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## **Missouri curators to consider tuition hike**

**COLUMBIA -- University of Missouri curators will meet today to consider raising tuition at the system's four campuses.**

The special meeting comes after the governing board postponed consideration of a tuition increase three weeks ago at its regular meeting in Kansas City. This time, the curators will meet by video teleconference along with new university president Tim Wolfe.

The proposed increases range from 3 percent at the Kansas City campus to 9 percent at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla. Students at the Columbia campus face a 7.5 percent increase.

That proposal came before Gov. Jay Nixon agreed to use \$40 million from a nationwide settlement with mortgage lenders for higher education. The boost would reduce the proposed cut in higher education funding from 12.5 percent to slightly less than 8 percent.



## Curators set to meet on MU tuition rates

Sunday, February 19, 2012

**The University of Missouri Board of Curators is meeting tomorrow to set tuition rates for the coming school year.**

Unlike earlier this month, the UM System office did not make public what administrators plan to recommend to curators, saying that rates are still being discussed and will be presented at the meeting.

Curators heard proposals on Feb. 2 to increase tuition at MU by 7.5 percent and to raise student fees charged by certain colleges, in some cases by more than double. Since that meeting, Gov. Jay Nixon has offered to cut state funding to higher education by 8 percent instead of the 12.5 percent he originally proposed.

The board will meet via teleconference at 10:30 a.m. At MU, the telepresence center is located in Ellis Library.



## **Nixon blasts idea of social service cuts**

### NO MU MENTION

By Rudi Keller

Columbia Daily Tribune Friday, February 17, 2012

JEFFERSON CITY — A House committee's cuts to social service programs to free up money for higher education are "just plain wrong," Gov. Jay Nixon said today.

During a news conference in his Capitol office, Nixon said he would "fight to restore these unacceptable cuts" made yesterday by the House Appropriations-Health, Mental Health and Social Services Committee. The cuts, totaling \$65.4 million in general revenue, targeted medical care for blind people and reductions in other medical and support services.

"Cutting health care for the blind, prenatal care for women, services for people with developmental disabilities and child care for low-income families is not the way to balance Missouri's budget," Nixon said. "It isn't the way to move the state forward. It is just plain wrong."

Along with Nixon's opposition, his budget director, Linda Luebbering, said some of the cuts might not actually result in savings.

In a few cases, the committee added money, such as \$480,000 for 15 new employees at Fulton State Hospital and \$500,000 for child advocacy service providers, including Columbia's Rainbow House. The committee vote followed party lines, with Republicans supporting them and Democrats opposed.

But most of the actions were cuts, and the largest was \$28 million that funds medical care for 2,858 blind people. The medical care is for people who receive payments from the state's Blind Pension Fund, which provides monthly stipends that make recipients ineligible for Medicaid under the state's income standards.

Although that program is entirely state-funded, some of the cuts might not yield the savings expected, Luebbering said. The committee cut \$4.5 million from home care services for Medicaid patients.

"I don't know how we would respond" to cuts, Luebbering said. "The people who are covered have to be served."

And other items cut by the committee are used to match federal funds the state receives. The committee cut \$2.6 million from child support enforcement but did not remove the \$5 million in federal funds that money is used to match.

The cuts aren't intended to pit one group against another, committee Chairman Rep. Tom Flanigan, R-Carthage, said. "I don't want a nuclear bomb to go off," he said. "We are making some suggestions on the budget."

Flanigan and House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, said they intend to use the money to restore Nixon's proposed cuts to higher education. Nixon initially took \$106 million from colleges and universities to balance his \$23.3 billion spending plan.

To mitigate the higher education cuts, Nixon has proposed using \$40 million from a national mortgage settlement. The committee's proposed cuts would close the remaining gap.

Another area cut was from what are known as "clawback" payments, money the state spends to repay a portion of federal Medicare prescription coverage for senior citizens and disabled residents on Medicaid. Luebbering said she was not sure whether that cut would last out the year. "We have to pay it," she said. "If we have to request a supplemental" appropriation, "it's not a cut to that program."

Luebbering yesterday was calculating the impact of the cuts and which represented possibilities for full-year savings. There were cuts to several Medicaid sections that must be studied, she said.

The committee's plan will be presented to the House Budget Committee next week.

The package of changes was studied carefully, Flanigan said. "We just think everything is worth looking at," he said. "If we are wrong, we are wrong, but we are pretty confident in what we are proposing."



## Columbia leaders impressed with Ames transit system

By Andrew Denney

Columbia Daily Tribune Saturday, February 18, 2012

**AMES, Iowa — Officials from the transit system here did not hesitate to tell visiting Columbia elected leaders, city staffers and University of Missouri students yesterday that their system is a model for other cities, but they were candid about the challenges of implementing and maintaining it.**

The trip to Ames was the first of three planned trips to Midwestern university towns whose bus systems are funded through partnerships between the schools and local governments. Last year, in an effort to find new funding models for Columbia Transit, Mayor Bob McDavid and city administrators proposed a funding model similar to Ames' for Columbia, in which students would pay a new activity fee to provide funding for the bus system and the city would modify the system to better cater to students' travel habits in the city.

After the city's proposal was poorly received by MU student representatives, city administrators planned the trips to more closely observe transit systems that are funded with student fees.

CyRide is funded by the Ames city government and Iowa State University. Students pay \$62.61 per semester, which accounts for almost 40 percent of the bus system's operating budget. In return, students are able to board buses with the use of their student IDs. The buses run seven days a week. They start at 6:30 a.m. Monday through Thursday and at 8:30 a.m. Sunday. They run until 12:30 a.m. for the Monday through Thursday routes, until 2:30 a.m. for the Friday routes, until 10:30 p.m. for the Saturday routes and 11:30 p.m. for the Sunday routes.

Ames Mayor Ann Campbell provided a history of the bus system, which she said began in 1981 after three separate bus systems in the city were integrated. Campbell said organizers initially considered making the system part of a taxing transit authority — an idea that has recently crossed the mind of Columbia leaders as a way of finding financial stability for the bus system — but they opted to make the transit system a municipal agency to avoid creating additional bureaucracy.

Campbell said CyRide is not under the authority of Ames' local government and is instead run by a six-member board of trustees, which includes Ames' city manager, another member of city government, a mayoral appointee, a representative from ISU's administration and two ISU students.

Campbell explained that the initial push to form the bus system came from action taken by ISU students, who approved a referendum to allow a student fee to fund the bus system. Campbell said the idea took a few years to implement and did not come without resistance from the Ames City Council.

"It doesn't happen overnight," Campbell said. "And it takes some convincing of people that they have more to gain than lose."

The idea to implement the "fare-free" service developed in 2001. It, too, was approved by a student vote and was adopted over two years. Barbara Neal, operations supervisor for CyRide, said the changes did not come without "growing pains," as the bus system dealt with low morale among drivers and falling revenue a few years later. Those problems were attributed to falling international student enrollment at ISU. But the system has grown its ridership by 34 percent over the past five years.

Students also are hired to drive buses in the system's fleet, Neal said. "Anytime you get former farm kids, that's usually good," she said. "They have good work ethic, show up to work on time, know how to drive tractors."

Sixth Ward Councilwoman Barbara Hoppe, who took a quick tour of the ISU campus on a CyRide bus, said she was impressed by the frequency of the buses moving around the campus. "Just very basically, you can see the value it can bring to the students."

Public Works Director John Glascock said it appeared to him that Ames has been able to develop a more advanced model for transit than what is offered in Columbia.

"We are obsolete," Glascock said of Columbia's transit system.



## Iowa State students rely heavily on CyRide

By Andrew Denney

**AMES, Iowa — University of Missouri students who came here yesterday to observe CyRide, the public transit system funded by Ames city government and Iowa State University, said using the bus to get around seemed natural to ISU students.**

"It was really a part of their culture as much as anything," said James Hatler, an MU student who serves on the Tiger Transit Network, a group that supports mass transit for students.

Halter and fellow MU student Anne Ahlvers joined a group of Columbia leaders and staffers for the trip to Ames, the first of three planned excursions to Midwestern university towns to observe how other transit systems operate.

ISU students are clearly the focus of the Ames bus system. The buses are painted with the school's colors — cardinal and gold — and CyRide's six-member board of trustees includes two students. According to CyRide pamphlets, an estimated 89 percent of riders on the system are ISU students.

The group met yesterday with officials from the bus system and ISU officials, as well as Dakota Hoben and Jared Knight, who serve as president and vice president of ISU's student government. The student leaders praised the system for easy access, and the fact that students do not have to worry about carrying pocket change to board the buses.

"We like having CyRide, and we think it's been a worthwhile investment," Hoben said.

ISU student Jeannette Parrott, who was taking a CyRide bus yesterday afternoon, echoed Holben's sentiment. Parrott said she takes the bus multiple times a day on the weekdays, and she said next school year she likely would have to start paying her own way through school. But she said she did not consider the \$62.61 that ISU students are required to pay each semester to fund the bus system as an onerous expense.

Parrott was taking the bus system's "orange" route, which traces a circuit around the ISU campus. Also riding the route yesterday afternoon were ISU students Gabbi Frerichs and Zach McCauley, who said they own their own vehicles but they commonly use the bus to get around during the week.

"I think it's nice you can take a bus anywhere you want to go, not only on campus, but around Ames," Frerichs said.