



MU's role in Ameren project questioned

Company reps to visit in June.

By Janese Silvey

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

A fractured nuclear engineering program at the University of Missouri might not hurt the state's chances of winning federal grant dollars, but it might affect MU's chances of being a key player in a nuclear project.

That assessment is from Charles Riggs, an industrial hygienist for Ameren Missouri, who spoke to the Tribune as an MU alumnus and not on behalf of the company. But, he said, "the perspective I'm getting from people within the corporation is that we're not interested in political infighting."

A month after MU announced plans to close the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute in exchange for a future interdisciplinary program, Ameren and Westinghouse Electric Co. announced they were teaming up to compete for as much as \$452 million in Department of Energy funding. The grant is being offered to entities to design, build and operate small modular nuclear reactors. The original proposal called for MU and the Missouri University of Science and Technology to be involved.

Asked whether MU's fuzzy future plans for nuclear engineering will hurt Ameren and Westinghouse's chances for the federal funding, Riggs said no.

"It won't impact Missouri's chances; it will impact Columbia's chances of participating in it," he said. "It's really frustrating that so much opportunity is present for the Columbia campus, and the politics are getting in the way."

Ameren and Westinghouse officials are expected to meet on both the Columbia and Rolla campuses in June. The meetings will include Gov. Jay Nixon during an entire day on the Rolla campus and a follow-up half-day meeting in Columbia.

"Missouri S&T has a unified approach," Riggs said. "There's now good indication that's not going to happen with the Columbia campus."

Riggs said UM President Tim Wolfe "needs to step in and tell the Columbia campus to stop it and that they need to work together."

Wolfe has stayed out of the debate, calling it a campus issue. Told about Riggs' comments, Board of Curators Chairman David Bradley said he is concerned and plans to get to the bottom of it.

MU Provost Brian Foster is adamant that NSEI will be replaced by a larger, interdisciplinary program aimed to improve the science.

"That's the goal," he said. "That's where we're headed. But it won't happen in the next two weeks. ... It would be unfortunate if this turned into a really destructive kind of dynamic when, in fact, I think we have a very good chance of making this into a program that builds on the successes NSEI has had but also broadens nuclear science and engineering presence we have not only within nuclear engineering but across the institution."

But not all administrators think an interdisciplinary approach is the way to go in some professional areas of study. Rob Duncan, vice chancellor of research, said interdisciplinary collaboration is a strength at MU but does not work for all departments.

"Certain disciplines like medicine and engineering are not interdisciplinary and should not be," he said. "We need to develop disciplinary professional standards to assure that bridges are safe and reactors are safe and medical practices are safe."



Engineering school looks to offer nuclear emphasis

By Janese Silvey

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

The University of Missouri's College of Engineering is in the process of coming up with new graduate-level nuclear engineering degree offerings, sidestepping the existing nuclear engineering program on campus.

It's the latest move in a tussle between administrators and the Nuclear Science and Engineering Institute, which is currently housed under MU's Graduate School.

Administrators have said NSEI will close after its last student graduates and will ultimately be replaced with a larger, more interdisciplinary program. The idea is to allow the College of Engineering to move forward with nuclear engineering offerings even as NSEI is phased out.

That means, in the interim, two separate entities, NSEI and the college, both would be offering master's and doctoral degrees in nuclear engineering. NSEI offers those degrees with emphases in medical physics, health physics or power.

The College of Engineering would then offer the degree with another emphasis in an area yet to be determined.

Because it is adding an emphasis area and not an entirely new degree, creating the College of Engineering program does not require the type of approval process needed when new degrees are created, MU Provost Brian Foster said.

But Sudarshan Loyalka, a curators' professor in NSEI, said he fears such a move will be confusing and dilute nuclear engineering at MU.

"This is, in my view, an outrage," he said. "We have a strong program already in place, which has been working extremely well. Starting something of this type does not serve the students, the faculty or the community. There is no argument or rationale behind it. It is totally unwarranted."

Foster said he hopes NSEI faculty would be involved in the discussions creating the new nuclear engineering track, but so far, they have not been included.

Engineering Dean James Thompson held a meeting yesterday to begin planning details of the program. The NSEI faculty members were not invited, nuclear engineering Professor Mark Prelas said. He was not aware of details of any new nuclear engineering program.

NSEI has been on the chopping block since March 12, when administrators announced it would cease to exist on March 15. They backed away from that timeline after pushback from students and alumni.



Hey, Prez, you think that's embarrassing ...

(Blog Entry)

By Janese Silvey

Posted May 9, 2012 at 2:19 p.m.

Yesterday, UM System President Tim Wolfe called legislative actions that would do away with an UMSL institute an "embarrassment."

"A fricking embarrassment."

You know what else seems kind of embarrassing?

That one Ameren Missouri worker says the political infighting is so obvious that MU might not have a large role in Ameren and Westinghouse's pursuit of a huge federal grant.

That Ameren and Westinghouse officials have invited Gov. Jay Nixon to meet when them on the Rolla, not Columbia, campus to get the talks started.

That MU's national reputation in nuclear engineering seems to have plummeted since March 12 when administrators announced they were doing away with the successful Nuclear Science Engineering Institute in exchange for some yet-to-be-determined interdisciplinary something-or-other.

Wolfe obviously is still learning the ropes of his position. I have to wonder, though, whether it was an accident that MU administrators—after at least two failed attempts to do this in the past—timed their decision to close NSEI just right. The announcement that NSEI was closing came almost a month to the date after Wolfe began duties.

Wolfe isn't well-versed in academia. He has picked Bob Schwartz, a former professor at Missouri S&T to be his chief advisory, and one would think that Schwartz would be more in the know about the potential damage MU is doing to its nuclear engineering program. Regardless, both have been mum on the issue, saying it's a campus matter.

But, frankly, it's a campus matter that could leave the campus out in the cold as Missouri S&T moves forward with the Ameren Missouri and Westinghouse deal.

Wolfe is in a bad spot, no doubt. Of course he has all the authority in the world to step in and take action.

Board of Curators Chairman David Bradley seems poised to at least learn more about the situation. He said he wants to “get to the bottom” of the issue and expressed concerns yesterday after I told him about a Ameren Missouri worker’s assessment of the campus’s political infighting.

In the meantime, though, I wonder whether Wolfe should be embarrassed by state lawmakers trying to close a university institute he deems successful when his own MU administrative team is doing the same thing right under his nose.



Spending compromise would boost funds for several colleges

By Rudi Keller

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

JEFFERSON CITY — A deal to end a Senate filibuster that tied up the state budget over higher education funding, money for veterans and the future of an institute for women at the University of Missouri-St. Louis appeared likely today.

The Senate considered no legislation yesterday as leaders worked on the deal that would divide \$3 million among seven of the state's smaller colleges and universities and softens language attacking the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life. The deal, if accepted, would allow a bill shifting money to veterans programs to move ahead, solving other pending budget problems.

"There is no sound policy reason for what is occurring," said Sen. Brad Lager, R-Savannah, who has worked to iron out issues regarding higher education funding. "Let's not kid ourselves here. This is about getting the budget through this year. It is about buying votes to get this done."

Lawmakers have until 6 p.m. Friday to pass spending bills for the budget year that begins July 1. The budget allocates \$24 billion to all functions of state government but has been tied up over \$2 million initially set aside for Southeast Missouri State University and allegations of improper political activity at the Sue Shear Institute.

The only unresolved issue would be how to support medical care for the blind, Sen. Kurt Schaefer said.

The House-Senate conference committee on the budget met publicly for about two minutes this morning, long enough for House Budget Committee Chairman Ryan Silvey to make an optimistic comment but also to say nothing is settled.

Schaefer, R-Columbia, said he was satisfied with the compromise, which does not include extra funding for the University of Missouri. The UM System and related programs already have fared well in the budget, he said.

"I feel very good about what we have been able to do for the University of Missouri," he said.

Two other schools will not receive a share of the \$3 million: Harris-Stowe State University in St. Louis and Missouri State University in Springfield. Harris-Stowe receives the highest per-pupil

funding of all four-year state schools. Missouri State University, like UM, has a statewide mission and receives extra funds for programs not included in the base budget, Schaefer said.

State Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardeau, did not want the \$2 million allocated to his alma mater. Crowell, who has accused House Speaker Steve Tilley of inserting extra money for SEMO to prove his value as a future lobbyist, said the compromise works for him.

SEMO would receive the largest share of the money, \$885,969, but it would not be the only school to gain. "It's not an earmark," Crowell said.

Tilley has defended the proposal as a way to restore funding equity for SEMO. It receives the second-lowest per-pupil allocation of state funds, a gap that widened this year as its enrollment grew. Missouri Western State University and Northwest Missouri State University would each gain more than \$500,000 in the deal.

The Sue Shear Institute, named for a longtime Democratic lawmaker from St. Louis County, is a target of Sen. Jane Cunningham, R-Chesterfield. She wants to kill the institute with legislation banning it. Schaefer said today that compromise language will be inserted into the budget reminding UM that public funds should not be used for political purposes.

The veterans funding issue is over money needed to operate the state's veterans nursing homes. Legislation to permanently allocate casino boarding fees for veterans and money from the national tobacco settlement to early childhood programs must be passed to fund the budget lawmakers have been writing.

Programs supported by the tobacco settlement money would now be supported by state lottery proceeds in a plan that anticipates the lottery will increase its profits for the state by \$35 million.

Impasse ends on key part of Missouri budget

Senate approves funding for veterans homes, after earmark to university is removed.

By JASON HANCOCK

JEFFERSON CITY | -- Lawmakers are one step closer to completing work on Missouri's \$24 billion budget.

The state Senate on Wednesday approved a plan to fund veterans nursing homes, a bill that budget negotiators said was key to continue their work.

House Budget Chairman Ryan Silvey, a Kansas City Republican, said the committee working out details of the state's budget would have had to enact deeper cuts to other programs if the veterans bill had not passed.

Stalling the budget was an unrelated matter concerning a \$2 million earmark for Southeast Missouri State University.

House Speaker Steven Tilley, a Perryville Republican, wanted that money because the school in Cape Girardeau had the second-lowest funding-to-student ratio among state universities. But Sen. Jason Crowell, a Cape Girardeau Republican, demanded the earmark be removed, arguing that one school shouldn't get preferential treatment.

Crowell promised to block votes on every bill — including the budget — until the earmark was removed, and Senate leaders acknowledged they lacked the votes to end a filibuster.

In order to get the veterans bill through the Senate, the budget now includes \$3 million that will be distributed among eight of the state's 10 public universities, based on funding disparities. However, the University of Missouri in Columbia and Missouri State University in Springfield were left out of the extra funding because they have a statewide presence, said Senate Appropriations Chairman Kurt Schaefer, a Columbia Republican.

The bill also requires the legislature to come up with an equitable funding formula for public universities by Dec. 31, 2013. The new plan is to be implemented by fiscal year 2015.

Another key provision had to be included for the bill to pass would ban the implementation of a quality rating system for child-care centers. Sen. Jane Cunningham, a Chesterfield Republican, demanded the provision be included before she would allow the bill to come to a vote.

Several critics panned the original wording of the rating provision, saying it could be interpreted to apply to programs at colleges and universities that offer degrees or credentialing in early childhood development. Cunningham agreed to amend the wording to address those concerns.

Sen. Jolie Justus, a Kansas City Democrat who criticized the original wording, said the changes made her comfortable that no unintended consequences would result from passing the bill.

At the heart of the legislation, however, was the veterans bill. It would redirect more than \$30 million of casino fees from early childhood programs to fund Missouri's seven veterans homes. The early childhood programs would receive \$35 million from the state's share of a nationwide settlement with tobacco companies.

Silvey had indicated earlier this week that failing to pass the veterans bill could have meant the end of a \$28 million program that provides health care to roughly 2,800 blind Missourians who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid — roughly \$9,495 a year — but have less than \$20,000 in assets besides their homes. The state has funded the health care program for the blind more than 50 years.

But even with the passage of the veterans bill, budget negotiators decided to limit the health care program to blind Missourians who earn up to three times the federal poverty level, or roughly \$30,000 a year for an individual. Anyone earning more than 150 percent of the poverty level would have to pay a premium.

Silvey said his original problem with the program had been that it treated one disability differently than all others, and that it wasn't means tested. He said limiting participation and mandating premiums addresses his concerns.

Democratic Gov. Jay Nixon, however, doesn't believe the changes to the budget will have any impact on who can access the health care program. Changing eligibility would require legislation to change state law.

"We are pleased that the conference committee has restored full funding authority for this vital lifeline for blind Missourians, but the attempt to place additional limitations on eligibility through the budget process does not change existing law — and is invalid," Sam Murphey, the governor's communications director, said in a statement. "We will ensure that this program continues to serve all 2,800 needy, blind Missourians who depend on it."

The budget now only needs to be approved again by the Senate and House before going to Nixon. Both chambers are expected to vote today.

Missouri lawmakers finalize state budget negotiations after Senate filibuster

By MATTHEW PATANE/State Capitol Bureau

May 9, 2012 | 9:22 p.m. CDT

JEFFERSON CITY — Missouri lawmakers have finally made progress on the state's \$24 billion operating budget after a Senate filibuster kept budget negotiations in flux for two days.

The state House of Representatives and Senate were able to finalize budget negotiations Wednesday after the Senate unanimously approved a measure that would provide more than \$30 million in funding to veterans' homes through reallocation of casino revenues. A filibuster had kept senators from acting on the proposal and threatened the outcome of the entire budget process after the House said funding for the veterans' homes was crucial for budget negotiations to continue. The extensive debate brought rumors that the Senate leadership would have to use a last-resort measure to stifle further debate — a move that has not been used since 2007.

The two-day long filibuster was brought about by a few senators who were discontented with some of the items in the budget. Sen. Jason Crowell, R-Cape Girardieucq, led much of the filibuster and said he would hold up debate on all bills brought before the Senate floor, no matter their content, until a \$2 million earmark set aside for Southeast Missouri State University was eliminated. Crowell argued that the \$2 million was simply being used as a favor to House Speaker Steve Tilley, R-Perryvillecq. Tilley, who attended the university, said the money was intended to fix an inequity in funding among the state's universities.

Among its provisions, the conference-approved budget:

- Increases funding for six Missouri universities by spreading \$3 million among the schools. The funding increases are based on the appropriations per student and include \$885,969 to Southeast Missouri State University **but leave out MU and Missouri State University. None of the money was presented to Harris-Stowe State University, which already receives the most money per student.**

- Provides funding for a health care program for 2,800 blind Missourians. Funding for the blind program was a contentious issue between the House and Senate going into the budget negotiations, but it was finally resolved when the conference committee allotted \$25 million to the program, which is \$3 million less than the program needs to be fully funded.
- Approves a 2 percent pay raise for state employees making less than \$70,000, which makes up about 97 percent of the state workforce.

Senate Budget Chairman Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said the increases were not applied to MU and Missouri State because, unlike the other universities, the schools are funded using statewide missions.

With the past 48 hours behind them, Missouri's senators finally came to a compromise Wednesday, allowing budget negotiations to continue. The compromise included the veterans' home funding as well as \$35 million to early childhood education programs from a national settlement with tobacco companies.

The compromise also took out a provision that proposed defunding the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life after some Republican lawmakers claimed that the institute was taking part in political activities by training women in liberal politics for the Democratic Party.

The institute, which is based out of the University of Missouri-St. Louis, is named after a prominent St. Louis state representative who was influential in ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment in Missouri in the 1970s.

The compromise also included a measure sponsored by Sen. Brad Lager, R-Savannah, that would have the joint committee on education create a funding formula for higher education. Lager's proposal would also require the legislature to implement the formula by the 2015 fiscal year. Lager said that even though research has been done to create a formula in the past, the issue has never been forced, and his measure would allow lawmakers to finish it.

"What we have lived through in the past 48 hours underscores the insanity by which we fund higher education in this state," Lager said. Schaefer said the conference-approved budget was balanced and \$50 million below the governor's budget. Schaefer said his original budget proposal was going to be \$70 million less than the governor's, but additions to the budget throughout the process, such as maintaining the funding for the blind health care program, required the change.

House Budget Chairman Ryan Silvey, R-Kansas City, said the House and Senate would vote to pass out the 13 bills comprising the budget on Thursday. Schaefer said that he expected the budget to pass through both chambers fairly easily, despite the past debate it has fostered. Legislators have until the constitutionally mandated 6 p.m. Friday deadline to send the budget bills to the governor's desk.

Rush Limbaugh bust missing from Capitol

Wednesday marked the arrival of a new member to the Hall of Famous Missourians, located in the rotunda of the state Capitol. Another recent addition that was expected at the ceremony was missing. House Speaker Steve Tilley, R-Perryville, inducted the bust of Dred Scott into the Hall, where Scott joined other famous Missourians such as Walt Disney and George Washington Carver.

Missing from the ceremony, however, was the bust of controversial conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh. Earlier in the session Tilley announced that he was planning on inducting Limbaugh as well as Scott into the Hall, which spurred national attention and controversy. While opponents to Limbaugh's induction called the radio personality a misogynist, referring to his derogatory comments about a Georgetown University student who uses birth control, Tilley said the Hall was for famous Missourians, not the most-liked ones. Despite Tilley's prior commitment to inducting Limbaugh, the radio personality's bust was not brought to the induction ceremony, leaving questions as to its whereabouts, especially after the sculptor posted on his website that he was "on the way to Jeff City to deliver Dred and Rush."

In a chamber next to the Hall where Scott was being inducted, the House approved a measure that would put the rotunda under lawmaker control. Currently, the House speaker is the only legislator who can determine who is honored in the Hall — a privilege that some took issue with when Tilley announced his decision to induct Limbaugh.

Under the amendment, the rotunda and any furniture or equipment in it would be specifically reserved for lawmakers, and outside groups would have to receive permission to use the area. The Senate president pro tem and House speaker would also join the governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general as voting members to the state public buildings board, which is in charge of supervising state facilities.

The provision was a part of an amendment attached to a Senate bill on state property that now must head back to the Senate. Legislators have until May 18 to send bills to the governor.



The Keys to Happiness: Partly Genetic, But You Control the Rest

Is there a "set point" that determines your level of happiness, regardless of your status in life? Is it something you have little power to change?

For several decades psychologists have wrestled with that question, and in recent years many, if not most, have embraced the idea that we are born with a tendency to be happy, or sour, and it doesn't have much to do with our surroundings or lifestyle. One researcher compared it to height. Try as you may, you probably aren't going to get any taller.

But a new study contends that happiness is very different from height or other genetically-determined characteristics. The study concludes that the "set point" is really a range, and we can move up and down on the happiness scale within that range.

All we have to do is keep our lives interesting, and be satisfied with what we already have.

Sounds easy, and psychologist Kennon Sheldon of the University of Missouri, Columbia, argues that it is -- although most of us may not succeed.

"We all have good things happen to us, and they lift us for a while and then we kind of fall back where we started," Sheldon, lead author of a study published in the Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, said in a telephone interview. "We're trying to figure out how people can get more out of the good things that happen to them."

Sheldon and his coauthor, psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky of the University of California, Riverside, have collaborated on several research projects over the last couple of decades. They have come up with a program that they think could help us inch our way up the happiness scale, and stay there longer, although there will always be a tendency to drop back to our personal "set points."

Their effort is an attempt to deal with an idea that has been kicking around for four decades, called "Hedonic Adaptation," or the "Hedonic Treadmill." That theory suggests that good things may move us up on the happiness scale, but in time the glow dims and we return to a point established chiefly by genetics. Bad things may move us down on the scale, but the impact of even traumatic experiences also diminishes over time, although some research suggests it's harder to forget the bad than remember the good.

We deal as best as we can with bad things as a way of avoiding depression, and that forces us back up the happiness scale. And as for the good things, as soon as we get them, we want more, thus pushing us back down toward the median.

Sheldon and Lyubomirsky argue that simple lifestyle changes can help keep us a bit happier, "despite pessimism from the current literature that the pursuit of happiness may be largely futile," as Lyubomirsky puts it.

It all comes down to two words: variety and appreciation.

There's a new love in your life? Keep it alive by introducing new experiences and variety. That will keep the relationship fresh and rewarding, and, well, happy. Appreciate what you've got.

"To appreciate something is to savor it, to feel grateful for it, to recognize that one might never have gotten it, or might lose it," the study says.

Without that, you're likely going to lose interest and cast about for something better, whether it's a new mate or a new car. It seems we are never satisfied, and that brings the happiness barometer down.

The researchers tested 481 students over two semesters to measure their level of happiness and determine if savoring a good thing could last even a few weeks. In most cases, it didn't. The participants quickly returned to their regular levels of happiness.

But some participants were able to maintain that elevated level of happiness by keeping the memory alive and appreciating what they already had.

Case closed? Not exactly.

There's still the question of how much our happiness depends on genetics, and how much it is affected by our lifestyles and possessions.

The researchers have come up with a formula that they have used in a number of publications. It's 50 percent genetics. The circumstances we find ourselves in -- like where we live, the quality of our love lives, whether we have a few bucks in the bank -- account for only about 10 percent. The remaining 40 percent is "within our control, how we think and behave."

But where did those numbers come from?

"Basically, we kind of made them up," Sheldon said, adding quickly, "but not entirely."

The 50 percent genetics is based on other research of identical twins who were separated at birth and had no contact with each other. A huge study in Germany found that separated twins ranked almost exactly the same on the happiness scale, regardless of their personal experiences.

"And if you look at studies of various superficial circumstances, like income, where you live, how many cars you have, those are pretty small," Sheldon said. "They don't seem to account for more than about 10 percent.

"So that left 40 percent that we conclude, although not everybody would agree with this conclusion, is the percent that is affected by what you do."

That certainly indicates that our happiness can be greatly influenced by what we do, and if the number is anywhere near correct, simple changes, like appreciating what we already have, can make a significant difference in our level of happiness.

But if that number is way off, as many psychologists would contend, then there isn't a lot we can do to make us keep smiling. Still, it may be worth a try.

A better way to keep hungry diners waiting

U. MISSOURI (US) — There are ways to make waiting for a table more pleasant for patrons and more profitable for restaurant owners, according to experiments in a virtual environment.

“Our study shows that waiting area design has an effect on diners,” says So-Yeon Yoon, associate professor of architectural studies at the University of Missouri. “By redesigning waiting areas, restaurant owners can make more money, and customers can have a more enjoyable experience.”

To increase customer comfort and privacy, Yoon says restaurant owners should design waiting areas with outward curving or angled walls, as opposed to open square rooms, so customers cannot see all waiting patrons at once.

They also should offer several waiting areas for customers, possibly on different sides of the restaurant, and visually divide the waiting space using plants or decorative elements to give diners more privacy and less sense of crowding.

Yoon conducted the study, published in the *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, using a virtual reality environment. Participants were presented with one of two randomly selected types of waiting areas in a virtual restaurant, each with a different level of crowding.

Then, they navigated through the virtual environment. Following the experiment, participants self-reported how the different crowding environments made them feel.

Yoon found that participants who could see many waiting patrons felt less comfortable and were more likely to leave than those with fewer patrons waiting in close proximity.

Yoon collaborated with Johye Hwang and Lawrence Bendle of Kyung Hee University on the study.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH



Taking Missouri out of University of Missouri-Kansas City? Maybe

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS | Posted: Wednesday, May 9, 2012 11:10 am | (3) comments.

COLUMBIA, Mo. • The University of Missouri-Kansas City is considering changing its name to the University of Kansas City.

Officials at the Kansas City school say the name change would help it emerge from the sizable shadow of the Missouri campus in Columbia.

The school has used its current name since it joined the four-campus University of Missouri system nearly 50 years ago. But Chancellor Leo Morton is suggesting the school return to the name it used when it was founded in 1929.

A UMKC name change would have to be approved by the university system's Board of Curators. No formal proposal has yet been submitted.

University name changes have become increasingly common in Missouri. The Missouri system's Rolla campus changed its name to the Missouri University of Science and Technology in 2008.

UMKC considers renaming itself University of Kansas City

By ALAN SCHER ZAGIER/The Associated Press

May 9, 2012 | 6:23 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — The University of Missouri-Kansas City is considering a name change that could help it emerge from the sizable shadow of its campus cousin down the road in Columbia.

The school has used its current name since joining the four-campus University of Missouri System nearly 50 years ago. But Chancellor Leo Morton, encouraged by some prominent donors and alumni who have sought the move for years, is suggesting the school look at dropping "Missouri" and return to the name used for more than three decades after it was founded in 1929: the University of Kansas City.

"It's not about going back in history, it's not about not liking the name we have," Morton said in a telephone interview Wednesday. "It's about finding the right name to develop our brand and better execute our mission."

A name change would have to be approved by the university system's Board of Curators. No formal proposal has been submitted, and Morton cautioned that he has no interest in leaving **behind the affiliation with the flagship Missouri campus in Columbia** as well as the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the Missouri University of Science & Technology in Rolla.

"We derive significant benefits from being part of the system," he said. "I would never even consider that."

With 15,000 students and its own schools of law, medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and nursing, as well as a music and dance conservatory, the university is still mistaken for a "branch campus" of the flagship far too often, Morton said.

"In many people's minds, that's a lower position," he said. "The University of Kansas City says, 'This is a university that serves the region and the city.'"

That distinction is important, particularly to donors, the chancellor said. And it's also accurate because 75 percent of UMKC undergraduates come from the Kansas City metro area on both sides of the state line. An equivalent percentage of graduates remain in the area, Morton added.

Name changes in higher education are becoming increasingly common in Missouri and beyond as schools seek to carve out unique brands in a crowded and competitive marketplace.

In 2005, state colleges Harris-Stowe in St. Louis and Missouri Western in St. Joseph morphed into universities. Missouri Southern State University-Joplin dropped the city identifier from its name — just two years after making its own college-to-university shift. Southwest Missouri State University ditched the regional designation to henceforth be known as Missouri State.

Three years later, the school known as the University of Missouri-Rolla became Missouri S&T. And the flagship campus formally stripped "Columbia" from its name to simply become the University of Missouri — even though that usage had long been informally adopted.

Morton broached the name change last week with the school's Faculty Senate and plans to soon discuss it with alumni association leaders. Should support suggest a continued effort, UMKC will embark on more formal surveys of students and graduates and seek out market research to justify a name change before bringing a proposal to curators.

"This is not a *fait accompli* by any means," Morton said. "We have to do the research. If the surveys say it's not the thing to do, and we don't have the support, then it won't happen."

Morton said he has previously discussed the idea with curators and new UM System President Tim Wolfe, but more as a hypothetical. Asked if Wolfe supports a name change, university spokeswoman Jennifer Hollingshead said "it's very premature" because UMKC hasn't yet presented a formal proposal. Several curators also said they were withholding judgment until more details are known.

"I would be open to looking at it and see if it makes sense for the entire state of Missouri," said curator David Bradley of St. Joseph.



Matthes seeks spending cuts to protect general fund

MU Mention PG. 2

By Andrew Denney
Wednesday, May 9, 2012

During the city's mini-retreat yesterday, City Manager Mike Matthes said he wants city departments to hold the line on spending and end a recent practice of budgeting for deficit spending with the general fund.

The general fund, which is about \$78 million for the current fiscal year, is a fraction of the city's \$477 million budget, but it provides money for most city departments and does not include dedicated streams of revenue. It has been a city practice for the general fund to spend about \$2 million more than it takes in with revenue and to make up the difference with the city's savings account.

The discussion comes as Matthes works on Columbia's fiscal year 2013 budget.

According to a presentation from the city's Finance Department, about \$79 million is projected to be spent from the general fund, and Matthes said if the city spends \$1 million less, general fund revenue and expenses could be in lock step for the next few fiscal years. To do so, Matthes said department heads should look for ways to further cut back on spending.

"There are 100 ways to cut the budget, and all of them suck," Matthes said.

Matthes said the financial challenges facing the city include \$120 million in unfunded pension liabilities and pay compression for city employees, \$40 million in infrastructure needs, and funding Columbia Regional Airport and Columbia Transit.

Matthes said increased collections through the city's half-cent transportation sales tax have provided a boost to the cash-strapped Columbia Transit, but he said the savings account supporting the bus system is still expected to dry up in fiscal year 2013.

During a discussion about paying for stormwater infrastructure, Fifth Ward Councilwoman Helen Anthony said the city should be acting more quickly to address aging stormwater drainage systems.

"Our stormwater infrastructure is crumbling, and we've been talking about it for a year now," Anthony said. Matthes said more funds could be made available through a sales tax, but Mayor Bob McDavid said fees or taxes for stormwater could be a hard sell for residents who have not had to face the side effects of an aging stormwater system, such as a flooded basement.

"Anecdotes and photos don't work," McDavid said.

Collections for the city's sales and property taxes have increased in the current fiscal year over fiscal year 2011, but McDavid asked how much revenue the city could capture if it levied a sales tax on online sales. Using a rough estimate, Finance Director John Blattel said the city could capture about \$4 million. McDavid said that could be a potential revenue source for the city.

"This money is lost from this community," McDavid said. Federal law currently allows states to levy an online sales tax on businesses that have a physical presence in the states. **According to a study released last month by the Truman School of Public Affairs Institute of Public Policy at the University of Missouri, the lack of an effective means of collecting online sales tax revenue could be costing the state \$468 million each year.**

The second installment of the mini-retreat will start after a special meeting set to begin at 6 tonight at City Hall. The council's annual retreat is scheduled for June 8 and 9 at the Activity & Recreation Center, 1701 W. Ash St.