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## Missouri colleges to cut 116 degree programs

*By ALAN SCHIFF ZAGIER*

*The Associated Press*

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. | More than 100 degree programs will be eliminated at Missouri colleges and universities as part of a cost-savings review ordered by Gov. Jay Nixon.

The state Department of Higher Education issued a report Wednesday outlining the 116 academic programs slated for deletion at two- and four-year schools because few students pursue degrees in those subjects. Many of the programs are graduate level, and the elimination of a degree program doesn't mean courses will no longer be offered.

The cuts will be phased in to allow students in degree programs faced with elimination to graduate.

**The University of Missouri-Columbia, the state's largest university, tops the list with 19 programs on the chopping block, followed by 11 at the University of Central Missouri and nine at Northwest Missouri State University. Truman State and Harris-Stowe were the only two of the state's 13 public universities with no program cuts.**

Forty-six degree programs at Missouri's 14 community colleges are no more, led by Metropolitan Community College with 11. Four community colleges were spared cuts.

The state defines "low-producing" programs as those awarding fewer than 10 bachelor's degrees a year on average. The cutoff is five graduates for master's programs and three graduates for doctoral programs.

Hundreds more degree programs were reviewed but spared elimination, with 24 programs reclassified as inactive and 175 flagged for another review in three years.

Those ranks include the five-man physics department at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, which graduated one lone student each of the past three years. But the department keeps a heavy teaching load with classes that meet general education requirements, school leaders told the state. The school bolstered its case with letters of support from local businesses.

The statewide review highlighted some disturbing trends, said David Russell, the state's higher education commissioner.

"Many fields that have been identified as crucial to the state's economic growth and global competitiveness were among the low-producing degree programs," he said in a statement. "Foreign languages, teacher education and the STEM fields - science, technology, engineering and mathematics - were prominent on the list of fields with few graduates. This is a concern that must be addressed across K-12 and higher education."

The report will be further discussed Thursday by the state Coordinating Board for Higher Education, with a final report provided to Nixon by the end of the month.

Nixon thanked the state's schools for "responding to my call for action."

This is an important initial step following through on my request for program review, and I am heartened by the institutions working to identify and carry out great efficiencies," he said in a statement.

## China Quakes Give U.S. Temblors Pause

By [Tim Wall](#) | Wed Feb 9, 2011 08:50 AM ET

Unlike the myth about lightning, earthquakes in the center of a landmass seem to never strike the same place twice. [University of Missouri, Columbia](#) researcher, Mian Liu, observed the unpredictable nature of quakes by examining the 2,000 year recorded history of earthquakes in north China.

Liu believes that his observation in China could hold a warning for the central United States.

Nearly a two centuries ago, the [Mississippi River flowed backwards](#) after a massive earthquake shook southern Missouri on February 7, 1812.

The series of quakes that rocked the New Madrid area from 1811 to 1812 weren't the first quakes to strike the area and many scientists doubt they will be the last. But recent research by Liu and his colleagues suggests seismologists should look beyond the New Madrid fault.

“In North China, where large earthquakes occur relatively frequently, not a single one repeated on the same fault segment in the past two thousand years,” Liu said in a [University of Missouri press release](#).

“So we need to look at the ‘big picture’ of interacting faults, rather than focusing only on the faults where large earthquakes occurred in the recent past.”

Southern Missouri experienced at least two other major shake-ups in the past 2,000 years between 800 and 1000 AD, according to a [1996 paper](#) by researchers at the Center for Earthquake Research and Information at the University of Memphis, Tennessee. Another pair of quakes may have shook the areas near what is now Marked Tree and Blytheville, Arkansas, between 1200 and 1400 AD.

“This led scientists to believe that more were on the way,” said co-author Seth Stein of Northwestern University in a press release.

“However, high-precision Global Positioning System measurements in the past two decades have found no significant strain in the New Madrid area. The China results imply that the major earthquakes at New Madrid may be ending, as the pressure will eventually shift to another fault,” said Stein.

While this study suggests that the location of mid-continent earthquakes may be difficult to predict, the researchers are hopeful that the results will help them understand the quakes.

Mid-landmass quakes affect the central and eastern United States, northwestern Europe, and Australia.

The results were published in the journal *Lithosphere*.

## Next central U.S. earthquake may not strike New Madrid

By [Mark Johnson](#) of the Journal Sentinel

Feb. 9, 2011 | [\(0\) Comments](#)

The most powerful earthquakes known to have hit the central U.S. were the New Madrid quakes of 1811 and 1812. Now, a new study suggests that the next 'Big One' in the region may not occur along the New Madrid fault, but somewhere else.

The new research, published in the journal [Lithosphere](#), examined earthquake records in China. Earthquakes have been recorded and described in China for some 2,000 years, but have never occurred twice in the same place.

"In North China, where large earthquakes occur relatively frequently, not a single one repeated on the same fault segment in the past 2,000 years," said [Mian Liu](#), a professor of geological sciences at University of Missouri and one of the authors of the new study. "So we need to look at the 'big picture' of interacting faults, rather than focusing only on the faults where large earthquakes occurred in the recent past."

Different faults form a web of interacting stresses. A large earthquake on one fault can increase stress on a different fault. Important faults can remain dormant for years then jolt awake in a brief period of violent activity.

[Seth Stein](#), a co-author of the paper and professor of earth and planetary sciences at Northwestern University, said that Global Positioning System measurements taken in the past two decades have found no significant strain in the New Madrid area.

## COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

# Faculty Council picks makeup option for MU snow days

By Andrea Braxton

February 9, 2011 | 9:23 p.m. CST

**COLUMBIA – MU's Faculty Council made a recommendation to move Reading Day to Saturday, May 7, and to start the university's finals week on Monday, May 9.**

**The move would allow MU to use the Thursday, May 5, and Friday, May 6, as makeup days for the three days of missed classes.**

Member Leona Rubin said the council will vote to change the academic calendar at its Feb. 17 meeting.

Finals would begin at 7:30 a.m. and end at 10 p.m. Monday through Thursday, May 9 to 13. Exams would end at noon Friday.

Faculty members are encouraged to contact the University Registrar if they don't need an exam time slot.

The finals week switch was one of three options proposed by the council Saturday. Rubin said the other options were too problematic. An option to hold class on Saturday would cause problems for faculty and students with children, as well as students who work. The faculty also didn't want to cancel finals week.

"This was the least disruptive option," Rubin said.

Missouri's Department of Higher Education has no requirement on how individual institutions should make up classes in the event they are canceled, according to Kathy Love, the department's spokesperson.

"There is no statewide regulations for the number of school days for institutions of higher education," Love said.

The requirement to make up the missed classes stems from the UM System Board of Curators. Under Section 20.140 of the Collected Rules and Regulations, the universities must have class on 43 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and 29 Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Rubin said the majority of MU administration, faculty and student leaders believe the plan to delay Reading Day and the start of final exam is the best plan.

Marketing professor John Bennett agreed the plan to push back Reading Day is the best option.

Spanish teacher Blanca Kelty said the plan suited her but that she was concerned about students who had already made travel plans.

Student Tatiana Blair, a business major, expressed a similar concern. She is studying abroad next summer, and her flight leaves the Friday of finals week. With exams pushed back, those plans might be jeopardized.

Both Blair and Eric Noll, a marketing major, said they were glad the Saturday class option was rejected.

"Saturday classes are a big no for me," Noll said.

The plan won't restore all of the class time lost during MU's shutdown. Rubin said faculty should use Tegrity or other lecture-capture software if they need additional time.

*Missourian reporter Jordan Shapiro contributed to this article.*



## Panel rewrites Nixon's education budget proposals

JEFFERSON CITY — There aren't very many good choices for lawmakers who get the first chance to rewrite Gov. Jay Nixon's proposals for public schools and higher education funding, the chairman of the House Appropriations for Education Committee said yesterday.

Rep. Mike Lair, R-Chillicothe, and his committee yesterday finished examining the public schools and higher education budget for the year that begins July 1. Over two days, they heard about items being cut, a few that are being increased and some that are being eliminated.

The panel will hear public comments on education spending beginning Tuesday, with university presidents scheduled to be in

front of the committee next Wednesday.

After that, members will vote on any changes they want to make before the two spending bills under its jurisdiction move on to the House Budget Committee.

"It is like Christmas shopping," Lair said. "When you don't have any money, it doesn't take long."

Questioning about the details of the higher education budget focused on the use of \$30 million in Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority funds for scholarships and how to implement Nixon's proposal to expand a scholarship program for community college students.

During yesterday's hearing, Commissioner of Higher Education David Russell and Deputy Commissioner Paul Wagner testified.

"There is not a lot to be learned by going over the institution recommendations," Wagner told the committee, noting that Nixon is proposing a 7 percent cut in funding and no new items for any four-year school.

The cuts have forced the universities to work more closely together, Russell said.

"Over the last year or so I have seen the institutions coordinating and cooperating with each other in a way that I have not seen since I came to Missouri in 1991," Russell said. "Frankly, as a consequence of the budget situation, you find institutions being driven together."

Nixon did not include the MOHELA funds in his budget. The MOHELA board is expected to vote on whether to give it to the state in June. "It doesn't show up here in the way you would



expect it to,” Wagner said. “The governor has assumed in his budget that he will get it. It is creative.”

“Creative is a good word,” Lair replied.

Restrictions on how money can be used and the shortage of revenue overall place severe restrictions on the committee’s ability to alter Nixon’s spending plan, Lair said.

State money is required to match federal funds and 25 percent of state general revenues must be dedicated to schools under the constitution.

What is left for lawmakers to appropriate, Lair said, is “just the tip of the iceberg.”

“Schools are going to exist,” he added. “We need to find equitable ways to distribute money.”

Referring to the agendas laid out by Republican legislative leaders at the beginning of the year, Lair said “right-to-work” and other proposals being made to make Missouri business friendly pale next to the needs of businesses for quality workers, Lair said.

“If we can supply business with an educated, capable work force, economic development is going to follow,” he said.

Reach Rudi Keller at 573-815-1709 or e-mail [rkeller@columbiatribune.com](mailto:rkeller@columbiatribune.com).



## UM System reviews applications for \$5 million fund

By Janesse Silvey

Sixteen individuals and companies are competing for money through the year-old University of Missouri System enterprise fund. Administrators are in the process of reviewing applications now, spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said. The deadline to apply for the grants was Dec. 31, but awards won't be announced until later this year.

Former UM System President Gary Forsee unveiled the Enterprise Investment Program in January 2010, setting aside

\$5 million to dole out in grants over a three-year period. The money will go to interested entrepreneurs who want to market university research.

Deciding where and how to spend those dollars is a complicated process. After administrators and an advisory panel review the proposals this month, applications will either be declined or will move on to a second round of reviews.

If proposals aren't declined by June 1, the applicant and university will go through a negotiation process before any contracts are finalized.

Until then, the names of those seeking money from the university are considered sealed records. That's partly because contracts haven't been negotiated yet. But even when they are, applications will remain closed under a recent addition to the Sunshine Law, said Kathy Miller, the system's custodian of records, in a letter denying the Tribune access to applications.

Last year, lawmakers attached a provision to Missouri's Open Meetings and Records Law that says documents submitted to a university by an individual or corporation proposing to commercialize intellectual property are closed to protect competitiveness and trade secrets.

Although there's already a provision of the law that protects proprietary information, the Missouri Press Association and the Tribune did not fight the changes when lawmakers were considering the bill.

"Clearly, there are proprietary records that can't be released," press association attorney Jean Maneke said.

Ensuring those records are closed will benefit the university by attracting more private partners, Hollingshead said. The change has allowed UM "to pursue intellectual property from outside

companies without risk to them of having to expose their” intellectual property “position,” she said. “As a result, we anticipate we’ll be able to work with a greater number of companies now that they no longer have to worry about their private information being shared.”

During last month’s UM Board of Curators meeting, Mike Nichols, vice president of research and development for the system, said the Sunshine Law changes encourage more investment into the university.

“As I talk around the state, people have come up to me and said, ‘I’ve been waiting for that so I could work with the university,’ ” Nichols said. “This is a major change that will outlive all of us.”

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail [jsilvey@columbianibune.com](mailto:jsilvey@columbianibune.com).

# Columbia Business Times

## Lead, follow, or get out of the way

By Chris Kelly  
Feb 4, 2011

Recently, Gov. Jay Nixon recommended a 7 percent cut in the core budget of the University of Missouri. This cut follows two years of smaller cuts and a generation of comprehensive underfunding.

During the past decade, the Columbia campus has grown by more than 9,000 students — nearly 2,000 more than the entire current student enrollment on the Rolla campus. This year, university funding is lower than in 2001.



One can reasonably argue that our difficult economy means tough times. Although that's true, it does not excuse a generation of state failure to adequately fund MU or the rest of the state's higher education institutions.

Several factors are exacerbating our state's failure. One is the unwillingness of our legislative and executive leadership to allow the people of Missouri to decide for themselves whether they would like to improve our educational system. Raising the state's tobacco tax to the national average would be one way to help support education.

The next time you hear a politician use the phrase, "and we did it without raising your taxes," substitute this phrase instead: "and we did it while degrading the quality of Missouri education." That is the impact of our inaction. The people of Missouri are smart enough to determine for themselves whether they want to relinquish our status as the state with the lowest tobacco tax for an increase in educational funding.

Access to higher education is important. With the increase of 9,000 students — just short of 40 percent — during the past 10 years, no reasonable person can argue that the university has been ignoring the issue of access.

Quality is also important. The failure of the state to fund higher education has had a negative effect on educational quality and ultimately on our state's economy. The leadership of the university has decided that it can no longer allow the failure in Jefferson City to further erode the quality of the University of Missouri. That is the reason it became necessary to increase tuition. When the university takes it upon itself to do what state leadership has failed to do, politicians should not interfere.

There is an old saying: "Lead, follow, or get out of the way." Having failed to lead or follow, I implore my fellow politicians to get out of the way.



Twain sanitization sparks discussion

## **'Huck Finn' changes draw praise and ire.**

By Janese Silvey

Sheena Waggoner doesn't mind teachers using "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" in class so long as they understand it as a whole text and can explain why the characters are using the N-word so much.

That's a conclusion she drew after attending an hourlong discussion, part of Black History Month events at University of Missouri, about the sanitizing of Mark Twain's classic.

Last month, Alan Gribben, a professor at Auburn University at Montgomery, announced plans to publish a new version of the book that replaces "nigger" with "slave."

It's a tough word to read. That's why Twain scholar and MU English Professor Tom Quirk doesn't ask his students to read aloud from "Huck Finn" when he assigns it in his classes. Quirk said he wouldn't use the new version but said he thinks Gribben's attempts to create a more user-friendly version are genuine, not some get-rich scheme.

"It's not a sacred text; it's been changed before," Quirk said.

Waggoner, who works for Ellis Library on campus, supports having the option of reading a sanitized version of the book. In the Poplar Bluff elementary school she attended, children were required to read the book out loud, and it was taken at face value.

"I had a bad experience with it," she said. "Once we left the classroom, the word then became a word used on the playground. It was demoralizing and hurtful as a young child."

"Huck Finn" wasn't taught in context, she said, rather "purposefully to make children of color understand their place."

The word "slave" doesn't work in all 219 instances where the N-word is used in the book, Quirk pointed out. Case in point, when Finn's father goes on a drunken tirade and spews out the word repeatedly, he's talking about a free black college professor from Ohio who is fluent in several languages. Contextually, calling him a "slave" doesn't make sense and in one case would create an oxymoron, "free slave."

April Langley, intern assistant director of the Black Studies Program, said the book should be used as a starting point for conversations about race and race relations. She pointed to the fact MU has a series of “Difficult Dialogue” events to foster those types of discussions and wondered at what age it’s appropriate to start having those conversations. Children’s books such as “Heather Has Two Mommies” aim to get dialogues about diversity started early, she pointed out.

And even if “Huck Finn” was written in a different time period, “why not introduce it?” she questioned. “We are where we are because of something that happened before we got here.”

Quirk said he wouldn’t teach any version of “Huck Finn” in middle school and would be reluctant to do so in junior high. Students need to be able to understand the concept of irony before they pick it up, he said.

And it’s not accurate to assume the N-word is used so much in the book because that’s the way people talked in the 1880s, he said. That would be like hearing a Richard Pryor stand-up routine and thinking people today use the F-word so much, he said.

Twain “was rubbing our noses in it,” Quirk said, “insisting on the question of race.”

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail [jsilvey@columbiatribune.com](mailto:jsilvey@columbiatribune.com).

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## **Is Law School Losing its Mojo?**

February 9, 2011, 4:27 PM ET

Say it 'aint so: Is law school starting to lose some of its luster? Are college graduates increasingly doubting the long-held notion that a law degree is a certain path to financial stability?

Evidently so, according to some early indications.

**The University of Missouri School of Law's admissions coordinator told the school's newspaper, the Maneater (woah-ohh here she comes!), that applications are down over last year, when the school enjoyed its highest application total since 2004. (Here's a post on the decline at Mizzou from the ABA Journal).**

The application process at law schools is ongoing, but the evidence so far suggests that many schools will share Mizzou's plight.

As of Feb. 4, law school applications were down nationwide by about 12%, according to a spokesman at the Law School Admissions Council. He estimated, based on last year's data, that about two-thirds of the applicants for the fall of 2011 have filed their paperwork. (Most schools, he said, have a late-March application deadline.)

If the trend continues, application will be down for the first time in four years, according to this chart from the Law School Admissions Council

The number of people who took the December 2010 LSAT was also down 16% from the previous year, at the New York Times's Economix blog recently reported.

Color us slightly confused. Firms are showing signs of life and some have indicated they will hire more associates than in years past. Shouldn't that fuel *more* law school applications?

Perhaps the steady drumbeat of media accounts questioning the value of a law degree is starting to filter down to the college ranks. And perhaps graduates are finally snapping to the idea, increasingly held, that there is a paradigm shift in which firms will be less leveraged and hire smaller associate classes for years to come.

As always, though, the problem is the what-else question. Sure, law may be a rockier path these days, but what else is out there for smart, ambitious, probing, argumentative college grads?

## Tax-Deductible Savings Plan for College Tuition in Missouri Reduces Fees

*William Browning* Wed Feb 9, 8:44 pm ET

Missouri Treasurer Clint Zweifel wants getting a higher education in Missouri to be cheaper for families trying to save money. To that end, the company in charge of the assets of the state's tuition savings program has reduced fees for the next five years.

The Missouri Saving for Tuition plan, or MOST, is reducing the cost for maintaining money in a 529 savings account. Upromise Investments has lowered costs to open and maintain a savings account while investing in a future college degree.

For the next five years starting June 6, Missouri residents can open a MOST educational savings account for \$25. Fees to maintain the account have been lowered to the fifth-lowest in the nation based upon how much money is in the account.

The Missouri college savings plan is a tax-deductible way to save for college. Interest earned on the account is tax-free when used for getting a higher education at a two-year or four-year college. Upromise has cut fees by 44 percent in order to try to make an education in Missouri affordable.

"Missouri families are steadfast college savers and I want to reward that commitment. It is a commitment to save early, often and at historic all-time highs," Zweifel said.

More than 113,000 accounts have been opened totaling \$1.47 billion being saved for college. In addition to cost savings, Upromise has allocated \$500,000 in matching funds for investors. Details for doling out that money will come later.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports the MOST program was listed as the 19th cheapest of the 76 college savings plans in the United States last year. With the lowered costs this year, Missouri's plan becomes more affordable.

**The University of Missouri system just voted to raise tuition so this new plan will be designed to make higher education even more affordable than before. Missouri has added tax benefits for those who contribute money to the plan--taxpayers can take a tax deduction for the first \$8,000 contributed to the plan.**

Upromise also announced mutual fund plans for investors. Its office in Kansas City plans on expanding the number of employees later this year.



Every little bit helps when saving for college. Although the monthly expenses for maintaining such an account are small by comparison to the overall fluctuations of the interest and amounts earned, over the life of the account they add up. So many Missourians have already taken the first step to save for college and even more should now join in with lower fees over the life of the account.

Overall, the reduction in expenses should save Missourians \$18.5 million over the next five years. The price cut only effects direct-sold accounts, that is the portion of the savings plan which people opened themselves without the help of an account adviser.

Upromise is under contract from the state of Missouri for the next five years to manage investments in the higher education savings accounts. The company is based in Massachusetts.

*William Browning, a lifelong Missouri resident, writes about local and state issues for the Yahoo! Contributor Network. Born in St. Louis, Browning earned his bachelor's degree in English from the University of Missouri. He currently resides in Branson.*