

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

University of Missouri system considers capping enrollment

Facing another year of unprecedented growth, the Missouri University of Science and Technology sought to answer a question last year that's been nagging at campus leaders: Are there too many students?

For three months, a task force pored over data — looking at things such as residence hall capacity, classroom space and faculty workloads — before concluding that there is, indeed, reason to worry.

"We were very close to exceeding capacity," said Jay Goff, the school's dean of enrollment management.

In some ways, the Rolla campus embodies the entire University of Missouri system. The four campuses are coping with the financial turmoil created by rising enrollment and a rapid decline in state financial support. It's a situation that's forcing the system to consider capping enrollment somewhere down the line.

Among other things, MS&T's study found that half of the 26 undergraduate programs were operating at or beyond their ideal levels. Something needed to be done, the task force concluded.

Already the school, which saw 45 percent enrollment growth over the 10 years prior to the study, had taken measures to protect its popular freshman engineering program, which limits the number of new students it will accept each year. But now school leaders also are curtailing growth in some of the more popular majors by raising academic requirements. And they have set a target of 7,400 as the maximum campus enrollment — it topped 7,200 last fall.

It's not an outright cap, but the school is hoping to slow growth by simply not trying as hard. "We're being less aggressive in some of our recruiting," Goff said.

The problem facing the school — and the rest of the UM system — is that teaching resources are not keeping pace with the growth of the student population. Leaders worry the imbalance will eventually degrade the quality of the education provided. And they acknowledged last month that it could force them to alter an admissions policy that, in general, accepts every applicant who meets entrance requirements.

"You can't have unlimited enrollment growth at the same time that you have chronic reductions in state support. That's just a business model that can't be sustained forever," said Warren Erdman, chairman of the Board of Curators.

It's a problem that's not limited to Missouri and one that's not likely to go away anytime soon. So it's no surprise, industry observers say, that caps have been enacted, or are being considered, in a wide range of states, including California, North Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia, Florida and Nevada.

"They have to do something. There are only so many ways they can cut costs," said Sandy Baum a senior fellow at the George Washington University School of Education

In some instances, she said, schools don't actually call it an enrollment cap. Instead, they simply raise the bar for admission, effectively excluding some marginal applicants.

That's one of the problems with enrollment caps, said William Tierney, director of the Center for Higher Education Policy Analysis at the University of Southern California.

They tend to hurt low-income and first-generation students the most. "If you have to limit enrollment, in effect what you are going to do is limit those that are the weakest," Tierney said.

OFFSETTING LOWER SUPPORT

For the University of Missouri, state support has been an up-and-down affair for much of the last decade. It hit \$429 million in 2000, fell to \$377 million in 2003 and then climbed to \$437 million in 2008. This year's allocation is \$384 million.

Pure funding numbers, however, do not take into account the system's enrollment, which is up 35 percent in the last decade. When that's factored in, the system gets \$6,800 for each full-time student. Ten years ago, it was \$10,500.

Offsetting that loss of money is no small challenge.

There have been times in the recent past when relief was gained through significant tuition increases. In 2003 and 2004, for example, tuition soared 14.8 percent and 19.8 percent to offset deep cuts in state funding. But this is a different political and economic climate, said Nikki Krawitz, UM's vice president of finance.

"I don't think the possibility for double-digit increases is there anymore," Krawitz said.

That was made clear earlier this year when the system's curators voted to increase tuition 5.5 percent — a half percent more than Gov. Jay Nixon had suggested. During the final days of budget balancing in Jefferson City, Nixon responded to that extra increase by slashing even more of the system's state appropriation.

So with no way to bring in extra revenue and no relief in sight for the state cuts, the system may have to consider limiting student access.

For now, system leaders downplay the prospect of a blanket cap. Before that happens, they would start with limits on specific programs or majors. Yet even that might not be enough, particularly in the case of Mizzou, Erdman said.

"You could foresee a day when you may have to cap undergraduate enrollment at the Columbia campus," Erdman said.

Administrators there are keeping tabs on a number of programs — the school declined to identify which ones — facing enrollment pressures.

Chancellor Brady Deaton said that there's still room for expansion in many areas and that a blanket cap is a distant possibility.

"That could happen, sure. One cannot keep educating without the resources to do the job," Deaton said.

The same is true at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where a handful of programs are under scrutiny. For now, the school has boosted the academic requirements needed to get into some areas of study, including nursing and criminology.

Often, the limiting factors revolve around faculty time and available space, said Thomas George, UMSL's chancellor.

It might not be such a critical issue when you think of pushing one or two more students into a lecture hall. But it's a different matter to squeeze those same students into labs with limited equipment and where there is a greater need for student-teacher interaction.

"If you simply add more students and dilute the offering, the quality of the education goes down," George said.

BORDER DEBATE

There is one potentially thorny issue that will have to be worked out if the system does enact caps: How would it affect the ratio of in-state and out-of-state students?

In some states, California for example, enrollment caps generally apply only to in-state students. Out-of-state residents — who pay two or three times as much tuition — are not turned away.

With such a policy comes the potential for political headaches, with administrators having to explain why limited seats are being given to kids from other states.

It's sure to be a subject of debate, particularly in the case of Mizzou, which aggressively recruits outside of the state's borders. Last year, in fact, Chicago-area students represented 10 percent of Mizzou's freshman class.

Erdman, however, is skeptical of any approach that would turn Missouri kids away in favor of those from other states.

"I don't think that's something we would want to do," Erdman said.

MISSOURIAN

Missouri curators meet behind closed doors

Monday, August 1, 2011 | 8:00 a.m. CDT

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA — A panel of University of Missouri System curators plans to meet behind closed doors as the search for a new president continues.

The curators' executive committee has scheduled a noon meeting Monday in Columbia to discuss personnel matters with university lawyers. Out-of-town curators are expected to join the meeting by telephone or through a video conferencing system.

Former university president Gary Forsee stepped down in January to care for his ill wife.

The acting president is former general counsel Steve Owens, who has said he is not interested in a permanent job leading the university system.



University of Missouri joins Gig.U broadband effort

COLUMBIA | The University of Missouri has announced that it is joining an effort by some of the nation's top colleges to build higher-speed data networks in their local communities.

The project is known as Gig.U: The University Community Next Generation Innovation Project.

The 29 participating schools include Arizona State, Duke, Florida, Michigan, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Florida and Wake Forest University.

The Aspen Institute, a Colorado-based nonprofit, initiated the effort.

The schools and their local partners will solicit proposals from telecommunications companies in their areas. They hope to quickly build high-speed broadband networks in communities with low unemployment and heavy demand for such services.

“These networks drive economic growth,” said University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton. “It will turn the entire city into a laboratory for high-bandwidth technology.”



Even Living Together Is Too Much Commitment for Today's Couples

Instead, they're shacking up a few nights a week while keeping option of going to their own home

A growing number of young American adults are engaging in what's called "stayover relationships," in which they spend three or more nights together each week while still having the option of going to their own homes, a new study shows.

"Instead of following a clear path from courtship to marriage, individuals are choosing to engage in romantic ties on their own terms without the guidance of social norms," study author Tyler Jamison, a doctoral candidate in the human development and family studies department at the University of Missouri, said in a university news release.

"There is a gap between the teen years and adulthood during which we don't know much about the dating behaviors of young adults. Stayovers are the unique answer to what emerging adults are doing in their relationships," she added.

There are a number of reasons for this growing trend in stayover relationships, said Jamison, who interviewed college-aged adults in committed, exclusive relationships.

"As soon as couples live together, it becomes more difficult to break up," she explained. "At that point, they have probably signed a lease, bought a couch and acquired a dog, making it harder to disentangle their lives should they break up. Staying over doesn't present those entanglements."

The couples in the study with stayover routines were content in their relationships, but didn't necessarily plan to move in together or get married.

"Many college-aged adults are students who will soon be facing a transition point in their lives," Jamison said. "Most students do not have a definite plan for where they will live or work after graduation, and stayovers are a way for couples to have comfort and convenience without the commitment of living together or having long-term plans."

The study appears in the current issue of the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.



'Stayover relationships' redefine young adult commitment

New study looks at college couples who spend 3-7 nights a week together — but keep separate homes

By Kimberly Hayes Taylor

If you're concerned about wasting money because you and your mate spend almost every night together but maintain your own separate homes, don't sweat it. You're simply engaging in America's "stayover relationship" trend.

University of Missouri researcher Tyler Jamison says she noticed that most of her college friends were "shacking up," but had not formally moved in together. Instead, they spent three or more nights together a week and still kept their own places. She conducted a research study among college students and found that committed couples in their 20s are redefining dating and breaking social norms with this new relationship model.

Her study of committed couples who engage in the stayover lifestyle is published in the current issue of the Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.

"This seems to be a pretty stable and convenient middle ground between casual dating and more formal commitments like living together and getting married," says Jamison, a University of Missouri doctoral candidate and researcher in the department of human development and family studies in Columbia, Mo.

"It's a comfortable thing people are doing when they are not totally sure they want to end up in a permanent situation with a person or don't want to end up living together and having to find another place to live if they are break or decide who gets the dog."

Jamison believes stayover relationships represent a general trend that young people want to delay permanent relationships because they want to finish their education and pursue other goals. She's expanding her research to examine unmarried parents, and suspects that people of all ages enjoy stayover relationships.

"Stayover is something they can do that doesn't have a lot of consequences, but it has a lot of benefits," she says.

Until a year ago, Michael Bless Jr., of Auburn Hills, Mich., enjoyed the benefits of a four-year stayover relationship. He liked the option of staying over or staying at home.

“Sometimes, you want your own space, and the next room may not be far enough,” says the 30-year-old engineering student at Oakland Community College. “I can love you and be with you almost every night, but there are times when I want to be alone.”

The couple parted ways when his former girlfriend graduated from the University of Detroit and took an accounting job in Miami. Wanting to fulfill his own goals, Bless says, “When she left, my commitment left.”

That's not surprising, says Aaron Turpeau, a licensed professional counselor and relationship expert in Atlanta. America's obsession with independence is driving these stayover relationships, he explains.

“We don't want anyone hindering us from doing our thing,” he says. “You hear people say it all the time: ‘You do you, and I'll do me.’ Unfortunately, this obsession with independence leads to unhealthy human relationships.”

The consequence is people continue living on the fence, never committing one way or the other, says Turpeau, author of “The Harmonious Way: A Success Guide Guide to Selecting a Compatible Mate.”

“We don't value what we don't need, and we don't love what we don't value,” he says. “I can say I want a relationship, but I don't need a relationship. I want a man, but I don't need a man. So we play house; we play marriage and as soon as we get tired, we go back to our own places.”

Nevertheless, Jamison is not convinced of any long-term consequences of stayover relationships.

“Without data, it's hard to make a statement about it,” she says. “I doubt it has major implications for later commitments or marriages.”



Cyber guardians test their skills

Competition shows difficulty of defense.

By ANDREW DENNEY

Saturday, July 30, 2011

They might not have looked the part, but the future guardians of some of your most sensitive online secrets were at the University of Missouri this week for a boot camp to help hone their skills.

They were the participants in the U.S. Cyber Challenge, a four-day boot camp held to help train the Internet security guards of tomorrow. The camp featured a "capture the flag" competition in which the object was to infiltrate a competitor's computer system to steal files while working to defend their own.

Jorge Orchilles, a Miami resident who was a member of the winning team, said as more public and private entities and citizens become dependent on the Internet to serve basic functions, the need for cyber defenders grows.

When asked why he chose to work in cyber security, as opposed to using his skills for more unethical purposes, Orchilles said: "Because I want to sleep at night."

University of Missouri Chancellor Brady Deaton lauded the program's participants for their intent to use their abilities to keep information safe. "I think it's a wonderful program," Deaton said.

According to a release from KnowBe4, a private Internet security awareness firm, the industries that are most susceptible to cybercrime are travel, education, financial services, governmental entities and information technology services.

A report released last year by the Internet Crime Complaint Center — which is run through a partnership between the FBI and the not-for-profit National White Collar Crime Center — indicated that in 2009 there were 4,158 complaints of Internet crime in Missouri. The two most prevalent complaints were for non-delivery of merchandise and identity theft, and more than 5 percent of the complaints were for a monetary loss of more than \$10,000 for the complainant.

The work of cyber security guards is becoming more crucial to the safety of a society that could barely function without the use of the Internet, said Matthew Sitko, a St. Cloud, Minn., resident who was a member of the winning team.

"It's so much easier to attack than to defend," he said.

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MISSOURIAN

MU hosts cyber security camp to train future defenders of cyberspace

Saturday, July 30, 2011 | 7:21 p.m. CDT; updated 5:37 p.m. CDT, Sunday, July 31, 2011



A focused Andrew Thompson offers coaching as his teammate, DC Grant, attempt to overcome a hurdle during Friday's race. Participants of the Cyber Challenge Camp converged at Ketchum Auditorium at the University of Missouri's engineering building to square off in the electronic race whose objective was to infiltrate a remote system via networking exploits. † [CHRISTOPHER PARKS](#)

BY [GLYN COAKLEY](#)

COLUMBIA — Three winners walked away from the [United States Cyber Challenge Regional Cyber Security Boot Camp](#) at MU with \$1,000 scholarships.

The winners, Jorge Orchilles, Mathew Sitko and Vijay Thurimella, left with more than that, though. They gained skills that will help them better defend computer networks and sensitive information from attacks that are becoming more common in today's world.

The camp ran from Monday morning until Friday afternoon and taught people from across the country skills for breaking into computer networks, in order to defend them from those attacks.

The camp also focused on ethics. An entire panel on Tuesday was devoted to the topic of ethics in information security, and small lessons and examples in ethics were given throughout other sessions, said Alex Levinson, a teaching assistant for the camp.

Levinson said that problems in information security, such as the breach in the PlayStation Network in April, arise out of an absence of ethical teaching about information technology. This, he said, is why ethics are such an important part of what the United States Cyber Challenge teaches at its camps across the nation.

Levinson said some accuse them of enabling hackers by teaching them more skills to use, but he argues that asking someone to defend a network without teaching them how to attack a network is "... like asking a police officer to protect and serve without teaching him how to use a gun."

Information security professionals, he said, don't just build and defend systems, they also assess their own systems for vulnerabilities. To do this, they have to know how to go on the offensive, not just the defensive.

Testing a network's security is just as important as actually securing it, he said.

Karen Evans, the national director for the United States Cyber Challenge, said the staff was looking to put a camp in the Midwest since the camps had previously only been on the coasts.

Choosing Columbia was primarily due to the work of Annette Sobel, assistant to the provost for strategic opportunities, and Beth Fisher, who is Sobel's project director, Evans said. Fisher heard about the competition and informed Sobel, and they both agreed that it was an opportunity they couldn't pass up.

Evans added it was a great deal for the Cyber Challenge.

"The university isn't getting anything from having us here," Evans said. MU only charged for the use of the dorms and meals, not the computer facilities

Sobel said MU was excited to be a part of such a quickly growing field. Sobel is working on building up MU's information security program and said this camp was a great way to start drawing attention to it.

On Friday morning, the capture-the-flag style game started with a flurry of tapping on keyboards.

The objective itself was simple: break into a network the camp had set up and plant a "flag", or file, on as many of the computers as possible. Each team that planted a flag was awarded points, but a flag could only be planted on any machine once. However, on each machine was a number of "artifacts" or clues that would help the teams of three break into more machines, and the teams were awarded points for collecting them.

The 4 1/2-hour-long competition was broken by several unique interruptions. A different meme was projected on a screen in the front of the room at the top of every hour, like "Nyan Cat" and Rebecca Black's "Friday." A fire alarm went off early in the competition and forced the competitors to evacuate the building for several minutes.

At the awards ceremony, Lex Akers, associate dean for the College of Engineering, joked that it was "still under investigation" if one of the competitors had somehow caused the alarm.

Although each member of the winning team won a \$1,000 scholarship, it was also an avenue to let the campers exercise their competitive personalities, which are common in information security. Several competitions have sprung up across the nation where aspiring information security professionals can test their skills against each other.

"You're trying to harness that," Evans said, talking about how the United States Cyber Challenge was trying to attract students to the information security field.



Big 12 schools getting off to an awkward start

By DAVE MATTER

Sunday, July 31, 2011

After a mostly positive 326-word soliloquy on the Big 12's future, Texas Tech Coach Tommy Tuberville paused to take a breath and, finally, said something interesting and honest.

"That's the political answer, right?" he said as he left the podium at Big 12 media days. "I practiced that one."

Like any marriage of convenience, Big 12 media football days in Dallas became a show of forced smiles and awkward, unsettling moments. Occasional candor surfaced amid the stagecraft, and Tuberville's deadpan delivery captured the essence of the conference's current state.

More truth is found in smirks and sarcasm than grand announcements and slogans.

In the first official conference event since becoming a league of 10, the Big 12 rolled out the red carpet Monday and Tuesday at The Westin Galleria, creating a peppier, more lavish vibe than usual. Cheerleaders and mascots from Big 12 teams stalked the third floor to greet guests as they moved from one room to the next. Reporters were rewarded with Big 12 golf shirts, fitted caps and backpacks, nicer swag than the typical mouse pad and key chain. Even the hotel itself and its downtown location were glitzier than the usual locale, which the last few years had been a remote section of Irving.

The signature event came Monday night at the commissioner's reception as the league launched its new marketing campaign, centered around the catchphrase, "How We Play." To start the program, the league's head coaches filed onto the stage one at a time — imagine a beauty pageant for uncomfortable middle-aged men — and posed for a group photo. To underscore the league's uncertain union, Tuberville was missing. He was playing golf.

Next up, in a scene that soon inspired snark from the Twittersphere, Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe entered the stage to the theme music from "The Natural." He took questions from the night's emcee in what sounded like a scripted Q&A session, during which Beebe insisted the Big 12 was "a tight family." Beebe exited stage left and wasn't heard from until the next day.

The show ended with a dramatic montage of football scenes from around the Big 12, slow-motion highlights narrated by a deep, drawling voice who spoke of the league's traditions, rivalries and — cue sportswriter snickering — common time zone.

If the league's authenticity felt artificial back in its formative years, this was downright fantasy land. Just a few hours before the declarations of unity and togetherness, one coach spent the morning grumbling over the Big 12's latest touchy subject: ESPN's \$300 million Longhorn Network and its plan to televise high school games and one of Texas' conference games. Texas A&M officials have been grouching about those plans for weeks. On Monday, while most coaches feigned ignorance or struck a diplomatic tone, **Missouri's Gary Pinkel became the first coach to openly question the network's controversial plans. The next day he found an ally in Oklahoma's Bob Stoops.**

"There just doesn't seem to be any common sense in that," Pinkel said. "And I can't believe that that's going to happen. But we'll see."

It's uncertain whether the network will actually air high school games or televise a conference game — the NCAA is exploring the issue and Big 12 athletic directors are meeting this week to discuss more — but the heart of the conflict is, ironically, a key factor that kept the Big 12 alive last summer. Texas chose to stay in the Big 12 in part because the Big 12 would clear Texas' path to create its own network, a venture that's prohibited in the other power conferences. The network has yet to launch — it is scheduled to go live Aug. 26 — but it's already heightened the Big 12's haves vs. have-nots perception into a game of Texas vs. everybody else.

The squabbles have Pinkel coveting the "All for one, one for all" philosophy of other conferences.

"You want a degree of fairness in any league," Pinkel said. "The fairness in the Southeastern Conference is every single team in that league gets the same revenue share. That's one of the reasons it's a great league. That's why the Pac-10 is going to that. And that's going to make that league better. ... That's how this new Big 12, to me, in my opinion, will become a great league. You do what's right for the Big 12. Every member is a part of it."

In a local radio interview later in the week, Missouri Athletic Director Mike Alden applauded Pinkel for taking a strong stance but sounded confident in the Big 12's stability. Alden called the Longhorn Network dispute a "distraction."

"All of a sudden you've got a lot of people saying, 'Oh my gosh, how is this going to help keep everything together?' " Alden said Thursday on KFRU. "I think once we get all of that calmed down, folks will see ... it'll all work out OK, and the league will be together for a long time. That's what we believe."

Beebe believes the same, but he isn't deaf to the skeptics. He said Tuesday he doesn't expect the benefit of the doubt after the league lost two members last summer.

"There's going to be a lot of vultures in the air," Beebe told reporters, "who want to see what's going to happen and say, 'I told you so, this conference is falling apart,' when we have issues like any other conference that we have to resolve."

In April, the league announced a lucrative new TV deal for its second-tier cable rights, a contract with Fox that more than doubles the number of games televised on cable and quadruples the dollar value of the previous cable deal. The buzz barely lasted three months.

MISSOURIAN

Missouri politicians jockey over job-creation

By DAVID A. LIEB

JEFFERSON CITY | The centerpiece legislation for Missouri's upcoming special session now has a name: the "Made in Missouri Jobs Package."

Gov. Jay Nixon bestowed the name upon the plan this past week while traveling the state to rally support for it. Of course, Nixon is not actually the one who came up with the plan. Or is he?

Over the past few weeks, Missouri's Democratic governor and Republican legislative leaders have been taking turns putting their insignia on an overhaul of the state's tax incentives that would create enticements for certain businesses while scaling back some existing tax credits.

Although not a single vote has been cast, the governor and many lawmakers already perceive the package to be a political winner — especially heading into an election year in which jobs and the economy appear likely to dominate the discourse. For any incumbent hoping to win in November 2012, it will be essential to show that he or she not only is concerned about creating jobs, but has done something to that effect.

Thus the situation at the Missouri Capitol, where "they're kind of jockeying to see who can take credit," said Jeff Milyo, a professor who focuses on political economics at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

The governor's office and key legislators all deny they care about who gets credit for the legislation. But consider this series of events:

— May 13: Despite negotiating to the final day, the Legislature adjourns without passing a bill overhauling the state's business incentives. Senate President Pro Tem Rob Mayer says he already has had discussions with Nixon about the potential for a special session. Nixon tells reporters there first must be consensus among lawmakers on a specific job-creation plan.

— June: A group of House and Senate members periodically discuss details of a potential bill. The governor's office says its staff also is involved.

— July 7: Nixon invites legislative leaders to meet with him "to finalize a strategy" for legislation on business incentives. Mayer and House Speaker Steven Tilley respond that Nixon's invitation is premature. They say lawmakers will first develop a plan, then meet with Nixon and ask him to call a special session.

— July 18: Nixon announces he will deliver a "major policy address relating to business development strategies" on July 21 in St. Louis and Kansas City.

— July 20: In a series of hastily called news conferences in St. Louis, Kansas City and Columbia, Mayer, Tilley and other lawmakers announce they have agreed on a package of business incentives and tax credit changes for a special session. Moments later, Nixon's office says he will call a special session.

— July 21: Nixon delivers his previously announced speech, outlining many of the same priorities as lawmakers and saying the special session will occur in September.

— July 25: Nixon meets with Mayer, Tilley and other lawmakers about the proposed legislation for the special session.

— July 27: Nixon travels to Springfield and the eastern Missouri town of Elsberry to tout the plan, which he dubs the "bipartisan Made in Missouri Jobs Package."

— July 28: Republican lawmakers distribute copies of a draft bill to colleagues; they say Nixon also has received a copy.

The apparent political positioning highlights several realities, said Richard Fulton, a longtime political science professor at Northwest Missouri State University..

The first general premise is that a governor will always have a larger bully pulpit than lawmakers, will probably be one of the few state politicians that residents recognize, and thus can easily lay claim to any popular policy enacted during his administration, Fulton said. With their largest legislative majorities in decades, Republicans also must demonstrate accomplishments to voters in 2012 or risk losing seats, he said.

At the midpoint of 2011, Missouri's unemployment rate remained just under 9 percent — an improvement from a year or two ago but still significantly higher than its pre-recession levels. Thus Republican state lawmakers and Nixon both need to lay claim to a plan to create jobs.

"It's the eternal game of both of them knowing that jobs is the key, and both of them trying to maneuver that this is ours," Fulton said.

Politically, it's perception that matters. That perhaps helps explain Nixon's penchant for naming job-creation plans. His inaugural "Show Me Jobs Plan" debuted in 2009. In 2010, his economic proposals included the "Missouri First" and "Training for Tomorrow" plans. This year, Nixon had been pushing the "Compete Missouri" jobs initiative that he now says falls within the "Made in Missouri Jobs Package."

Yet some economists have long doubted the ability of targeted state tax breaks to live up to their names.

"Any economist worth their salt is going to tell you those things don't have the kind of economic impact and job-creating impact that politicians like to claim," Milyo said.

The plan drafted for Missouri's special session would pare back tax credits for housing developers, renovators of historic buildings and low-income elderly and disabled residents who live in rented homes. Instead, it would create incentives for companies that export goods through the St. Louis airport, that operate large computerized data centers or that focus on scientific or high-tech industries. Organizers of big-time amateur sporting events also could get new tax breaks.

Despite the enthusiasm of Missouri's politicians, Milyo remains skeptical.

"In general, if these activities aren't going to locate here without subsidies, that's probably because they're really not well suited to be here," he said.

In a split Missouri, Gov. Jay Nixon straddles the political divide

By STEVE KRASKE

MU MENTION PAGE 2

Sister Berta Sailer didn't see this one coming.

But there it was in black and white: Gov. Jay Nixon signed a bill in July requiring some federal welfare recipients to be tested for drugs.

Sailer, who runs Operation Breakthrough, a child care operation and social service center that serves much of Kansas City's central core, felt singled. Those were *her* people the governor of Missouri was unfairly singling out, she said.

"I was shocked by it," Sailer said of Nixon's action. "That a Democratic governor would approve it."

The signing wasn't Nixon's only move that ran contrary to traditional Democratic thinking. He recently rocked some Democrats by allowing a measure that imposes new restrictions on late-term abortions to become law without his signature.

He also allowed to become law a bill that lets Missouri ignore requirements of President Barack Obama's health care reform law. He also signed legislation lowering the minimum age to get a concealed-gun permit.

Nixon describes himself as standing smack in the middle of the political spectrum — and he makes no apologies for it.

"I just don't bring a hard partisan tone to what I do," Nixon said.

In fact, Nixon aides point out, several of the positions Nixon took had significant Democratic support.

Back in Kansas City, Missouri Sen. Jolie Justus, a fellow Democrat, said Nixon does a pretty good job walking a fine line. In a state that appears to be tilting rightward, Nixon must at the

same time appease members of his own party and Republicans, who easily control both chambers of the General Assembly.

Still, Justus hears catcalls from her Democratic constituents, many of whom live around the Country Club Plaza and south along the Ward Parkway corridor.

“My constituents in particular are increasingly frustrated,” she said. “They say, ‘What’s up? Why is the governor doing this?’ ”

She has an answer for them.

“I say we live in a state right now where the legislature is controlled by people who disagree with how we feel in Kansas City,” she said.

This year, Nixon also acted on bills in ways that appealed to Democrats.

He rejected legislation that would have required many voters to display government-issued photo identification when they cast ballots. He vetoed a bill that would have made it tougher to win workplace discrimination cases.

He rejected a map that redrew the boundary lines for the state’s soon-to-be eight congressional districts. Most observers said the new map favors Republicans. And Republicans overrode his veto.

And the bill that would allow Missouri to ignore requirements of the health care reform law? It might not have any effect because it requires Congress to first sign off on the creation of a multistate health care compact.

All in all, analysts said, Nixon appears to be straddling a very pronounced political divide in a state that remains deeply split between the two major parties. And, they said, that’s not a bad place to be.

“I think he’s working as hard as he can to position himself in the middle, where he doesn’t leave Republicans with too much ammunition to go after him,” said Peverill Squire, a political scientist at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

“He’s done things that anger Democrats, but he’s calculated correctly that they don’t have any other place to go.”

Sailer is a case in point. She voted for Nixon in 2008. Asked whether she would do so again next year when he seeks re-election, Sailer at first hesitated.

“Everyone is flip-flopping everything,” she said.

But then, when she considered that his likely opponent is Republican Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder, Sailer said she would probably stay with Nixon because the vote would be between “a person who goes a little overboard against someone who is overboard all the time.”

Nixon said a lot of people are attracted to him “because I don’t bring a highly partisan edge or a highly radical philosophical edge to things.”

“I try to get things done. To make an analogy to sports, the action happens between the hashmarks. It’s where you can move the ball up and down the field.”

Citing some of the pro-Democratic stands he has taken this year, Nixon insists that he has not forsaken any of his principles.

“I think I have a record over 25 years that’s supported workers, that’s supported individual rights, that clearly believes strongly in the rights ... of minorities.”

As for the bill regarding drug testing of some welfare clients, Nixon said he would “work to make sure that whatever program is implemented is implemented in a way that fights for kids ... and works to get treatment for folks that have addiction problems.”

Nixon said his values have been honed by the thousands of hours he’s spent among his fellow Missourians.

“I sincerely believe that the true art of what I do is trying to find ways to bring people together to make incremental change and, when you make incremental change, having the will to stick with it,” he said. “It’s not just veering from one spot to another based on what the weather vane of public opinion is for that moment.”

The tag that Nixon is “Democrat Lite” has been with him ever since he took office in 2009.

Throughout his first three legislative sessions in Jefferson City, Nixon steered away from boosting taxes in the midst of the economic downturn. Given declining revenues, he has also been forced to continue downsizing state government by tens of millions of dollars.

And he has also been forced to work with a set of legislative leaders who are all Republicans, given the GOP’s dominance in the General Assembly.

His evenhanded approach has earned him polite applause at times from Republicans, who have said they have little to complain about. Nixon, they say, governs “to the right of center,” as Missouri Sen. Brad Lager, a Savannah Republican, put it.

These days, Lager said he’s not surprised some Democrats are steaming.

“I’m not debating that the left of his party is probably very upset,” Lager said. “But the reality is, he’s probably governing from a perspective by which most Missourians believe.”

House Speaker Steve Tilley, a Farmington Republican, said Nixon is clearly a Democrat, but “probably on the conservative side for a Democrat.”

Other Republicans have expressed more frustration, saying Nixon’s actions too often amount to a refusal to lead. Case in point: allowing new abortion restrictions to go into effect without his signature.

Jonathon Prouty, a spokesman for the Missouri GOP, said that although Republicans are pleased with the new restrictions, it is another example of the governor “not dealing with difficult issues.”

Conservative Patrick Tuohey, writing on the Missouri Record blog, agrees. He said he wonders whether Nixon is “ashamed to be a Democrat. Or maybe he’s pretending not to be a Democrat. At times, though, it seems he’s pretending not to be governor.”

Nixon “promised more education funding. It has been cut,” Tuohey wrote. “He said he would undo Medicaid cuts. He hasn’t. He said he would increase college scholarships for Missouri high school students. Instead? More cuts.”

Still, several Republicans admit that Nixon’s middle-of-the-road record will make him hard to beat next year. Asked what he’ll be like to run against, Lager offered one word:

“Tough.”



Online learning tests campuses

By **BOB ROPER**

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MU MENTION ON P. 2

Two weeks ago, I discussed the emergence of online learning as competition for brick-and-mortar classrooms in higher education. Because higher education is Columbia's main economic driver, it's important to understand what's driving the changes.

Online learning has a lot of advantages. First and foremost, it is cheap. As Harvard Professor Louis Lataif points out, "If you can buy a self-paced calculus course on DVD for \$57, is it worth spending \$5,000 to take the same course at a private university?"

Second, the quality of online learning is already good. This might surprise some, but Clayton Christensen, a Harvard business professor, said the quality of online learning is quite good — and getting better. For example, thanks to high-quality, low-cost videoconferencing, students can work in groups as in a classroom. Computer simulations of high quality allow them to enter "virtual laboratories."

Plus, curriculums can be customized as needed, which is not always possible in traditional classrooms.

Third, online learning is convenient to the student in ways not possible at the traditional campus. The work is done at the volume and time of the student's choosing.

Fourth, more low-cost vendors are in, or will soon be in, the marketplace. We all know about DeVry University, the University of Phoenix and Kaplan. But what about Apple? This great company is the market leader with such products as iPhones and iPads. Young people seem to get this technology instinctively, so the question naturally arises: When will we see the advent of Apple University? I see no reason Apple U, et al, could not offer a college education that is inexpensive, broad-based, flexible and of high quality.

Finally, some might bypass college altogether. After all, young people might choose to become first-rate plumbers, electricians and the like rather than graduate from college with a degree, sizable debt and questionable job prospects.

Others might bypass college for an entirely different reason: A new option has arisen, called online learning portals, that might make college superfluous. For example, a company like Learning Counts

allows students to create portfolios that document their knowledge and skills. College professors examine the portfolios and certify what the students know and what they can do. This can, of course, lead to college credits. But it can also lead to a classic “cutting out the middle man” phenomenon: students bypassing college and taking the certifications directly to prospective employers. After all, in a real sense a college education is merely a means to an end, and if a better means turns up ... well, you get the picture.

Based on the foregoing, one could reasonably wonder whether it is all over for traditional colleges and universities, especially four-year institutions and most especially the big research universities. I believe they will survive if they are adept in strategic thinking and resolute in their determination to make the changes necessary to survive and thrive. After all, universities have many advantages in this survival competition.

These advantages include the professoriate. They also have their campuses, where the great majority of students want to be. As Christensen says, campuses are “founts of discovery.”

Given these advantages, it still seems long-term survival requires big changes. For example:

- Colleges and universities will have to become a lot more productive, which will not make faculty happy. Tenured faculty could be required to teach more classes. For efficiency, teaching will involve more technology. We will likely see the hiring of more teaching specialists rather than the traditional tenure-track, research-oriented scholars. Programs might be eliminated, and layoffs are likely. Mergers might occur. Tenure might be reduced, limited or even eliminated. Because community colleges, which already have half the students, cost cash-strapped states less than traditional colleges and universities, precious resources are likely to flow to them. A student can get that degree in three years, instead of the usual four or five, by extending the usual nine-month school year. That same student can also acquire two degrees in four years.
- Colleges and universities will have to think and act creatively. To Christensen, that clearly includes morphing to a “hybrid instruction” model: blending the online and face-to-face learning models. Because the people and computer systems are already in place, this is a “low marginal cost” change and should be a sure winner. A variant of that is to set up a model where part of one’s education occurs by online learning, the rest on campus. Most important, since disruptive innovation is not going away, the most nimble and strategically smart will deal with it as an opportunity as well as a threat. Then they will find the right niche and go for it.

The University of Missouri, Columbia College and Stephens College are all working on these challenges. For example, 25 percent of Stephens’ net revenues come from online learning. Columbia College has students all over the world learning online. And MU has both online learning programs (MU Direct and CDIS) and hybrid courses.

Also, the UM Board of Curators recently reviewed its strategic plan with a consultant, clearly based on the certain knowledge the ground is shifting.