a response team to deal with the students. Far from being ignored, they are being recognized with special officers and task forces to hear and work with them.

If this doesn’t satisfy the student protesters, they will be regarded as outliers unwilling to take part in a credible process of accommodation. If they keep pounding on office doors, so to speak, they indicate a pre-emptive unwillingness to take part in top-level university outreach. Their cause should not be forgotten, but escalating the confrontation at this point is not in their best interests.

Gov. Nixon nominates MU student for Board of Curators

AUSTIN HUGUELET, 17 hrs ago

COLUMBIA — Gov. Jay Nixon nominated Thursday an MU junior to be the next student representative to the UM System Board of Curators

The nomination of Gene Patrick Graham, a vocal music education student and a member of the MU Alumni Association Board, will need confirmation by the state Senate, according to a news release.

If confirmed, Graham would serve until Jan. 1, 2018, as a nonvoting member of the board. Graham would fill the seat held most recently by University of Missouri-St. Louis graduate student Tracy Mulderig.
The board is currently three voting members short after the resignations of Ann Covington, Yvonne Sparks and David L. Steward in recent months.

The student representative position cycles among the four campuses in the university system in the order they were founded. MU is followed by Missouri University of Science & Technology, the University of Missouri-Kansas City and then UMSL.

Missouri Senate panel considers expanding post-grad programs

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — A Missouri Senate committee has considered a bill that would allow public colleges and universities to launch a new post-graduate degree program without approval from another school.

The Senate Education Committee considered the bill Wednesday afternoon, The Jefferson City News Tribune (http://bit.ly/1Xf2Dto) reported. Under the proposal, universities would still have to get approval from the state Coordinating Board for Higher Education to launch a new master's or doctorate degree program.

State Sen. Eric Schmitt said, "But I do think this bill would lift some of the barriers for universities to, really, determine who they want to be and what kinds of programs they so want to offer — so that each one of them has a greater sense of ownership over their programs and the degrees."

The bill would also end a 2005 agreement that stopped a more than 17-hour filibuster against a bill changing the names of various higher education institutions, including Southwest Missouri State University to Missouri State University.
President Cliff Smart testified that the agreement placed restrictions on Missouri State University as the University of Missouri is the only university generally authorized to deliver doctoral programs.

Smart has said that the University of Missouri is described as a land-grant university and Missouri's only doctoral level and public research institution, meaning the school is the only university generally authorized to deliver doctoral programs.

Jay Hahn, director of the Missouri Foundation for Equity in Higher Education, told the Senate committee that the current statutes are muddled and clarity is needed to allow all colleges and universities to be on a level playing field when it comes to making decisions about creating new programs.

Scammers pose as Thompson Center supporters


COLUMBIA, Mo -
MU's Thompson Center is warning the community of a scam that is going around that claims the proceeds are going to the center’s research facility.

MU's Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders confirms that people are illegally going door to door selling magazine subscriptions saying it's all to benefit autistic children at the center.

The Thompson Center says they heard of some speculation about a month ago of the potential scam and today, the center got it confirmed.
Salesmen going door to door, isn't a stranger to neighborhoods in Mid- Missouri. Salesmen pitching to potential buyers that the money that is spent on subscriptions that will go to a good cause.

The Thompson Center however denies this way of fundraising. "We got a phone call from a person who subscribed to the magazine. They gave us a call asking if it was legitimate and we don't that person, we don't fund raise that way."

The Thompson Center says when they first got the call from the subscriber, they were shocked. Stephen Kanne, Executive Director of the facility said, "it kind of took us by surprise to be honest with you. Why would people be going around using our name and preying upon people to use to solicit money and keeping it for themselves."

The Thompson Center wants to advise the community to not accept any kind of sale from an individual who is trying to sell products on behalf of the facility. If you do wish to donate, you can go onto the centers website.

Some other helpful ways to avoid scammers, is to ask where they are from, get the details in form of a contract, and to always verify with the better business bureau if the business seems suspicious.

**MISSOURIAN**

**Missouri, Boone County to help decide 'largest haul' of presidential delegates since Super Tuesday**

KELSI ANDERSON AND ALLISON GRAVES, 1 hr ago

COLUMBIA — One of the most interesting presidential primaries in recent memory comes to Boone County and the rest of Missouri on Tuesday.

It's a primary that's seen a billionaire business mogul take the Republican Party by storm, against the will of its establishment. It's a primary that's seen a self-labeled Socialist compete head-to-head with a Democratic candidate, who for months or even years had been considered a shoo-in for her party's nomination.

It's also a primary that will give voters in Missouri a surprising number of choices.
Despite all the hullaballoo across the country, there's been little visible action on the ground in Columbia by the presidential campaigns until recently. There's no doubt, though, that Tuesday is important.

Missouri will join Illinois, Florida, Ohio, North Carolina — and the Northern Mariana Islands — in casting ballots for their favorite candidates. In all, 691 pledged Democratic delegates are up for grabs. For Republicans, 367 are at stake.

It's the "largest haul of delegates we've had since Super Tuesday," MU political science professor emeritus David Leuthold said, adding that he expects most people have picked their candidate and are simply waiting for their chance to vote.

“The pattern seems to be from the exit polls in other states that perhaps three-quarters of the people have already made up their minds,” Leuthold said, "but at least around a quarter or so will be deciding here this week or next week.”


Loftin says goodbye to Residence on the Quad

Former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin: “If it all works out, then we'll hopefully be able to move out around the middle-to-late part of April.”

After two years at MU, former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin and his wife Karin are preparing to say goodbye to the Residence on Francis Quadrangle, a place they have called home since February 2014.
Following his resignation on Nov. 9, Loftin asked for up to 120 days to remain in the residence while he and his wife searched for a new place to live. Loftin said the UM System Board of Curators were very understanding with his situation. He has since transitioned into a new role as the director for research facility development.

The Loftins have been looking for a new house since November 2015 and made an offer on one earlier in the year. However, the sale fell through when the seller decided to take the house off the market. They began their search again and have recently made an offer on another house.

Loftin said he hopes to close on this house sometime in the next two weeks.

“If it all works out, then we'll hopefully be able to move out around the middle to late part of April,” Loftin said. “The nominal deadline is the end of April, and I think that is going to be achievable now.”

When Loftin and his wife move out, the residence will continue to be used for “university-related business and entertainment,” as outlined in Loftin’s original contract.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said the residence is typically used for receptions or entertaining the chancellor’s guests. In recent years, the bottom level of the three-story house has been open to the public during campus events such as Family weekend.

Since 1867, when the residence was constructed, many notable figures have been entertained there including Mark Twain, Harry S. Truman and Eleanor Roosevelt, according to the Columbia Missourian.

In Loftin’s time, the residence has hosted Bill Nye the Science Guy and Jack Dorsey, the founder of the mobile payment company Square.

Loftin remembers taking a picture in front of one of the home's fireplaces with Truman the Tiger and Nye, where they each straightened their bow ties for the camera.

“During his presentation in Jesse (Hall), I actually gave him a bow tie and he changed his bow tie out in real time,” Loftin said.

Aside from some of the more well-known guests, Loftin has also provided the residence as a safe haven for current MU students. The night of Nov. 10, among Yik Yak threats
on campus, he allowed students to stay the night in his house. The mother of former Missouri Students Association Vice President Brenda Smith-Lezama called him to voice her concern about the threats, Loftin said.

“We opened our home up to Brenda and some of the officers of MSA that night because they were afraid to go home,” Loftin said. “Their addresses had been made publicly known. They were very concerned about being targeted.”

Loftin sees himself as someone who is easily approachable and enjoys being around students. He said he meets up with different students for coffee or just to talk at least 2–3 times each week, something that hasn’t changed with his shift in faculty positions.

While many of his friends holding administrative positions at other universities are moving away from their campuses because of the constant noise, the campus environment is something Loftin finds comfort in.

Many students walk past the residence or head toward the Columns after leaving bars in the early morning hours, often making enough noise to wake Loftin.

“It’s not exactly a thing you want to do, but at the same time, it’s a comforting thing to know they’re not driving, they’re safe, they’re with their friends and they’re having a good time,” Loftin said. “That’s kind of a nice little thing. These are things that are part of the life and the pulse of the campus.”

Loftin plans to visit the area of the residence as much as possible once he and his family move. His friend, Larry McMullen, an MU graduate who now resides in Kansas City, asked him to watch over the memorial of his late wife, also an MU graduate. A tulip tree was planted by the residence and two benches were placed on the Francis Quadrangle in her honor.

“I made him a promise when I moved in here that I would always check every day on his wife’s tree,” Loftin said. “I can’t do that exactly, but I will still try to get on campus enough to do that for him.”

Loftin said that being around the MU campus the past two years has made him feel younger. He will miss the campus atmosphere.
“That's not what you find anywhere else but a university campus,” Loftin said. “Being around students of that age group has a positive effect on me, it really does.”