

JAN 13 2012



Schaefer to take part in GOP response to Nixon speech

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — State Sen. Kurt Schaefer will join House Majority Leader Tim Jones to give the Republican response to Gov. Jay Nixon's State of the State address next week.

The response, which has been handled in the past by Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder, is being turned over to Schaefer, R-Columbia, and Jones, R-Eureka, to highlight the importance of legislative and budget issues, said Jonathon Prouty, communications director for the Missouri Republican Party.

Nixon will deliver his State of the State speech beginning at 7 p.m. Tuesday. A videotaped response from Schaefer and Jones will be broadcast over a satellite feed about five minutes after Nixon finishes, the Republican announcement said.

Kinder is the party's senior state elected official. But he pulled back from an expected challenge to Nixon and in his re-election bid faces at least one intraparty rival, state Sen. Brad Lager, R-Savannah. Kinder could draw another opponent as state Sen. Luann Ridgeway, R-Smithville, mulls the race.

In response to a question about the selection, Prouty called Schaefer and Jones "two promising young leaders who share a unified vision about how to restore the economy and create jobs, improve education and demand greater accountability in taxpayer spending."

Schaefer is chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Jones has been selected by the House Republican Caucus as the chamber's next speaker.



Students again push for UM board vote

Kelly still supports change to curators.

By Janese Silvey

University of Missouri student lobbyists will again spend the legislative session trying to convince lawmakers that students should have voting rights on the UM Board of Curators.

“It’s so important,” said Corbin Evans, legislative director of the Associated Students of the University of Missouri, or ASUM. Through surveys, he said, students have indicated “they feel like they do deserve a voice.”

Last year was seen as an opportune time for the change because legislators had to alter the makeup of the Board of Curators after Missouri lost a congressional district. The state constitution sets the board at nine members, which conflicted with a previous state law that required no more than one member from each of Missouri’s nine congressional districts. In 2013, Missouri will have eight districts.

Lawmakers addressed the conflict by passing a bill that filled the ninth seat with an at-large representative.

Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, has filed a bill this session that would essentially undo that law. His bill would give the ninth seat to a student.

“Generations of students have believed it’s appropriate to have representation on the board,” ~~Kelly said, adding that he has supported that idea since he helped get a non-voting student on the board in the 1980s.~~

Curators have argued the board should remain a group of trustees responsible for the whole institution and not stakeholders representing certain groups. The argument made more sense in the past when state appropriations were funding the bulk of university operations, Evans said. Today, students pick up most of the university’s operating costs through tuition and fees.

Having students as voting members of boards isn’t uncommon. In 2010, half of all public colleges and universities had at least one student as a voting member of their boards, according to the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges.

Some also argue students aren’t mature or experienced enough to vote. One compromise, Evans said, would be to appoint graduate or professional students to a voting position.

Kelly scoffs at the argument, though.

“I would be willing to say the student curators at the various universities around the state are at least as well-prepared as the average curator,” he said. “And I’ll bet you their study habits of the issues are at least as good once they’re on there as the average curator.”

ASUM’s legislative agenda this year also includes preserving funding for higher education. This year, though, the student lobbyists will try to sway Gov. Jay Nixon as well as legislators. Last year, Evans said, student lobbyists helped convince lawmakers to reduce Nixon’s proposed 7 percent cut to higher education, but it didn’t matter when Nixon later withheld money to colleges.

“We came away last year feeling we had succeeded, so it was disheartening,” he said. “We’re hoping it doesn’t happen again.”

Another ASUM priority is to promote science, technology, engineering and math careers. Evans said his team is working on a plan that would provide tax incentives to Missouri employers who provide internships in STEM-related fields to UM System students.

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

MU study finds breast cancer survivors benefit from meditation

By Jessica England

January 12, 2012 | 6:48 p.m. CST

COLUMBIA — Breast cancer survivor Kay Smith was running in overdrive. She described herself as overstressed, overworked and running on empty during and after radiation treatment.

She heard about a study called Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction that was being run at MU and decided to participate.

The eight-to-10 week program aimed to improve the lives of breast cancer patients with a routine that consisted of breathing sessions, yoga and Tai Chi exercises. Participants were also told to focus on their positive and negative thoughts to learn to manage their stress level.

"The cancer experience is stressful for patients, and as they complete treatment and become cancer survivors, they often seek ways to manage and eliminate stress, which contributes to an improved quality of life," said Bob Stewart, one of the researchers.

Smith said the study helped her concentrate on her thoughts.

"The class allowed me to be aware of who I am and where my life is going," Smith said.

Smith said her health improved because she learned how to slow down, listen to her body and mind and not over-commit herself. Doctors noticed a change in her blood pressure.

"It helped me mentally, physically and spiritually," she said.

Smith said four other participants she talked to felt less stressed as well.

"When we felt slow and not well, we could sit still and just breathe," Smith said. "It helped me begin my day with a positive attitude."

Smith said she would likely participate in the program again because it was important for her to learn to take each moment as it came and to slow down and be aware of her life.

Before the study, Smith did not attend support groups, but after being a part of the study she offered to talk with people that wanted to seek help and tell them about the opportunities it offered.

"It's important for people to know there is a lot of vital information to live a better life after breast cancer," Smith said.

Jane Armer, professor of nursing at MU, worked with Yaowarat Matchim, former doctoral student, and Stewart, professor emeritus of education and adjunct faculty in nursing, to study health improvement for breast cancer survivors after they participated in Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.

"It helps the patient learn to maintain a flexible balance with their stress reduction," Armer said.

Matchim tested the meditation on healthy, non-cancer patients in Missouri and Thailand before she conducted the study.

The 32 participants were all breast cancer survivors who had completed their active treatment less than three months before the program and were diagnosed with stage 0, 1, or 2 breast cancer, which are less-advanced stages. Fifteen participants received the stress-reduction treatment and 17 were in the control group.

A control group is a group not receiving the intervention, Armer said. This allows the researchers to better understand if the intervention itself had the effect on the group undergoing treatment or if some outside factor contributed to changes.

Stewart said this study was different because it used a control group, which many other breast cancer studies do not.

Armer said the study had both a baseline, pre-intervention, measurement and a longer follow-up time than many other studies. This allowed researchers to look at the longer-term effects of the intervention and make comparisons with the measures recorded before the intervention was carried out.

Researchers also used cortisol levels as a physiological measure and physical measure of blood pressure, pulse, respiration, to psychosocial measures, Armer said.

Cortisol is the primary stress hormone. It alters immune system responses and suppresses the digestive system, the reproductive system and growth processes.

Armer said the cancer itself is managed by rigorous treatment protocols. While this intervention may reduce stress and help manage symptoms during treatment, it does not in any way replace cancer treatment.

"It is an important intervention to reduce stress and improve quality of life and has implications in years of survivorship, after the active cancer treatment ends," Armer said.

Matchim is currently working in Thailand on a meditation training project and a therapeutic prayer project for chronic patients.

In Missouri, Armer said plans are being made for the next step in survivorship.

"We've had positive success and users that wanted to keep up with the course," Armer said.

"We are focused on what people have learned and their benefits overtime. There is interesting work left to be done."



New REDI grant will assist budding entrepreneurs

By Jacob Barker

The University of Missouri has awarded Regional Economic Development Inc. a \$60,000 grant to help entrepreneurs build their companies, giving the agency resources to operate the business incubator it plans to open next to its new offices in the Fifth and Walnut streets parking garage.

The grant will help REDI provide counseling to small businesses to help them develop a business plan and find startup capital. Its success will be measured by looking at jobs created, investment dollars in startups and counseling hours provided to entrepreneurs.

The grant is similar to one the university has awarded to the MU Life Sciences Business Incubator on Providence Road, REDI President Mike Brooks said.

REDI plans to use services from the League of Innovators, a business incubator venture recently launched by local AdVentures and REDI board member Brent Beshore, to run its incubator. The League of Innovators operates out of the Museo building on Buttonwood Drive, and entrepreneurs can purchase a membership that gives them access to the space. The idea is to get innovators together in one space with opportunities to collaborate or recruit talent.

REDI has a memorandum of understanding with the League of Innovators and has slated \$30,000 from the grant to pay the group for services related to running REDI's planned incubator, Brooks said. Beshore said the League already has the staff to run an incubator, and rather than duplicating employees, REDI's need for services offered a good partnership opportunity.

Another \$10,000 will go to former PetScreen executive Tariq Shah to provide support services to businesses, and the remaining \$20,000 could be used to compensate REDI staff for counseling they provide.

Brooks said REDI retained the League of Innovators for services because it wants to support the group and not set up services that compete against it.

"We didn't want to duplicate services, obviously," Brooks said. "We don't want to go out and create another entity. The challenge in this community is making sure we're all working together."

Brooks and REDI's board have indicated interest in emphasizing youth entrepreneurship at the incubator and providing a place where students looking to begin businesses have the opportunity

to network with Columbia's business community. REDI's incubator could serve as another portal to induct people into the entrepreneurial community Beshore and the League are fostering.

"There's going to be a real connection between the League of Innovators on Buttonwood and downtown," Brooks said.

Reach Jacob Barker at 573-815-1722 or e-mail jtbarker@columbiatribune.com.



MU joins training, research on PTSD

The University of Missouri School of Medicine has joined first lady Michelle Obama's campaign to boost training and research for the treatment of veterans with mental health issues.

The initiative, part of Obama's Joining Forces campaign, was announced yesterday and attracted pledges from 130 medical schools. Schools essentially agree to step up research into post-traumatic stress disorder and train medical students to treat PTSD and traumatic brain injuries.

MU's School of Medicine already has a long and close affiliation with Truman Memorial Veterans' Hospital in Columbia, spokeswoman Laura Gerding said. For example, many third-year medical students spend a significant amount of time at the VA hospital caring for veterans under the supervision of VA physicians who also have MU faculty appointments. "The students spend time in psychiatry, neurology, internal medicine and surgery, and their training in these areas includes serving patients who have PTSD," Gerding said. "The School of Medicine looks forward to working with other medical schools across the country to continue to advance care for our nation's wounded warriors."

THE MANEATER

THE STUDENT VOICE OF MU SINCE 1955

The Lofts student housing complex begins construction downtown

The project, also known as Watson Place, should be completed by August 2013.

By Jimmy Hibschi

Published Jan. 12, 2012

The Lofts, one of Columbia's latest housing projects, will be able to house 120 new residents with its 64 units, according to details released Tuesday by Certified Realty Inc.

Upon completion, the building on Ninth Street will be five stories. It will house 120 residents in 56 two-bedroom, two-bathroom units and eight one-bedroom, one-bathroom units. The ground level will feature retail and restaurant space, adding to the number of restaurants already available on the block including Which Wich?, Ingredient and Chipotle Mexican Grill.

The project was originally revealed as Watson Place, which Certified Realty Inc. President Travis McGee said is the official name of the property. It will be referred to as the Lofts.

McGee said the housing project's proximity to both the university and the downtown area is one of its strongest selling points.

"With the university's need and the general public's need for housing near downtown and near the University of Missouri campus, it worked out to be a great location not just for MU students but all students in Columbia and professionals in the area," he said.

Although McGee acknowledged students will more than likely fill the majority of the apartments, the company is marketing them toward anyone living in Columbia.

"It's not restricted to students only or anything like that," he said. "It's marketed to all parties of the public — professionals, young professionals and of course students as well. Considering its location, though, it will probably be filled predominately with students."

Construction began last week on the property at 308 Ninth St. The property, adjacent to Chipotle Mexican Grill, previously served as a metered parking lot open to the public. With the construction of the building comes the elimination of the entire parking lot — a point of contention with many students.

“I feel like it’s going to be frustrating for a lot of students because there’s already limited parking downtown,” MU sophomore Alyssa Chassman said.

McGee acknowledged the elimination of parking but said the adjacent 1,820-car capacity of Hitt Street Parking Garage should be able to alleviate the problem. Although the majority of the garage is university parking, many of the spaces are metered.

A price has not been set for living in the building, but McGee said it will be comparable to the rest of the units in the downtown market. Leases will be available in November and December.

The building will be 99,075 square feet total, 19,815 square feet of which will serve as restaurant and retail space on the ground level. A skylight will cover 8,000 square feet of the rooftop, which McGee said will allow natural sunlight to pass all the way to the second floor. There will be pedestrian courtyards on the north and south sides of the building.

“It will be a great project for Columbia,” McGee said. “It’s one of the first of its kind for the city and we’re excited about it. We hope the city is, too.”

McGee said the project’s completion date is set for August 2013.



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mo. gov. candidate drops economics degree from bio

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — A Missouri gubernatorial candidate has changed a claim on his campaign website that he earned a college degree in economics.

The changes come after Dave Spence acknowledged earlier this week that it may have been misleading to state in his original online biography that he earned an economics degree - without originally noting that it was in home economics.

On Thursday, the Republican's website first was changed to remove any reference to a degree, stating merely that he attended the University of Missouri-Columbia. Later in the day, the website was changed again to state that he majored in family economics and management and earned a bachelor's of science degree in home economics.

Spence is seeking to challenge Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon in this year's elections.