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Schaefer's focus is on education in Senate budget

By Rudi Keller

Sunday, March 25, 2012

JEFFERSON CITY — The Senate budget plan will focus available general revenue on education even as questions are raised about how much money lawmakers will have to work with, Appropriations Committee Chairman Kurt Schaefer said.

The \$24 billion budget passed by the House last week altered Gov. Jay Nixon's original proposal by shifting more than \$69 million in general revenue to state colleges and universities. Nixon publicly campaigned against the biggest shift, which moved \$28 million from a state medical program that covers 2,858 blind people, and he privately lobbied several GOP House members to oppose the cut.

Schaefer, R-Columbia, said Friday that he has not been contacted directly by Nixon, but that Budget Director Linda Luebbering asked for the Senate to restore the medical program. "My position at this point is that I don't know," Schaeffer said. "We are going to look at it; we are going to look at everything. In a budget year like this, the worst budget year we have seen in modern times, everything is on the table."

Although general revenue — the portion of the state budget where Nixon and lawmakers have the greatest discretion — has increased in the past two years, it has not returned to pre-recession levels. Nixon's original budget proposal was balanced by Medicaid changes, cuts to higher education and other stopgap measures that covered a \$500 million hole. Nixon moved \$198 million in general revenue into public schools, for example, to replace federal spending support.

The House budget reversed Nixon's cuts to higher education. And Schaefer, who will need a happy University of Missouri constituency as he faces state Rep. Mary Still, D-Columbia, in this year's election, said he's not inclined to change that decision. "I have had a lot of discussions with" House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, Schaefer said. "One thing this budget is going to demonstrate is that education is a top priority for the state of Missouri."

But maintaining House funding levels for higher education might face bigger problems than pressure from Nixon to restore the blind medical program.

Last week, Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, vowed to block all legislation that generates one-time revenue. He's demanding tax credit and pension changes and said because this is his last year in office, he will get them, or bills that generate money already counted in the House spending plan will not pass.

The biggest of those measures would generate \$70 million through a tax amnesty combined with more vigorous collection efforts. "I am going to budget what I believe are realistic numbers," Schaefer said. "Part of that assessment will include the legislation needed."

Nixon's lobbying effort with several House Republicans, although it didn't pay off in votes against the budget bill cutting the blind medical program, could signal that he's ready to engage lawmakers.

That lobbying, which took place after the House finished amending the spending bills, would have thrown the budget process into chaos if it had succeeded, Silvey said. "Clearly, if the governor was actually interested in restoring the funding rather than using it as a campaign tool, he would have engaged earlier in the process with the people who had the ability to make those decisions," Silvey said.

State Rep. Chris Kelly, D-Columbia, had amendments prepared that would have moved money from public schools, higher education and the Office of Administration to restore the blind medical program. He did not offer any of those amendments. House members didn't like cutting education, and Nixon's office didn't like cutting the Office of Administration, Kelly said.

"I ran all the traps very hard on it and I could find no votes and it was clear I wasn't going to pass it," Kelly said.



House passes \$24 billion in budget bills

Senate still must debate package.

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY --- The budget debate yesterday in the Missouri House became a discussion of education philosophy, federal health care changes and whether taxpayers are being asked for enough money to meet the state's basic needs.

When it was over, the House had passed 13 budget bills that spend \$24 billion in the coming year and represent significant shifts of funding from Gov. Jay Nixon's original \$23 billion proposal. Overall, the spending plan maintains funding for public schools and higher education at current levels.

The University of Missouri could actually see an increase in funding over this year's level. Nixon withheld more from the university than from most other state colleges this year, and the allocation of \$397.9 million represents an attempt to restore that funding. The figure is more than \$4 million more than Nixon is allowing for the university out of last year's appropriation.

Rep. Mary Still, D-Columbia, voted against the spending bill for higher education while her Columbia colleagues, Democratic Reps. Chris Kelly and Stephen Webber, voted in favor of the measure.

UM has endured too many cuts for flat funding to be much help, Still said. "Flat funding after a decade of cuts is simply not enough to maintain the quality of this great university," she said.

The budget, which now must be considered by the Senate, also provides most state workers a raise for the first time in three years and eliminates estimated amounts that provided spending flexibility in hundreds of areas. The replacement of the estimated amounts with firm appropriations resulted in most of the \$1 billion increase over Nixon's original proposal.

House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, was unapologetic for the budget that shifts \$28 million from health care for the blind to higher education.

"I am here to say that continuing the assault on education in this state is just plain wrong, and the assault by this governor on education ends today," Silvey said.

The budget sets aside \$3.009 billion plus \$1 for basic aid to school districts through the foundation formula. The extra dollar was included by Silvey so Nixon could not claim to have proposed more money for schools than any person in history.

The school funding bill generated the longest debate of any of the 13 spending measures, as Democrats led calls for new revenue sources to close the \$470 million gap between actual funding and the amount considered adequate by state law.

Even with the slight increase, many districts will see their funding cut because of the way the formula protects some districts.

"If everybody is thinking, 'My school gets the same amount of money because there is the same total amount of money in the formula,' that is not true," said Rep. Joe Aull, D-Marshall.

After Rep. Margo McNeil, D-Florissant, suggested that taxing Internet sales, for example, would be a fair way to generate more state tax money, Republicans argued that no new revenue was needed.

House Majority Leader Tim Jones, R-Eureka, noted that his children attend a district that spends half of the amount spent in St. Louis. His children receive a good education, he said.

"We are more than meeting our constitutional requirement of spending more than 25 percent of the state's budget on education," Jones said. "First of all, how much is enough? I think it is more than adequate."

Along with discussion of medical care for the blind, debate on social services funding focused on whether the state should accept a \$50 million federal grant. While Nixon's administration wants to use the money to replace the state's computer system for Medicaid enrollment, the grant is part of the federal effort to help states establish health insurance exchanges mandated by the health care overhaul from 2010.

"We shouldn't be passing up \$50 million to help the federal debt," said Rep. Rory Ellinger, D-St. Louis. "That is our money, and we should spend it for Missourians."

The budget also includes smaller changes to Nixon's original proposal that represent issues GOP leaders have with Nixon or a particular agency. Silvey moved to cut \$170,000 from the budgets of 11 agencies that helped pay for Nixon's office staff who receive paychecks from the Department of Insurance, Financial Institutions and Professional Registration.

It also moved \$160,000 from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations to the public defenders' office, a move Jones sponsored.



Nixon asks for GOP help on blind benefit

By Rudi Keller
Friday, March 23, 2012

MU Mention Pg. 2

JEFFERSON CITY — In a rare move, Gov. Jay Nixon sought Republican support this week to reverse a \$28 million cut that ends a medical program for blind Missourians by bringing rank-and-file members to his office.

Since Nixon took office, Republican legislative leaders have often criticized him for being unwilling to work directly with lawmakers. Democrats have privately made similar complaints that the governor does not assist them in forging a common strategy against GOP initiatives.

Money from the cut to the medical program was shifted to state colleges and universities as part of a plan to maintain level funding for the schools.

Nixon met Wednesday with Rep. Jeff Grisamore, R-Lee's Summit, and Rep. Dwight Scharnhorst, R-Valley Park. In an interview, Grisamore said Nixon reiterated his "commendable concern" about the cuts and talked with them about how to reverse the decision.

"The governor made a passionate case for his concerns in this area," Grisamore said.

Scharnhorst could not be reached for comment.

Grisamore, a member of the House Budget Committee and chairman of the Special Standing Committee on Disability Services, said he opposed the cuts during committee work. Once the committee had voted, Grisamore said he felt he had to stand with Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, because he had been able to reverse other decisions that would have cut services to the disabled.

"We had many more victories than defeats," he said.

The closest vote came on the bill that eliminates medical coverage for 2,858 blind Missourians. Seven Republicans joined Democrats in opposing the measure, which passed on a 90-61 vote. All four Democrats who represent Boone County — Reps. Mary Still, Chris Kelly, Stephen Webber and Paul Quinn — voted against the bill. Rep. John Cauthorn, R-Mexico, voted in favor of the bill.

The bill contains \$6 million for a "transitional benefit" to help some who will lose coverage.

Spokesman Scott Holste said Nixon met with Grisamore and Scharnhorst, "among others."

"I can also tell you that he is greatly disappointed that these two longtime supporters of Missourians with disabilities then voted to eliminate, for all intents and purposes, this vital program that has been in place to help needy blind people for more than 40 years," Holste said.

Grisamore said he suggested Nixon ask college and university presidents to help save the program. A letter to the Senate giving up some of the money might work, he said he told the governor.

But yesterday, University of Missouri President Tim Wolfe told the MU Faculty Council he is not planning to get into the politics of the budget. "We're not getting involved in where the source of funding is," he said. "If anyone asks, that's for legislators to decide, not for us to decide."

Wolfe did warn, though, that Nixon's proposal to cut higher education by 7.8 percent is still a possibility. With tuition increases, that cut would amount to a \$47 million shortfall. In the worst-case scenario, Wolfe said, 245 jobs are on the chopping block.

Holste said today Nixon would seek to restore the funding by promoting the merits of the program.

"This issue is not about cutting a deal," Holste said. "It is about doing the right thing."



Professor's case to test new UM leader Wolfe's actions will set tone.

By EDDIE ADELSTEIN

Sunday, March 25, 2012

There are no actual requirements to be the president of the University of Missouri. The qualification statement simply lists a bunch of platitudes that we could all agree are good. I could have applied for this job.

We generally pick presidents who appreciate the status quo. Manuel Pacheco was known for his inaction. He dealt with faculty grievances by never acting on appeals so that the legal process was stopped. Gary Forsee was also a safe bet for inactivity and was hired with no academic credentials and a markedly flawed private-sector experience. He was viewed by administration as a perfect model and was greatly respected for his ability to acquire wealth.

Sometimes we actually need competent leadership. So to save the medical center, which was failing under the leadership of Richard Wallace and Chancellor Brady Deaton, the UM Board of Curators violated all its precepts and hired Elson Floyd. He was an academic with practical experience in running an educational institution. He saved the hospital and was developing plans to stabilize tuition and significantly reduce administrative costs by acting as both chancellor and president, with potential savings of between \$40 million and \$60 million. He quickly reviewed and resolved many grievances. His wife made a racial comment, and they left soon after. So much for racial diversity and tolerance.

Tim Wolfe, our new president, is a man of mystery. A Google search reveals little insight into his activities, and except for his new position and his jobs at IBM and Novella, little information exists to give us a clue as to his effectiveness as a president.

We know his parents were teachers, so he must have some concept of academic freedom and faculty governance. We need new leadership because our present administrators have alienated Missouri legislators. They have a school that consistently ranks low in national surveys, has poorly paid teachers and large classes. They have limited ability to solve budget problems except by raising tuition.

We have a long history of an adversarial relationship between many of our most creative faculty and administration. Clearly, President Wolfe will be tested when asked to adjudicate the current grievance of Professor Greg Engel.

Engel was awarded a \$2 million earmarked grant from the U.S. Navy to develop an electro-mechanical propulsion system. In an organization that awards suck-up behavior over merit, the dean of engineering and his chairman, complaining about a lack of administrative skills, removed Engel as the principal investigator of his project. He has refused to cooperate with his removal and has been viciously attacked by his dean and chairman using their standard weapons of mass destruction. They found willing colleagues to be critical of him and found some students willing to come forth to complain about his treatment of them in the classroom.

They initiated the faculty irresponsibility committee (CCFR), which has been quiescent for the past 30 years, and called a committee of students to review the gender discrimination charges against him.

Much to Chancellor Deaton's alarm, both committees found in Engel's favor. Rather than lose, Deaton asked the committee of irresponsibility to revisit the charges using lesser criteria for judgment.

Gordon Christensen, Sudarshan Loyalka and I proposed resolutions to the faculty that strongly condemned Deaton's actions.

The CCFR met and was critical of Deaton's request for re-evaluation. Further, its members said, "In the determination of this case, the standard of proof had no significant bearing." No matter what standard would be used, they said, they could not find against Engel.

Because Loyalka was one of the signers of the criticism of Deaton, it was not surprising that Provost Brian Foster, apparently with Deaton's approval, has dissolved the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute (NSEI), which was founded in 2002 to escape the wrath of the dean of the College of Engineering. The students in this program and its alumni are upset. This is the most blatant and vicious reprisal carried out by Deaton and high-level administrators, who apparently have no fear of faculty disapproval.

So, President Wolfe, there will never be a clearer case of administrative wrongdoing. As Mark Twain said, "Do the right thing. It will gratify a few and astonish the rest."

You have the power. We will see who you are. My hope is you will set this institution upon a new course and make your parents proud.

Eddie Adelstein, an associate professor of pathology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine, is president of the MU chapter of AAUP.



President Wolfe visits with MU faculty

By Janese Silvey
Friday, March 23, 2012

On one hand, University of Missouri System President Tim Wolfe is known for being a "change agent."

That's how MU Chancellor Brady Deaton introduced him to MU's Faculty Council yesterday. But it also was clear from the discussion that Wolfe — who took office last month and is still learning the ropes of academia — is relying on campus chancellors to implement those changes.

When Wolfe outlined a plan to distribute budget cuts based on program successes, for instance, he couldn't answer a follow-up question asking what metrics would be used to determine success.

"I have no idea what metrics to use," he said. "Brady is better equipped to make those decisions."

It's typical for a CEO to defer to department heads, said Clyde Bentley, an associate professor of journalism. But he also said he hopes Wolfe's communication style rubs off on Deaton, whose evaluation last year highlighted a weakness in communication skills.

Deaton has come under fire with some faculty members in recent weeks for his call to use a low standard of evidence when considering whether to recommend a tenured professor be fired and for a decision to shut down a nuclear science engineering program without faculty input.

Wolfe's "communication skills so far have been very good," Bentley said. "They may mitigate some of the communication issues we've had on campus lately."

Bentley said he doesn't mind that Wolfe is open about not having academic experience; in fact, he said, it shows Wolfe is "honest enough to say, 'I don't know.' "

At one point yesterday, Wolfe admitted to professors that he didn't realize the UM System had a president until Curator Warren Erdman contacted him about the job. "I asked, 'What happened to Brady?' " he recalled.

Wolfe appeared to have gotten up to speed somewhat since then. He outlined what he sees as the challenges facing the university, including a lack of predictable resources and a lack of understanding among Missourians about the importance of higher education.

Wolfe also apologized to faculty for missing his previously scheduled meeting with them. He was supposed to visit the council two weeks earlier, but a last-minute medical issue kept him from coming. Wolfe didn't elaborate but brought in his emergency-room medical bracelet as proof.

"I guarantee you, you would not have wanted me to be in front of you," he said. "It's not like me to miss these meetings because faculty is very important. Don't expect that to be my behavior in the future."

By the end of the more than hourlong visit, Wolfe was on a first-name basis with some and praised others who offered suggestions.

When Kattesh Katti, a radiology professor, suggested that faculty members join the effort to help the public better understand connections with the university, Wolfe replied: "I love it. ... That's a fantastic idea."

He didn't exactly win over his more vocal skeptics, though. Eddie Adelstein, an associate professor of pathology and anatomy, said Wolfe is a businessman who is clearly used to the "advertising and hustling world."

Stephen Montgomery-Smith, a math professor, said he's taking a wait-and-see attitude.

"If he's got a sense of right and wrong, that will make up for any lack of experience," he said. "If we have a decent person, he will see the truth."



MU shifts gears on nuclear institute

Hasty shutdown led to criticism.

By Janese Silvey
Friday, March 23, 2012

University of Missouri administrators are backing off the plan that shut down a nuclear science engineering entity on campus last week, opting instead to work with faculty to develop a new transition plan.

Provost Brian Foster was expected to meet with Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute professors today to work out details.

Graduate Dean George Justice on March 12 announced that NSEI would close March 16 as part of a Graduate School restructuring. The goal is to create a more collaborative interdisciplinary nuclear program.

"The long-term goals of restructuring the NSEI are still intact," spokeswoman Mary Jo Banken said. "After meeting with concerned NSEI students and faculty, the provost and chancellor have decided to slow the process somewhat with the original goal the same."

Administrators faced backlash for not planning to involve the four core NSEI faculty members in those discussions. Students and alumni also criticized MU for closing NSEI immediately without open discussion.

Justice and Foster have argued that faculty members were in the loop because they discussed an evaluation of the program in 2010 that suggested NSEI be more collaborative. But the report is outdated and things have improved, so the decision appeared to come out of the blue, said Harry Tyrer, a computer engineering professor and Faculty Council chairman.

Tyrer said he especially became concerned when MU took down the NSEI website, which included resources for students. The site is expected to be back online soon.

Ryan Meyer, an NSEI alumnus who works in a national lab, said he was happy to hear today that the institute is temporarily being reinstated. "I think we as students and alumni have no problem with restructuring that is constructive in nature and well-thought-out and planned," he said.

Meyer collected 52 signatures on a letter protesting the administrative action, and other alumni wrote separate letters to UM curators and UM President Tim Wolfe.

"I think the constant pressure did reinforce to administration that they stepped into something that they really shouldn't have," Meyer said.

Although he doesn't think the situation will deter future students, Meyer questioned whether it might hurt faculty recruiting.

"I think people who follow the story will be somewhat confused and will be a little disturbed that a program was shut down in four days," he said. "I think most of the impact for MU will be potential employees who see this and be less inclined to work at MU."

Some have wondered whether the decision was in part retaliation against an NSEI professor, Sudarshan Loyalka, who has criticized administrators over the way they handled a case involving a tenured faculty member.

"This was one of the most egregious actions I've ever witnessed," Eddie Adelstein, an associate professor of pathology and anatomy, told the Faculty Council.

Loyalka told the council he and fellow NSEI faculty had a productive meeting Tuesday with Foster and that they agreed with his ideas. "I trust NSEI students, faculty and alumni will come out ahead," he said.



Trip planners benefit from communication

By Janese Silvey
Saturday, March 24, 2012

Trip planners who help set up volunteer opportunities for tourists might want to consider strengthening their communication skills.

That's one finding from a recent University of Missouri study on volunteer tourism. A research team also used its findings to draft some tips for those considering using vacation time for good deeds.

Volunteer tourism not only benefits the communities that are served but also the traveler, said Carla Barbieri, assistant professor in MU's College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources.

Typically, trips are organized by a third party, usually a not-for-profit group, she said.

"These trip facilities are key to ensuring a positive experience for the traveler and the community in need," Barbieri said.

To get a better idea of what travelers face, MU graduate student Yasuharu Katsube took a volunteer tourism trip to Rwanda. Afterward, the team collaborated with Carla Almeida Santos, an associate professor of recreation and tourism at the University of Illinois, to determine if his first-hand experience agreed with previously published research.

"We found that Yasuharu's experience mirrored what was in the research, especially related to the intrinsic rewards he experienced helping Rwanda families and kids in need," Barbieri said.

Based on the research and experience, she advises people considering volunteer trips to first of all beware of scams. Check references and research a company's previously facilitated trips, she said.

Barbieri recommends better communication with the facility before traveling so the traveler knows what he or she is in for.

Trip operators should consider the tourists' goals and talk about how their skills can be best used in a community.

Barbieri recommends facilitators give tourists a choice of volunteer activities before departure to make sure the opportunities match their skill set.

The study, "Volunteer tourism: On the ground observations from Rwanda," was published in *Tourism Management*.

MU notebook: Alden expands on SEC move; Emmert talks about Miami inquiry

By TEREZ A. PAYLOR

ST. LOUIS -- Missouri's impending move to the Southeastern Conference is in full swing, and athletic director Mike Alden addressed several topics related to the switch during a panel discussion Friday.

One such topic started to gain steam a few weeks ago, when South Carolina president Harry Pastides hinted in an interview that Missouri and Arkansas would be paired together as cross-division rivals.

"I know that (SEC) commissioner (Mike) Slive said that should be addressed by the board (of presidents) in May," said Alden, who was participating in the Conference on College Composition and Communication at America's Convention Center. "I know that it hasn't been decided on (yet)."

Alden insisted that Missouri doesn't have a preference, and indicated a desire to do what's best for the league in this regard.

"We're still just trying to become part of our league," Alden said. "For us to say we prefer this over this ... no, I wouldn't want to do that."

But when asked to provide the upside that would come with having Arkansas as a cross-division rival, Alden found no shortage of reasons, which have no doubt been communicated to the league's presidents.

"Our fanbase has a tremendous affinity for the University of Arkansas," Alden said, "They just do, especially south of I-70. There's a lot of people in the southern part of the state that resonate with Arkansas. There's a lot of commonalities between Fayetteville and Columbia."

Alden also said Missouri is inching closer to announcing its new facilities initiative. Since the move to the SEC has been announced, Missouri football coach Gary Pinkel has lobbied hard to upgrade facilities as the school transitions to arguably the most competitive football conference in the country.

"I want to make sure we don't overpromise and underdeliver to our fanbase," Alden said.

To that end, Alden said there still needs to be a presentation made to the Board of Curators about the plan, the date of which will be determined by the board and Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton's office.

"It will be a significant investment," Alden said. "I think the support is there privately, institutionally, and I believe the support is there from our fanbase, too."

Lastly, Alden also said he was impressed that some members of the St. Louis Sports Commission sent a delegation to New Orleans to spend time with SEC officials in hopes of luring the conference's postseason basketball tournament somewhere down the road.

Alden also indicated that the members of the Kansas City Sports Commission will spend time with Slive when he arrives in Kansas City next week.

"We have two great cities in our state that have real interest in hosting the SEC championships," Alden said.

Miami/Haith update

NCAA president Mark Emmert was also in St. Louis to address the same panel Alden did. When asked about the current inquiry at the University of Miami, Emmert was limited in what he could say because the investigation is ongoing.

"We're working on it aggressively," Emmert said.

Since Missouri men's basketball coach Frank Haith left Miami last April, three Hurricanes have been held out of games for receiving impermissible benefits. All three, however, have been reinstated.

Emmert said the NCAA hoped to make a quicker ruling, but hinted that the complexity of the case — and the amount of information that has needed to be gathered — is a reason for the drawn-out process.

"We don't have subpoena power," Emmert said. "We have to rely on people giving us information when they're in the mood to give it us sometimes, and that makes it challenging."

And by the looks of it, it could be a while before a ruling is made.

"We don't have a fixed timeframe," Emmert said. "The important thing is to get it right, not just get it fast."

Alden said Missouri has not been asked to provide information on the case.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Colleges more often hiring part-timers

BY TIM BARKER tbarker@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8350 | Posted: Saturday, March 24, 2012 11:45 am | [\(5\) comments](#).

When college administrators explain why they hire part-time faculty, instead of pricier full-timers, they often conjure images of instructors such as Kim Rensing, who teaches criminology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

A lawyer who spent a decade in the St. Louis County prosecutor's office, Rensing has a wealth of real-world experiences not typically found among academics who spend their entire lives in and around classrooms.

"It gives me an advantage over someone who's never practiced," said Rensing, who's been an adjunct instructor at UMSL since 2007.

For a university without its own law school, Rensing represents an inexpensive way to add expertise to the faculty roster. She needs no office. No phone. Only a mailbox and a university email account. And best of all, she's paid just a small portion of what a full tenured professor would cost.

Part-timers such as Rensing have long been fixtures on college campuses. But cash-strapped schools are increasingly turning to such adjuncts — generally defined as instructors paid on a class-by-class basis — while looking for ways to educate record numbers of students.

And while most agree that adjuncts make fine teachers, some critics say the trend is hurting students by depriving them of the mentoring and stability provided by professional faculty. It doesn't help, they say, that the rise in adjuncts coincides with ever-rising higher education costs.

"Students are paying more and getting less," said Howard Bunsis, secretary treasurer of the American Association of University Professors.

A look at nine of the region's top institutions shows that adjunct hiring soared from 2002 to 2011, with the ranks of these part-timers increasing by 10 percent to 50 percent at most of the schools. The University of Missouri-Columbia, for example, saw a 48.4 percent increase, while the University of Missouri-St. Louis recorded a 55.8 percent jump.

Administrators can point out several advantages offered by adjuncts, but it seems that much of the increase can be attributed — in one way or another --- to nationwide cost-cutting efforts by schools coping with financial hardship.

"The shift away from full-time faculty is just something — except at the richest institutions — that is going to continue to occur," said Ronald Ehrenberg, director of the Cornell University Higher Education Research Institute. "That's a cost savings thing. It's as simple as that."

ENROLLMENT BOOM

The world of higher education teaching contains many layers and titles, including professors, assistant professors, associate professors, instructors and lecturers. Details can differ from school to school, but at the upper end of the faculty spectrum is the tenured professor — someone with a great deal of job security who divides her time between teaching, research and service activities such as student advising. Pay varies widely by school, but at the larger institutions, can easily exceed \$100,000 for full professors.

At the lower end of the spectrum are adjuncts, who gets paid a few thousand dollars each semester to teach a class. Even if the adjuncts teach a full load of four classes a semester, they are unlikely to get even half of the tenured professor's paycheck. And they generally work on one-semester or one-year contracts, giving them virtually no job security and, often, no benefits.

Their ranks include UMSL's Susan Crowe, who teaches a couple of courses on western art. She recently finished her master's degree in art history, plans to pursue a doctorate next year and hopes to one day teach full time.

But with such jobs becoming harder to find, she knows it won't be easy. Already, she is preparing for the possibility that she'll have to pick up classes at other area schools in the fall.

For now, teaching two classes is workable, because her husband provides a second, stronger income.

"But this is not a model we'll be sustaining," Crowe said. "We don't get paid a lot of money, but I do enjoy what I do."

Administrators generally prefer not to dwell on the saving.

"I don't know that we have anybody hiring adjuncts just to save money," said Glen Hahn Cope, UMSL's provost. "It wouldn't be out of the realm of possibility that some departments would do it to save money. I'm just not aware of it."

Instead, they like to talk about the advantages of adjuncts at a time of unprecedented college enrollment.

At Mizzou, for example, enrollment has risen nearly 30 percent since 2002. That's created the demand for the sort of short-term flexibility offered by adjuncts, said Michael O'Brien, dean of the College of Arts and Science.

"When we get flooded with new students, it's a blessing," O'Brien said. "You certainly don't want to hire people and have to lay them off later."

Others say adjuncts are an important element of higher education, allowing instructors such as UMSL's Rensing to give students real-world insights.

That's a key component of the educational mission at Webster University, where adjuncts outnumber full-time instructors 700 to 200, said Julian Schuster, the school's provost.

The school is in the midst of a study of its adjuncts with a goal of offering many of them something more than course-by-course contracts. It's possible, he said, that some veterans could be offered annual or even multiyear contracts to solidify their positions with the school.

But he insists that adjuncts — and what they have to offer — will remain a key component at Webster.

"It's not just a simple formula of what's cheaper or what's more expensive," Schuster said. "You need to have a proper balance between the theory and the practice."

TOO MANY ADJUNCTS?

The problem, critics say, is that adjuncts don't necessarily approach their jobs in the same manner as full-time faculty members.

For the most part, they are quick to praise adjuncts as classroom instructors. And no one is calling for the abolition of part-time faculty. They are seen as a key piece of the higher education structure, covering classes for busy researchers and handling the introductory courses shunned by many full-time professors.

"It's nice having three to four adjuncts to teach classes we don't want to touch," said Stephen Montgomery-Smith, professor of mathematics at Mizzou. "If I were doing day-to-day college algebra, I would get bored out of my mind." The problem, critics say, is that schools are relying too heavily upon adjuncts, with some studies showing that more than half of the nation's college instructors are part-timers. And while adjuncts tend to be more heavily used at community colleges and smaller four-year schools, they are on the rise everywhere.

And that has veteran educators such as Bill Connett, professor emeritus in UMSL's math and computer science department, worried about the future.

"The university is sort of destroying itself by having so much of its content taught by adjuncts," Connett said. "It's a dangerous path to go down."

Interestingly, the criticism of adjuncts tends to revolve around what happens outside, rather than inside, the classroom.

Some complain that adjuncts, essentially paid just to teach, don't have time to spend mentoring and advising their students. That's compounded by the fact that many of them work at two or three different schools in order to make ends meet. They also are not typically involved in cutting-edge research in their fields.

Others worry about academic freedom protections -- or rather, the lack of it -- for adjuncts. Academic freedom is what shields tenured professors from administrators unhappy with a particular piece of research or teaching technique. In theory, it protects the purity of the education process.

Because adjuncts don't have the same protections, they are more likely to tailor their teaching to the whims of the administrators who hired them. That makes them more vulnerable to questionable practices such as grade inflation, said Mizzou's Montgomery-Smith.

"The integrity of the teaching mission can get lost that way," he said.