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Van Matre moves closer to confirmation to UM board of curators

## Senate panel votes 8-1 to approve Columbia lawyer.

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — Columbia attorney Craig Van Matre is one step closer to confirmation to a seat on the University of Missouri Board of Curators, but Republican opposition still could doom his nomination.

Van Matre, a Democrat, was approved on an 8-1 vote Monday by the Senate Gubernatorial Appointments Committee. The only dissenting vote was cast by Senate Majority Leader Tom Dempsey, R-St. Charles, who also asked that Van Matre be considered separately from a list of non-controversial appointees.

Van Matre, who was first nominated to the board a year ago, has been one of the most troubled of Gov. Jay Nixon's appointees. Van Matre could not win confirmation during last year's session, but Nixon renewed the appointment in the early summer.

When the Senate refused to consider nominees in the special session, Nixon withdrew Van Matre again and renominated him in late October.

Several Senate Republicans have vowed to filibuster Van Matre's nomination because of pointed opinion articles critical of past GOP legislative leadership.

A vote must be held on Van Matre's nomination, or it must be withdrawn, by Friday or he is barred from being a curator.

Because Van Matre is filling the remainder of a six-year term, he will serve until Jan. 1, 2013, if approved.

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## Full Senate to vote whether to confirm Van Matre as curator

By Celia Ampel, Margaux Henquinet

January 30, 2012 | 8:29 p.m. CST

**JEFFERSON CITY — Columbia attorney Craig Van Matre is the closest he has been to being confirmed as a University of Missouri System curator.**

The Gubernatorial Appointments Committee voted 8-1 Monday afternoon to move Van Matre to the full Senate for confirmation to the UM System Board of Curators.

Van Matre's confirmation could come to a vote as early as Tuesday, Senate Majority Floor Leader Tom Dempsey, R-St. Charles, said.

If the Senate does not confirm Van Matre this week, or if the governor's office withdraws his name for a third time, he will not be able to vote at Friday's board meeting. In this case, the board will have only seven voting members. There are usually nine.

The board plans to vote then on tuition and fee increases for all four UM campuses.

Gov. Jay Nixon has appointed Van Matre as a curator three times: in January, June and October 2011. Each of the first two times, Van Matre's name was withdrawn before it could be voted on by the Gubernatorial Appointments Committee.

Board of Curators Chairman David Bradley said last week that the board needs as many curators as possible for Friday's vote, especially after curator Judith Haggard stepped down Jan. 17.

"It is important for the board to have a full complement of curators to discuss critical issues coming up, like setting next year's tuition and how to cope with drastic cuts in state aid," Bradley said. "We hope the governor and state Senate work together to expedite the appointment and confirmation of new curators."

At Monday's committee meeting, Dempsey gave the lone vote against moving Van Matre's appointment to the full Senate.

Dempsey said his vote was influenced by a 2007 Columbia Daily Tribune editorial in which Van Matre criticized state Republicans' reaction to the Missouri Nonpartisan Court Plan.

Van Matre's editorial was forwarded to Dempsey's office. After reading it, Dempsey did a Google search on Van Matre for more information and talked to people he knew in the Columbia business community.

Dempsey said that from what he read, Van Matre seemed poorly informed and lacking in the interpersonal skills Dempsey would want a person in a leadership position to have.

"I want somebody in that position who's going to be a leader and bring people together," he said.

Dempsey does not plan to filibuster Van Matre's confirmation because as floor leader he likes to deal with issues, which means bringing them to a vote, he said.

State Sen. Kevin Engler, R-Farmington, said last week that he planned to filibuster Van Matre's confirmation if it came before the full Senate. He added that other senators said they would do the same. He could not be reached for comment Monday about whether he still plans to filibuster.

# Missourinet

## Nixon appointments generating skepticism (AUDIO)

January 31, 2012 By [Bob Priddy](#)

Some of the people Governor Nixon wants to serve on state boards and commissions, or even head some state departments, are in trouble with the state senate. These are the people who make policies for state agencies and institutions, or who even head them. They have to be confirmed by the senate.

But some senators don't like the way Nixon has been handling appointments. "This governor has played games with me on appointments in northwest Missouri....and I'm sick of it," says Savannah Senator Brad Lager.

Senator Will Krause of Lee's Summit wonders if Nixon isn't playing games with the law by appointing independents to positions that Republicans should get on boards and commissions.

Senate leader Rob Mayer says the senate has seen this before. "Last year we had this issue come up," he says, although he hasn't noticed it as much this year as last year.

But other senators are making a case of it. Some senators don't like Nixon withdrawing appointments when the senate is hostile to them, then appointing the people while the legislature is out of session. **He's done that twice with a University of Missouri curator—and might be forced to do it again this week if the senate refuses to confirm.**

## MU professor ponders rising university tuition, fees

By Janese Silvey

Telling universities to keep tuition rates down might make for good campaign rhetoric, but families pay more for college, in part, because they demand more services for students.

That's one takeaway from an e-book published earlier this month by a University of Missouri English professor. "Is a College Education Still Worth the Price?" aims to try to better explain to families why higher education is expensive, author Richard Schwartz said.

"There's a lot of concern about the rise in price," he said. "When do we reach a tipping point?"

President Barack Obama last week put colleges "on notice" for rising costs, outlining a plan that would reward affordable schools with more federal financial aid funding. The mantra mirrors Gov. Jay Nixon's call for universities to cap tuition increases at inflation in spite of a state funding cut.

But politicians and those outside academia might not realize the impact of continued cuts in college budgets or what all goes into college costs, Schwartz said. For one, colleges are using more general revenue to pay for centers aimed to help students succeed, which aligns with goals both Obama and Nixon have set to increase the number of people with degrees.

"Schools are increasingly spending money on instruction that should have been done in high school," Schwartz said. "Does Jay Nixon, for example, want us or Missouri State or someplace down in the Bootheel, does he want those institutions to stop providing remediation?"

Universities maintain academic support services in an effort to boost retention and graduation rates, said Paul Wagner, Missouri's deputy commissioner of higher education. But schools have to find a balance in doing so, he said.

Although they might not want to water down those efforts by overloading an adviser's caseload, for instance, "schools may no longer be able to afford to keep the levels of service they currently provide," Wagner said.

At MU, students pay several required fees on top of tuition rates to support other types of services.

Students pay \$12.20 per credit hour, for instance, to fund IT departments needed to operate computer labs and meet wireless demands on campus.

Additionally, MU students must pay nearly \$388 every semester to pay for the health center, the recreational center and student activities. In some cases, students have voted to implement or increase those fees, hiking up college costs for future generations.

One way to reduce those costs would be to let students choose whether they want to use and pay for those amenities, Schwartz said.

“Eventually, we’re going to reach a point where people start saying, ‘Wait, some of these things are nice, but we don’t need to spend that much,’ ” he said.

Missouri schools are facing a 12.5 percent cut in state funding under Nixon’s proposed budget. If that becomes reality, public universities will have had their budgets cut by 25 percent in three years. MU increased tuition by 5.8 percent last year after two years of holding tuition flat.

The university already has implemented changes to respond to dwindling resources: Buildings now run with more-efficient light bulbs, limited hot water, and heating and cooling systems that turn off when a room is unoccupied.

At some point, Schwartz thinks decision makers are going to have to look at whether students need all of the services currently provided on campuses or whether they could instead seek some of those services in the community.

“There’s no question there was a time when universities did not provide these kinds of services, and they got by a lot cheaper than it is now,” he said. “We have to get to the point where universities, politicians and parents start looking at the realities. Is your son or daughter who goes off to college prepared to be on their own if it saves money? ... That’s the question. The only answer I can give is once upon a time, they all did.”

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# COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

## MBA students bring TED Talks to MU

By Alyssa Schueneman

January 30, 2012 | 9:16 a.m. CST

COLUMBIA — The famous TED Talks are being brought to Missouri by two MBA students in an individualized event, TEDxMU.

After meeting at orientation for the MBA program in August 2011, Aamer Trambu and Curtis Roller noticed that while there were numerous entrepreneurial events, most were focused specifically on business. They discussed the need for a different type of event, and they formulated the idea of bringing the TED Talks to MU. During Thanksgiving break, Trambu applied for a license. He got it.

Trambu contacted Roller when they returned from break, and Roller jumped at the chance to be involved with the event.

"There were needs that weren't being addressed. There were no opportunities to share ideas in the community, and we wanted to bring them innovative ideas," Roller said. "We wanted to give people the opportunity to change and to make a difference."

Following a news release sent out Dec. 23, the TEDxMU team was flooded with responses from the community. Student Life, the dean of Trulaske College of Business, the Reynolds Journalism Institute and the Crosby MBA program have gotten on board with the event. Residents of Columbia and mid-Missouri also offered to help in any way they could.

TED is a "non-profit organization devoted to Ideas Worth Sharing." According to [its website](#), TED believes in the power that ideas hold and their ability to change lives and even the world. They invite "the world's most inspired thinkers and a community of curious souls to engage with ideas and each other." The resulting talks have been compiled on their website and they continue to hold two annual conferences.

TEDx is an offshoot of these annual conferences; each is designed to be self-organized and allow individual communities to create a dialogue similar to that of TED events, but on a local level. They have been popping up on college campuses across the U.S., including one at the University of Oklahoma on Jan. 27.

So many people applied to speak at the MU event that Trambu and Roller decided to extend the application deadline to Feb. 25. "We want to make sure the talks are dynamic and engaging, and that the ideas are worth sharing. We also want to have a wide variety of topics," Roller said.

One applicant wants to speak about the challenges and rewards of raising a mentally challenged child. Talks like that are what TED is all about.

The event at MU is scheduled to take place from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 14 in the Fred W. Smith Forum in the Reynolds Journalism Institute. Due to space constraints, only 100 people may attend, and each must apply for a ticket.

Applications, due March 31, are on [the TEDxMU website](#). Anyone is welcome to apply, and they will be experiencing talks such as the TED talk on starting a movement, which is noted as Trambu's favorite on the website.

There will also be a live stream of the event, which is capable of hosting 20,000 viewers.

The theme of TEDxMU is "Collaboration for Innovation." Online, Trambu writes: "The event will be a melting pot for ideas, innovation, thinkers and doers. I want everyone who walks into the conference to walk out of it inspired with the belief that they have it in them to change the world, to make it a better place, to share, give back, and to grow."

Roller said he hopes that not only do people grow as a result of the event, but that the event grows as a result of the people. He wants to make the event annual, and has plans to create a tradition of TEDxMU.

"I want this to last long after I graduate," Roller said. "I want the culture of idea sharing and innovation to be perpetuated."

## MU's Frederick vom Saal wants FDA to ban BPA, endocrine disruptors

By [Simina Mistreanu](#)

January 31, 2012 | 6:00 a.m. CST



Professor of biological sciences, Frederick Vom Saal, poses for a portrait in his laboratory in Lefevre Hall at MU on Nov. 13. Vom Saal has researched the effects of industrial chemicals, such as bisphenol A, which acts as an endocrine disruptor, that can enter the human body and mimic hormones. Low levels of endocrine disruptors can be found in household goods and the environment, but according to Vom Saal's research, even small exposure to such chemicals can have drastic effects on biological systems. | [Nick Michael](#)

**COLUMBIA — For the past 20 years, much of MU biology professor Frederick vom Saal's research, thoughts and time have converged into one point: trying to get endocrine disruptors — chemicals that interfere with the hormone system and can cause obesity, infertility and cancer — out of daily use.**

He's accomplished the laboratory part, which resulted in dozens of scientific papers outlining the negative effects of bisphenol-A, an endocrine disruptor. These chemicals are everywhere in the environment: in plastics, food cans, clothing fabrics, furniture and household and beauty products.

Now he's doing the communicator's part, trying to convince U.S. authorities to regulate the chemicals.

In mid-September, vom Saal was among 20 scientists who met in a closed session in St. Louis to discuss why, in the face of what they see as mountainous evidence, U.S. regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration don't ban endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

Vom Saal's work, and that of other scientists, has so far persuaded 11 states, Canada, China and the European Union to enact legislation prohibiting or restricting endocrine disruptors. Now he's making further attempts to crack a tougher nut: the U.S. regulatory system.

That's why Vom Saal, 67, spent most of the first week of October away from his beloved laboratory mice. Instead, he knuckled down at the computer in his office in Lefevre Hall, surrounded by figurine mice and a drawing of a wide-eyed rodent. He had a paper to write.

Seen as a three-act play, vom Saal's pursuit is near the end of its second act — influencing federal regulation on endocrine disruptors.

Getting to Act 3 might be up to the public.

"As a scientist I feel I have an obligation to identify when, in fact, science and government policy are not consistent with each other," vom Saal says. "And that's what I'm doing."

### **"We need to get together and talk"**

Vom Saal's quest to get endocrine-disrupting chemicals out of daily use began with a 1990 phone call from Theo Colborn.

He was preparing to leave for New York when Colborn, then leading the toxics division of the World Wildlife Fund, called because she had just read vom Saal's paper on the physiological changes of animals exposed to low doses of estrogenic hormones. At the same time, Colborn was studying how chemicals in the environment altered the physiology of animals.

But somehow, their studies were describing the same effects.

"Are you aware of this?" Colborn asked.

"No," vom Saal said.

"We need to get together and talk," she said.

They met in New York, and Colborn provided vom Saal with a 2-foot stack of research papers on the chemicals in wildlife, posing the hypothesis that the chemicals might be acting like hormones even in very small doses — smaller than anyone would have thought.

Vom Saal took a few weeks to read the papers, then got back to Colborn. "My God, this is astounding," he recalls telling her. "I think you are onto something really important."

They called a meeting of scientists from different fields: physiologists, wildlife biologists and epidemiologists. The specialists talked over a weekend in Racine, Wis., and concluded that endocrine-disrupting chemicals interfere with hormonal signals, altering the physiology of animals.

A few years later, Colborn wrote a book called "Our Stolen Future" in which she included the conclusions of the Wisconsin meeting.

Now, two decades after the scientists met, the bibliography on endocrine disrupting chemicals has increased by thousands of papers and so has the list of chemicals identified as endocrine disruptors.

### **"It happened in the first experiment"**

One disruptor, in particular, bisphenol-A, or BPA, has stirred public interest.

Vom Saal has become nationally recognized as a leader opposing the chemical, which is used to manufacture plastics and plastic linings — in water bottles, baby bottles, food cans, soda cans, dental sealants and cash register receipts, among others.

In 1976, BPA was included in a list of more than 60,000 chemicals deemed safe by the Toxic Substances Control Act.

In the mid-1990s, vom Saal and his research partners, Wade Welshons, an associate professor of veterinary biomedical sciences, and Susan Nagel, an assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, did an experiment to test whether proteins act as barriers to keep natural estrogens from entering cells and thus having effects on organisms. They wanted to see which chemicals can get around those protective proteins at extremely low doses and act like hormones in the body.

They tried it with BPA at a dose 25,000 times lower than toxicologists had studied before.

"And good grief, it happened in the first experiment," Welshons recalls.

*to view the remainder of the story, please  
visit [www.columbiamissovian.com](http://www.columbiamissovian.com).*

# MU School of Medicine expands partnership with Cristo Rey Network

By Breanna Dumbacher

January 30, 2012 | 6:21 p.m. CST

**COLUMBIA — With a plan to expand its reach, the MU School of Medicine has formed a national partnership with the Cristo Rey Network in order to promote diversity and encourage students across the nation to consider college.**

The network is composed of 24 Catholic high schools that strive to provide a quality education to students in urban communities with limited educational opportunities, according to a news release from the MU School of Medicine.

## **A taste of college life**

The School of Medicine has worked with Cristo Rey High School in Kansas City to provide summer programs for prospective college students for the past four summers, said Maureen Gregg, a nurse at the high school who has helped organize the program since the beginning.

Gregg said the summer program allows students from Cristo Rey Kansas City to visit MU, live in the dorms and eat in the dining halls to learn what college life is like.

She said the program also introduces students to fields they might not have thought about pursuing by offering hands-on activities. The program teaches skills to students, such as how to start IVs, how to use surgical instruments and what an ultrasound looks like.

In the past, the summer programs have hosted between 13 and 22 students, all from Cristo Rey Kansas City, said Kathleen Quinn, director of MU's Area Health Education Center who also helped organize the program.

With the MU School of Medicine's new partnership, there is an opportunity to interact with nearly 7,000 students from Cristo Rey both in Kansas City and beyond. The program hopes to have around 40 participants this upcoming summer, Quinn said.

With the expansion of the partnership, Gregg hopes students from other Cristo Rey high schools can experience the same opportunities and explore career options in the medical field.

“We’re going to need health care providers to be taking care of the next generation,” Gregg said. “I see so many passionate kinds here. They would be great in those roles.”

### **A necessary goal**

One major reason the School of Medicine began the summer programs was to promote diversity, Quinn said. According to the [Cristo Rey Network’s website](#), “students of color” make up 95 percent of the student body.

Quinn said adding diversity to the medical programs at MU will help students learn about people who are different from them. She said these lessons will help prepare all students to be a diverse health care provider because they will likely be helping a group of various people in their careers.

Diversity in the industry is also important in encouraging patients to take care of their health, Quinn said.

“If there’s more diverse health care professionals, patients are more likely to follow up with their care with someone from their same background,” Quinn said.

Ellis Ingram, a contributor to the project and the senior associate dean for Diversity and Inclusion, said in the news release that by encouraging students from the Cristo Rey program to pursue health care, the medical opportunities and conditions in struggling areas would likely improve.

“We hope the students who benefit from our outreach and development programs will ultimately become successful professionals who give back to the communities where they were raised,” Ingram, a medical doctor, said in the release. “When it comes to medicine, data proves that students from underserved urban or rural areas are much more likely to return to those areas as physicians.”

## Software creates 'dashboard' for diabetes docs

By Robert Joiner, Beacon staff

Posted 1:13 pm Mon., 1.30.12

Some doctors are beginning to discover a downside to electronic health records. Call it EHR overload. It refers to instances when physicians have so much medical data at their finger tips that they are overwhelmed and have trouble finding what they need to make quick decisions about treating patients.

**"Electronic health records are actually giving us a lot of data," says Dr. Richelle Koopman, associate professor of family and community medicine at the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Columbia.**

"But we've gotten to the point where there is actually too much data. We need to organize it in a better fashion to make it useful. That's what we've tried to do with the dashboard."

The "diabetes dashboard" is a godsend for doctors, helping them better manage medical information for treatment of diabetics, Koopman says.

Some doctors treating diabetics have to click the mouse back and forth up to 60 times to find and read all the relevant electronic records about a patient. The dashboard gathers all the data on a single screen with about three mouse clicks.

"Finding all this information in the medical chart (used to) take doctors an average of five minutes. The dashboard pulls all this information together ... (in) one minute. In other words, we're saving the doctor four minutes, and if you've got a 15-minute visit, that's a lot of time."

That extra four minutes, she says, gives a physician more "quality time talking to the patient instead of (having) your nose in that chart."

The dashboard software collects data common to many health conditions and chronic illnesses, but the main focus is on delivering better treatment for diabetics.

Created by the medical school in 2008, the dashboard is now marketed nationally by Cerner, a health information technology company based in Kansas City. Cerner offers the dashboard software to health providers who use one of its EHR systems. No information was immediately available on how many hospitals use the dashboard. There are competing products on the market.

Koopman says a university study of the dashboard suggests it can lessen medical costs by helping doctors avoid ordering needless medical tests.

"We created charts similar to patient charts with a similar amount of information," said Koopman who worked on the dashboard project. "Some of the information that doctors needed was buried. Some of our physicians found all of the information, and some of them couldn't."

In addition, she says, some doctors wrote down incorrect information when using the old system or failed to record the most recent results for some tests as they flipped and searched different computer screens to find information.

"That can happen when you're jumping around trying to find stuff," Koopman says. "When you are floating around through multiple screens and clicking and clicking, there's actually a lot of what we call cognitive load. It actually takes up part of your brain so that you make more errors. But the biggest category of errors was that the physicians didn't find stuff. "

Even with the potential information overload, Koopman readily acknowledges that electronic medical records are important in health-care management. She remembers the days when she became a physician in 1993. Paper records were standard and doctors scribbled notes on paper, leaving it to someone else to compile the data into records.

"That's one of the valuable features about the dashboard. Nobody has to key in information because the software is pulling together information already in the patient's charts. It helps physicians coordinate care on a single screen. This streamlines and improves care at a lower cost."

## Push Pencils—and Pedals!

Bad news for office workers: Research shows that sitting for long stretches can up the risk of obesity and related health issues. **Happily, “any attempt to break up periods of sitting, including exercising at your desk, can help protect your health,” says John Thyfault, director of the Health Activity Center at the University of Missouri.** Here are some ideas to try.



### Webble Ergonomic Footrest

(\$150, [webblefootrest.com](http://webblefootrest.com))

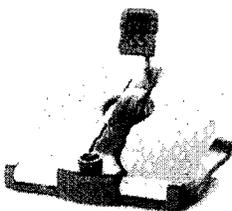
This skateboard-like footrest is attached to four casters that glide in all directions. Mostly a fidget-enhancer, it nonetheless provides an easy way to entertain yourself (and boost circulation) during a boring phone call.



### MagneTrainer ER Mini-Exercise Bike from 3D Innovations

(\$150, [magnetraener.com](http://magnetraener.com))

To avoid knocking your knees on the bottom of your desk, try turning your chair and pedaling this device while reading, watching videos, or talking on the phone. Or set it on top of your desk and exercise your arms with the included hand pedals.



### Sit-N-Stroll Deluxe Portable Foot Exerciser

(\$50, [sune-mate.com](http://sune-mate.com))

This device has two foot pedals (with adjustable resistance) that you pump back and forth, as if alternating between the gas and clutch pedals in a car.



### Stamina InMotion E1000 Elliptical Trainer

(\$150, [staminaproducts.com](http://staminaproducts.com))

You can use it sitting or standing, though if desk clearance is an issue, you may need to push the pedals forward (as if you were riding a recumbent bike) rather than straight up and down.