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MU Curators continue search for new president

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Columbia, MO (AP) - **University of Missouri curators expect to meet behind closed doors today in Columbia to discuss the search for a new president for the four-campus system.**

A four-hour executive session This morning kicks off the two-day meeting at Reynolds Alumni Center.

Curators are seeking a replacement for former Sprint Nextel CEO Gary Forsee, who resigned in January after nearly three years as president to care for his ill wife.

An outside firm is helping to guide the confidential search process.

General counsel Steve Owens took over for Forsee on a temporary basis but says he is not interested in the permanent job.



UM employees might not see salary boost

Plan made prior to Nixon's cut.

By Janes Silvey

University of Missouri System administrators were ready to ask the Board of Curators this week to increase the salary pool by 2 percent, allowing some employees to see their paychecks increase for the first time in years.

But that was before Friday, when Gov. Jay Nixon announced he's cutting the UM budget by 8.1 percent — which will mean \$4.5 million less to the system than Nixon recommended in his January budget proposal.

The steeper cut is widely thought to be Nixon's way of punishing the system for increasing tuition and fees by an average of 5.5 percent, a move he publicly condemned.

Although a recommendation to increase salaries is on the agenda for the curators meeting tomorrow and Friday in Columbia, "the board agenda was prepared before that happened," said Betsy Rodriguez, vice president of human resources.

"Everything is on the table at this point," she said. "Absolutely, it's our top priority, but the reality is that did happen, and we'll have to find additional money to cut."

Nikki Krawitz, vice president of finance and administration, agreed raises are a priority, but "we have a number of top priorities," she said. "We'll have to have a discussion about them with the board."

System administrators have spent much of this fiscal year optimistic they could budget for a 2 percent increase this coming school year.

Salaries at the four campuses are based on merit, which means the 2 percent increase wouldn't be an across-the-board raise but rather additional money in the salary pool, allowing administrators to dole out raises based on performance.

Most employees haven't seen a pay increase in several years, although the university has allowed for raises based on tenure promotions or other special considerations.

This is the Board of Curators' annual meeting and typically when curators approve a budget for the coming fiscal year, which starts July 1. Budget documents included in the meeting materials also are now outdated and will have to be amended at the meeting, Krawitz said.

Also on the agenda is a proposal for a new animal resource center on the MU campus. The facility — to be located in the southeast part of campus near other animal-based research facilities — would house non-rodent species, primarily swine.

The facility would be managed by the MU Office of Animal Resources as part of the College of Veterinary Medicine but also would be used by researchers from MU's School of Medicine and College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. It's being funded with \$5.35 million from the National Institute of Health and \$2 million from campus reserves.

To finance future building projects on its four campuses, the system also is asking curators to approve a new commercial paper program. Essentially, it would set up a mechanism for the university to sell promissory notes to generate short-term funding at low interest rates, providing bridge funding until revenue bonds are issued.

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Board of Curators meeting to discuss budget, retirement, presidency

By Megan Cassidy

June 15, 2011 | 7:58 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri System Board of Curators will tackle an unforeseen shortfall in state funding at its scheduled meeting this week at MU, as well as vote on changes in the employee retirement plan and get an update on the presidential search.

Thursday afternoon, Nikki Krawitz, the system's vice president for and administration, is expected to recommend ways to meet the steeper cuts imposed by Gov. Jay Nixon last week. Her plan will be reviewed first by the Finance Committee before consideration by the full board.

Nixon announced June 9 that the appropriation for the system's four campuses will be cut by 8.1 percent instead of the anticipated 7 percent. UM tuition increases and funds set aside for disaster relief were cited as reasons for the additional 1.1 percent cut.

The loss will amount to about \$5 million for the system and \$2 million for the Columbia campus, said Mary Jo Banken of the MU News Bureau.

In the past, travel expenses, maintenance and repairs have suffered the brunt of budget cuts. This time, the budget planners "are looking at every option available," Banken said Wednesday.

Curators are also expected to vote this week on changes to future employee retirement plans after nearly two years of discussion. The changes would not affect current employees but would apply to workers hired after Sept. 30, 2012.

"The university remains committed to honoring the obligations of the current plan," Interim President Steve Owens wrote in a message he sent to employees Tuesday.

Instead of the current defined benefit plan, new employees would be offered a combination of a defined benefit and defined contribution plan, Owens said.

Under the existing defined benefit plan, UM employees are guaranteed a monthly benefit for life upon retirement. Although employees currently pay a small contribution into this plan, market risks such as fluctuations in the economy fall on the employer, as they are bound to pay out the promised benefit amount.

Conversely, defined contribution plans specify how much the employer and employee must contribute to an account. The risk falls on employees in this plan, with retirement benefits contingent upon the performance of their investments.

Betsy Rodriguez, UM vice president for human resources, said a combination plan would include elements of both, with a certain amount guaranteed and the rest subject to an employee's investment decisions.

“It would be half of the defined benefit plan that we have now, and the other half will come from a defined contribution,” Rodriguez said.

Owens' message to employees indicated that new employees would be asked to make approximately the same mandatory contribution as current employees.

Although details will not be announced at this week's meetings, Rodriguez said board action will move the changes to the next step.

“It's directing us to develop the final plan design for a board vote in October,” she said.

The Presidential Search Committee also will convene Thursday in executive session. Warren Erdman, who chairs the search committee, said he would provide a public update afterward.

After Gary Forsee's resignation in January, Owens has served as interim president.

The two-day session will begin at 7:30 a.m. Thursday in the Reynolds Alumni Center, with committee meetings taking up most of the day.

The full board meeting Friday will be live audio-streamed at <http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/curators/meetings/stream.shtml>.



Benefits plan back on plate for UM board

Specific proposal still months away.

The University of Missouri System's Board of Curators will vote this week on whether to offer future employees a combination retirement plan that would both guarantee benefits and require workers to save.

But curators won't see a specific plan. If they vote to change the benefits plan for future hires, administrators will spend the coming months hashing out details of the new retirement package.

"What they'll be doing is saying, 'We're ready to take the next step,'" said Betsy Rodriguez, vice president for human resources.

Curators are meeting at the Reynolds Alumni Center on the MU campus starting tomorrow. On Friday, the full board will vote on a recommendation that says the board "plans to close the current retirement plan to new university employees" who start work after Sept. 30, 2012, and directs administrators to develop a new package. A detailed retirement plan would be presented to the board as early as October.

Now, employees are guaranteed retirement benefits totaling 2.2 percent of their salary for every year of employment once they're eligible to retire. The university contributes 7.25 percent of a person's salary into that plan, and employees pay a 1 percent to 2 percent match based on income level.

That package won't change for current employees. In a letter sent to employees yesterday, interim system President Steve Owens said ending the current plan for new hires also won't affect the retirement benefits they're guaranteed.

"Detailed reports and independent actuarial analyses have confirmed that the current plan will not be harmed by closing the plan to new employees next year," he said.

An internal committee of employees spent months evaluating the retirement program and concluded in March that if the current plan isn't viable in the short- and long-term, curators should move forward with a plan that keeps intact some guaranteed benefits while also requiring new hires to invest.

Although the board won't see a proposed package, the committee did draft an example of what a new retirement plan could look like. Under that model, future hires would be guaranteed 1.1

percent based on salary and years of service, and UM would contribute 3.4 percent of salary. Both are about half of what is now offered.

The university also would set up a defined contributions, or savings, plan for new hires that would require them to contribute 1 percent or 2 percent of salary, depending on income level, with a UM match. They also would have a chance to contribute more money on a voluntary basis with UM matching as much as 3 percent.

There are several considerations curators will have to make before moving forward, said Craig Van Matre, a Columbia attorney who will join the board for the first time this week. "It's not a right-or-wrong issue, not a black-or-white issue," he said. "The question is: Are there savings and at what cost?"

The board needs to look at employees' overall compensation and make sure the university is attracting and keeping loyal employees, he said.

"There are a lot of people who think the existing plan does a good job with that and ought not to be messed with," Van Matre said. "There are others who think we just can't afford it. The existing proposal is a sort of compromise. ... I don't think the discussion is over."

Reach Janese Silvey at 573-815-1705 or e-mail jsilvey@columbiatribune.com.

Revenue crisis can be solved

Inaction forced tuition increase.

BY MARY STILL

Consider these facts:



Mary Still

- The **University of Missouri** has faced a 10-year decline in state support.
- The university's enrollment has increased by 17,000 during the past 10 years.
- The university accounts for 70 percent of the state's growth in undergraduate enrollment among four-year institutions and is educating these students with the same state support it had 2001.

It is no wonder the **Board of Curators** and the Coordinating Board for Higher Education approved a tuition increase for **MU**. While I regret the necessity of that decision, I understand it is essential if we are to preserve quality at the state's premier public research institution and if we are to move our state forward.

Thus, I was disappointed to learn Gov. Jay Nixon withheld funds for higher education and hit the university extra hard because of the increased tuition.

Of even greater disappointment, however, is the fact legislators and the education community are not facing up to reality. Missouri has a revenue crisis because we stubbornly refuse to do the obvious

First, we refuse to raise cigarette taxes, even though we have the lowest rate in the country. We could raise our taxes by 12 cents a package and still be the lowest in the country and bring in more than \$60 million a year. Or we could move our cigarette taxes up to be competitive with other states and bring in hundreds of millions in revenue. We would have the added advantage of reducing the \$600 million tab the state and federal government pay annually for smoking-related illnesses. It makes sense. Even one Republican senator from a district not our own said to me, "It is indefensible to be the lowest in the

nation." Our own Republican Sen. Kurt Schaefer has said he would support a vote of the people on this issue.

Second, we are not collecting sales tax on Internet transactions. These are taxes owed and easily collected once Missouri joins the interstate compact. Collecting this sales tax has the double value of raising revenue and supporting our local businesses that are at a 6 to 9 percent disadvantage because they collect sales tax. Almost all surrounding states do this, and Missouri could raise \$20 million a year almost immediately, with much more to come in the future.

Third, we could close tax loopholes that almost all other states have closed.

Fourth, we could reject the false theory that low corporate taxes will help us attract industry. If that were the case, we would be swarming in jobs. We already have among the lowest corporate taxes in the country, and last session the legislature voted to eliminate the corporate franchise taxes for companies with more than 10 million in assets. This will cost our state \$80 million a year. Legislators who voted in favor of this are part of the problem, not the solution.

Finally, consider our income tax: Those in poverty pay the same rate as multimillionaires. We could alter our tax structure in ways that would not harm the middle class.

In fact, none of these sources of revenue would have a significant effect on the hard-working middle-income families who are playing by the rules but struggling.

What does affect these middle-income families is the fact they can no longer afford to send their children to the state university.

What does affect middle class Missourians are the cuts to education that we will continue to make until we face this reality: Missouri does not have a budget crisis; it has a revenue crisis.

I recall a quote attributed to Huey Long: "Louisiana ain't a poor state — it has a passel of poor folks, but it is not a poor state."

The same will be said of Missouri if we don't have the political courage to address the obvious. We have the resources to do better. Political courage is what's missing.

Mary Still of Columbia represents the 25th District in the Missouri House of Representatives.

COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU study shows tai chi might improve cognitive function after chemotherapy

By Sarah Strasburg

June 15, 2011 | 7:24 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — About one-third of breast cancer patients experience a decrease in cognition that lasts beyond chemotherapy, and an MU pilot study has found that practicing tai chi as little as four hours a week can help.

Chemotherapy can negatively affect cognition, including memory and concentration, said Stephanie Reid-Arndt, the MU researcher who conducted the study.

The cause of cognitive decline is not understood, Reid-Arndt said, but other current research is trying to understand the nature of the decline and its causes.

For now, though, patients need a solution, and that's what this study focuses on, she said.

The results are based on 23 patients who practiced tai chi for 10 weeks.

Kathy Windmoeller was diagnosed with the most common kind of breast cancer, intraductal breast cancer, in January 1999 and began chemotherapy the following month. She said she didn't notice a decline in her cognitive skills right away but realized one day that she was forgetting everyday tasks, such as locking her keys in the car and losing track of time. Windmoeller said she started asking people to give her reminders, making lists and placing sticky notes everywhere to try to solve the problems.

Like the other participants in the MU study, she had never tried tai chi before.

"The tai chi itself, it definitely does work on your balance, and it works on your memory because it's a pattern, and you need to remember the pattern," Windmoeller said. "It's a very gentle, calming, good exercise."

Windmoeller said she saw improvement in her balance while she was practicing tai chi but not in her cognition. The classes also offered her the opportunity to form new friendships.

"I really enjoyed the tai chi, very much, but I think the thing that was really nice that came out of it was the camaraderie that developed between the participants," Windmoeller said. "I don't know why, but everybody just clicked, and we became good friends, and that was an added bonus on top of whatever it was doing for us physically and mentally."

At this point, Reid-Arndt hasn't eliminated other factors such as camaraderie or shared traumatic experience as contributing factors in patient improvements.

The next steps for the research will be more extensive testing that could weed out some of these other factors and then a comparison of the tai chi results with traditional, group-based support.

The study was funded through the MU School of Health Professions. Reid-Arndt said further testing is on hold until more funding is available.

New study backs red-light cameras

By Scott Wyman June 15, 2011 09:00 AM

Amid the debate over the growing use of red-light cameras in South Florida, a new study is defending them as a way to help reduce traffic accidents.

The study by the University of Missouri said the safety benefits outweigh the potential for abuse. Carlos Sun, an associate professor of civil engineering at Missouri, cited statistics from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that indicate almost a third of all traffic fatalities are speed related, and that running red lights accounts for 883 fatalities and 165,000 injuries each year.

According to the university media office, Sun examined automated speed enforcement studies from around the world as well as the recent national traffic accident data to make his conclusions. Proponents of the red-light cameras have previously cited the national accident data as well.

“A red light camera is not a panacea for traffic problems; it is a very effective tool for safe and efficient transportation,” said Sun in a news release from the school. “Just like any other tool, it should be used responsibly in the proper situation. The decision to use automated traffic enforcement tools requires a balancing act, but we shouldn’t take away an effective tool just because of the potential for abuse.”

Sun said the cameras have a spillover effect by making drivers more likely to respect red lights at other intersections as well.

Sun, though, did find room for improvement. He said certain contracts between cities and private vendors can lead to public mistrust and accusations that they are there to generate revenue rather than improve safety.

“If people wanted to create a scheme to make money, it would have to involve many people who all have a charge to do their duty well,” he said. “The irony of red light camera enforcement is that if people obeyed the law, the revenue wouldn’t be generated.”



CBT Business News Digest

By CBT Staff
Jun 10, 2011

VA Mortgage Center.com is expanding its operations in Columbia and expects to create 300 new jobs during the next five years while tapping an estimated \$6 million in state incentives. Gov. Jay Nixon said while visiting VA Mortgage Center's headquarters in south Columbia that the company's significant investment to fund the expansion is "exciting news" for the economy of Boone County and is one of several recent signs that the state's economy is growing. VA Mortgage Center, which provides home loans for veterans and military personnel, has grown from 136 employees to more than 500 in the past three years, and about 400 of them work at the company's three locations in the city.

Columbia Board of Realtors President Betty Tice announced May 28 that Michael Brown resigned his position as chief executive officer. He was hired for the position last December. Lee Terry will serve as interim CEO until the board of directors selects a new CEO.

Gov. Jay Nixon appointed Craig Van Matre to the University of Missouri System Board of Curators on June 2. Van Matre is a university of alumnus and the president of Columbia law firm Van Matre, Harrison, Hollis, Pitzer & Taylor. He has lived in Columbia since 1974.

The Columbia City Council at its June 6 meeting authorized the purchase of property on Short Street for approximately \$9.2 million for the construction of a 300-space parking garage next to the Regency Hotel. The Council postponed action on a plan to fund the garage through an increase in downtown parking rates until its June 20 meeting. Hilton Hotels Corp. has approved a franchise agreement for Broadway Lodging to construct a 114-room Doubletree hotel called The Broadway on the site after the Regency is demolished, local media reported.

The Council appointed Andy Lee to the Planning and Zoning Commission at its June 6 meeting. He received four of seven votes. Other candidates for the vacancy were: Frederick Carroz, Brandon Crews, Michele Nix, Vivek Puri, Glenn Rice, former 3rd Ward Councilman Karl Skala and former mayoral candidate Sid Sullivan.

The Council rejected 4th Ward Rep. Daryl Dudley's proposal to install a 60-foot flagpole on top of the Fifth and Walnut parking garage, a project that would have cost \$13,000

It's been a wild 30 days of Missouri weather, and the economic impact might be felt for years. First there was a tornado at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. Then the Mississippi River flooded parts of southeast Missouri. Then one of the deadliest tornadoes on record tore through Joplin, followed by another devastating tornado in Sedalia. Now communities along the Missouri River are braced for near-record flooding. The billions of dollars of damage caused by these natural disasters will likely increase insurance premiums for home and vehicle owners, the Associated Press reported. And restaurants and retailers in regions hit by storms and floods are likely to see lower sales. Hardest hit might be the state budget, which is already out of balance. State cleanup costs and assistance could lead to more cuts in government services.

The USDA Rural Development's rural utilities service administrator, Jonathan Adelstein, along with several other state and local officials, visited telephone and Internet service provider Socket Telecom on May 18 to discuss the company's current fiber-to-the-home project in Callaway County. This last-mile project is being funded by a combination loan and grant totaling \$23.7 million in federal stimulus funds. More than 3,000 homes and businesses in rural Callaway County and Fulton will be connected to the fiber-optic broadband network, and Socket said construction should begin in the next 60 to 90 days.

New data from the U.S. Census Bureau reports that Missouri and Kansas are the only two Midwest states that aren't losing population to southern and western states. Approximately 25,000 more people moved into Missouri and Kansas than moved away from 2008 to 2009. The Midwest lost 62,000 people during that same period. Missouri had a net gain of about 11,000 from other states in 2009 from 2008.

The Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission awarded a project to construct a new diamond interchange along U.S. Highway 63 at Route H in Boone County near the Columbia Regional Airport. Chester Bross Construction Co./C.B. Equipment Inc. of Hannibal was awarded the contract after submitting the low bid of \$9.79 million. The Missouri Department of Transportation will also construct new southbound lanes from just north of Route 163 to Route H. An outer road system will be created using the current southbound lanes. The commission also awarded a project to build a new diamond interchange along Route 179 in Cole County that will provide access to a new St. Mary's Health Center development to Emery Sapp and Sons Inc. of Columbia, which submitted the low bid of \$7.44 million.

Women reversing trends in doctorate enrollments

By Brian McNeill
Jun 10, 2011

During the past decade, women have led the way in obtaining master's degrees but lagged behind men in earning doctorates — until now.

The Council of Graduate Schools reports that in 2008-09, women earned 50.4 percent of doctorates. That was the first year that women reversed a long-established trend.

At the University of Missouri, the percentage of doctorates by gender stayed the same in 2008-09 as it was in 2000-01; women earned 46 percent of the doctorates awarded at the university compared to 54 percent for men. But in 2009-10, the percentages flipped — 56 percent women and 44 percent men.

For decades women have outpaced men for doctorates in such fields of study as education, health sciences and arts and humanities. **But last year at MU, the number of women obtaining doctorates in social and behavioral sciences and biological and agricultural sciences increased substantially.**

It has been in engineering, however, where women have made the biggest impact in completing doctoral studies. In a decade, the number of women earning doctorates in engineering more than doubled from 15 percent in 2000-01 to 32 percent in 2009-10.

Lex Akers, associate dean of the MU College of Engineering, points to the number of high-achieving students entering the college as undergraduates as one reason why the number of women is increasing at the graduate level.

"The number of undergraduate women is still small — only 13 percent — but nearly all of them are among the best undergraduates overall," Akers said. "Less than a fifth of all undergraduate students are women, but they comprise over half of the students whom we identify as leaders, those who will excel in postgraduate studies."

Competition for the best and the brightest is especially fierce at engineering schools because corporations are out to grab as many engineers with bachelor's degrees as they can. High corporate salaries and other perks lure engineers away from staying in school to pursue a master's degree or doctorate.

To keep engineering students in one of the MU College of Engineering's seven fields of graduate study, an undergraduate research program pays students \$1,000 a semester beginning in their junior year to work in the research lab. "Undergraduate students otherwise would never have an opportunity to see faculty or graduate students in their role as researchers," Akers said. "It piques their interest in staying in school a while longer."

Akers said he is proud to see more women obtaining doctorates in engineering, and he would like to see the numbers grow higher. "Getting females to consider engineering in the first place can be difficult because they often are steered away by well-meaning middle school and high school counselors," he said. "Counselors tend to talk about

engineering as a career option only to the best female students, and they tell girls with average grades that engineering would be too difficult for them. We want to also encourage those students to try engineering.”

Emily Baxter of Fulton received her bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering this year and decided to stay at the **MU College of Engineering** until she completes her master’s degree and doctorate. “The opportunities for women with doctorates in electrical engineering are incredible, so I decided to stay put,” she said. “I’ll be here for at least two to three years; I bought a house in Columbia.”

Baxter said she was always interested in engineering because both of her parents have engineering backgrounds. Even so, high school counselors and others tried to dissuade her from that field. “They told me it would be too hard to complete, but it’s only as difficult as you make it,” she said.

Participating in the College of Engineering’s undergraduate research program gave Baxter the initiative to pursue a doctorate, she said.

“I’ve really enjoyed school and wouldn’t have wanted to do anything else,” she added. “Engineering isn’t the most fun field of study, but it’s challenging. And I’ve always found fun in challenges.”

University of Missouri Doctorate Degrees Awarded by Year Percent by Gender Within CGS Field of Study

CGS Field of Study*	2000-01		2007-08		2008-09		2009-10	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Other	60%	40%	54%	46%	72%	28%	69%	31%
Social and Behavioral Sciences	34%	66%	48%	52%	45%	55%	50%	50%
Physical and Earth Sciences	26%	74%	27%	73%	15%	85%	24%	76%
Math and Computer Sciences	43%	57%	47%	53%	41%	59%	21%	79%
Health Sciences	50%	50%	65%	35%	64%	36%	80%	20%
Engineering	15%	85%	19%	81%	19%	81%	32%	68%
Education	61%	39%	67%	33%	61%	39%	71%	29%
Business	25%	75%	50%	50%	33%	67%	25%	75%
Biological and Agricultural Sciences	39%	61%	53%	47%	29%	71%	49%	51%
Arts and Humanities	62%	38%	52%	48%	44%	56%	55%	45%
Grand Total	46%	54%	50%	50%	46%	54%	56%	44%