

Sue Shear Institute survives another challenge

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — The Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life survived another attempt to kill it yesterday when a House-Senate conference committee rejected a House-passed amendment that would have banned the University of Missouri-St. Louis program.

The program, named for the St. Louis County House member who was the longest-serving woman in legislative history, provides training for women who want to be in politics and government and tracks their success in achieving positions of authority. It has come under assault from some Republicans who accuse it of partisanship in favor of Democrats and liberals.

"We have spoken pretty clearly," said Sen. David Pearce, R-Warrensburg. "We are going to keep the Sue Shear Institute."

The decision came as lawmakers were discussing a higher education bill that originated in the Senate as a measure to standardize remedial education efforts and ease the transfer of course credits among state-supported schools. The House added numerous provisions, including a tax credit to lure sporting events and the Sue Shear Institute ban.

With tomorrow's deadline looming, lawmakers are using every avenue to obtain passage of their legislation. But to save the underlying proposals, committees are stripping many of those provisions from the now heavily laden bills.

The credit transfer provisions would direct the Coordinating Board for Higher Education to develop a curriculum of 25 lower-division courses that would be common to all state schools.

Along with the tax credit for sporting events, the bill returned from the House with a tax credit for businesses that add jobs, with the credits being good for tuition at any higher education institution in Missouri.

The tax credits, not the underlying measure or the Sue Shear Institute language, could trip up the bill in its final days. "If this is still on the bill" when it returns to the Senate, "the bill is dead," Pearce said.

"It won't come up on the House floor without it," replied Rep. Mike Thomson, R-Maryville.

Pearce agreed to try to pass the bill with the athletic events tax credit intact but did not hold out much hope.

The Sue Shear Institute survived an attempt to put language in the higher education spending bill that would have directed the UM System to eliminate funding for the program. Instead, the language directs the university to avoid spending public money on partisan politics.

"There is overwhelming scholarly evidence that women face internal, as well as external, barriers to participation in the public policy process," Dayna Stock, manager of the institute, said in a statement. "Educational programs like those at the Sue Shear Institute, and other institutions of higher learning, help break down those barriers and move us toward a more representative democracy."

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5 QUESTIONS

FOR Greg Steinhoff,
organizer of Tiger Town

Tiger Town will be a site for vendor booths, restaurants and other businesses to provide entertainment before and after the University of Missouri's four Southeast Conference home football games against Georgia, Vanderbilt, Alabama and Kentucky. Greg Steinhoff, president of strategic operations at Veterans United Home Loans, is one of three local businessmen who proposed the idea of Tiger Town to city and university officials.



Greg Steinhoff

every school has some sort of designated gathering point for fans. Perhaps the most well-known is The Grove at Ole Miss, which is 12 acres of tents with lots of traditions. Tiger Town would be unique in that it would feature more of the downtown businesses, largely due to The District's close proximity to campus and

Memorial Stadium/Faurot Field. Most of the SEC venues are on open properties located near the football stadium.

How did the idea of Tiger Town come about?

Rick Means [of Shelter Insurance], Bob Gerding [of Gerding, Korte & Chitwood, CPAs] and I traveled to several out-of-town University of Missouri football games over the years. We noticed that some communities make special efforts to reach out to visiting fans by creating some sort of destination activity. We most recently visited Campus Corner prior to the University of Oklahoma game. When we became aware that Mizzou was going to be a member of the Southeast Conference, we thought this would be an excellent time to create a similar venue for the thousands of new visitors both from the SEC as well as Mizzou fans from Missouri and elsewhere.

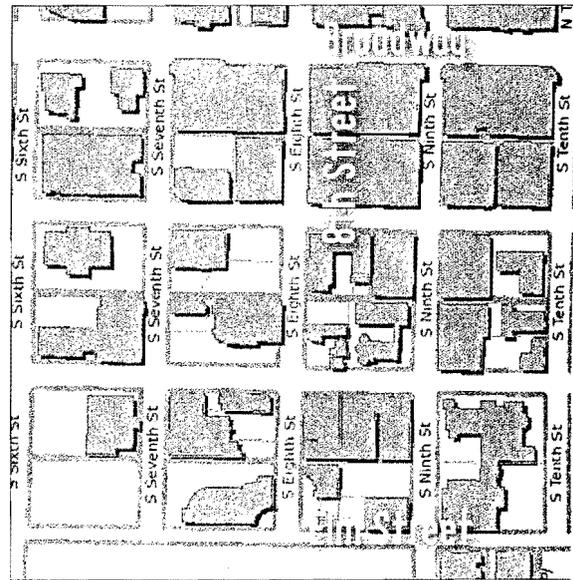
What other cities in the Southeast Conference have their version of Tiger Town, and how will Tiger Town be similar and differ from those?

We've researched all SEC institutions to learn about what they do for pre- and post-game activities. There is a lot of variety, but most

How has the inclusion of a wider variety of downtown merchants in the planning of Tiger Town affected its development?

The dialogue we've had with the downtown businesses has been great. We've included a number of things that make Tiger Town more of a "catch and release" attraction, directing people to a specific event for a short period of time and then encouraging them to visit businesses in the surrounding areas. There are a number of items that will benefit businesses that they've been requesting for years. Things like a dedicated mass transit route that will deliver people to and from the stadium, waiver of "open container ordinance" for all of The District for those Tiger Town weekends, marketing the downtown businesses in conjunction with Tiger Town to visiting fans, etc.

Why should business owners — especially those with businesses in The District — support Tiger Town?



The future site of Tiger Town on 8th Street between Broadway and Elm Streets.

Big picture, Tiger Town is a way to attract thousands of new visitors to Columbia who we hope will return for many years to come. Will there be adverse effects? Sure, as there always will be with a new event. But as Campus Corner at OU has evolved over 40 years, we will learn and improve over time.

When will Tiger Town have its debut, and what will it look like?

Sept. 8 will be a big day. It's our SEC home opener against Georgia, and that's when Tiger Town will debut. We understand there will be more than 7,000 visiting fans, and we are sure there will be huge interest among Mizzou fans. For this first year, we intend to have Tiger Town only on SEC football weekends. **CBT**

The Star's editorial | Name change for UMKC could be a game change

As names go, the University of Missouri-Kansas City doesn't exactly roll off the tongue. It's clunky, and the "Kansas City" part comes across as an afterthought.

The University of Kansas City, on the other hand, has a nice, clean ring. It conveys a sense of place.

And a sense of responsibility.

UMKC Chancellor Leo Morton is floating the idea of asking the University of Missouri system's Board of Curators to allow his university to return to its original name, the University of Kansas City, while remaining part of the UM four-campus system.

Mayor Sly James likes the idea.

We say, go for it.

Despite all protests to the contrary, sticking with the current name will forever suggest that Kansas City's public university is a branch campus of Mizzou in Columbia.

It is not. UMKC is a self-contained university with schools of medicine, dentistry and pharmacy, a law school, a conservatory of music and dance and an up-and-coming school of business that is different from anything offered in Columbia.

But it is also a school that owes its survival to its inclusion in the University of Missouri system. As a private institution, the University of Kansas City was chronically short of funds from its creation in 1933 until its rebirth as a public university in 1963. Coming under the University of Missouri system's umbrella meant access to state funding and a much larger pool of prospective students.

UMKC still benefits from being part of the state's university system, but the rewards have diminished. Missouri politicians have chosen to ignore obvious sources of revenue and to starve most of the state's important functions, especially higher education. Investing in the quality of colleges and universities has not been a priority for more than a decade.

Despite that handicap, UMKC has made strides in recent years. It has found strong and stable leadership, boosted its credentials as a residential campus and achieved recognition for achievements in its business school, conservatory and medical programs.

It also has established its own fundraising entity, the UMKC Foundation.

With a solid structure in place, the university has the potential to raise more private funds and rely less on measly state appropriations. A name change could help with that.

Renaming the school the University of Kansas City would put Kansas Citians on the hook for supporting the school financially and otherwise. A first-class city can ill afford to have a second-rate university sharing its name.

Kansas City is and should remain a part of the University of Missouri system. But it is ready for a stronger identity as the University of Kansas City.



Education reform expert speaks to teachers at MU

By Janese Silvey

Wednesday, May 16, 2012

America's educational system is broken and discourages individuality when schools ought to be promoting creativity and originality, an author and professor emeritus told a group of Missouri educators yesterday.

"The system isn't working anymore," Sir Ken Robinson said. "It used to, in a way, but it's not now."

Robinson was the keynote speaker for the University of Missouri's annual Celebration of Teaching, which attracted college and K-12 instructors from across the state. The event, which continues today with workshops, aims to let educators reflect on the past school year while it is still fresh in their minds.

"This weekend we spent time celebrating the learning part" during graduations, said Jim Spain, vice chancellor of undergraduate studies, which sponsored the program. "Now we celebrate teaching. ... It's a time to challenge ourselves to think about what we did — what we did well and what we'd like to do differently."

Robinson spent 12 years as a professor of education in the United Kingdom and is now an internationally known speaker on education reform. Knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2003 for his service to the arts, he also works with governments and international agencies to promote creativity.

Before moving to the United States a decade ago, he said he was warned Americans do not get irony. Robinson joked that naming the federal law "No Child Left Behind," when, in fact, it leaves millions of children behind is proof that Americans do understand irony.

Although the law has "all the best intentions," he said, the problem is the strategy. NCLB uses standardized tests in an attempt to make sure students are at or above grade level in math, science and communication. By doing so, Robinson said, art, music and other non-tested subjects have received less attention in schools.

Robinson argued that schools should be cultivating creativity and embracing ideas. Employers are not as interested in carbon-copy college graduates as they are in original thinkers, he said.

"We need to teach creatively," he said. "As we teach, we need to recognize the way students learn by engaging their imagination."

Recognizing pockets of schools and colleges that are trying new things, Robinson said change is not impossible. He compared it to Death Valley in his home state of California, which lay dormant for years until rare storms in 2005 gave way to a burst of wildflowers and other life. With the right conditions, he said, schools "can be revived."

The Boston Globe

Facebook IPO belies perils of collegiate inventors

By Brian Love

This week's Facebook IPO, already the gravy train for an army of lawyers and bankers, will reportedly transform a thousand Facebook employees into overnight millionaires. In all likelihood, few of these soon-to-be tycoons realize they owe a great deal of thanks to Harvard University for their newfound wealth.

What did Harvard do? Nothing. Rather, it's something the school didn't do: claim Facebook for itself.

You see, Harvard University could have asserted a stronger claim to the company than the Winklevoss twins and Paul Ceglia combined. In 2004 Mark Zuckerberg and friends started Facebook while enrolled in Harvard, working in a Harvard dormitory, and using Harvard's computer network. Simply by using university resources, Facebook's founders opened the door for school officials to later assert ownership of the website's core technology.

Harvard didn't. Other universities would have.

Over the last three decades, patent acquisition and technology licensing have become big business for US universities, which collectively obtain thousands of patents and billions in licensing revenue each year. In a never-ending quest for more royalties, university officials are increasingly likely to take and market not just the inventions of fulltime faculty members, but also those of their students.

Unlike professors, however, students generally don't sign patent assignment agreements, are far from business savvy, and usually pay large sums to, rather than are paid by, their future alma maters. Nonetheless, under the authority of broad policies buried in student handbooks, university officials routinely lay claim to the discoveries of tuition-paying students who unwittingly erred by inventing something of value on campus.

Perhaps not coincidentally, students have been the vanguard of technology in recent years. Google founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin were Stanford grad students when they invented the company's web search technology, and Marc Andreessen, co-founder

of Netscape and current Facebook board member, was just a University of Illinois undergraduate when he spearheaded development of the first widely-used web browser. Among other high-tech innovations, students invented the laser, the first practical electron microscope, and the Linux operating system — a list that arguably should include the accomplishments of icons like Bill Gates and Steve Jobs who dropped out of college just before finding success.

In the money-centric culture of today's universities, when dorm-room projects transform into something valuable, school officials usually come calling and rarely play nice. Student entrepreneurs then find themselves in the awkward position of bargaining with university personnel, whom they are supposed to obey and respect under threat of expulsion, for the right to commercialize the fruits of their own ingenuity.

Understandably most students fold and, if lucky, satisfy administrators by forking over just a chunk of their potential profit. For the right to use their own software, Page and Brin gave Stanford an equity stake in Google that sold in 2005 for \$336 million and today would be worth over a billion.

Students who don't capitulate soon find their futures in jeopardy. When Andreessen left for Silicon Valley to found his own company, the University of Illinois accused its new alum of infringing the school's rights to the browser he helped develop on campus the year prior. The university refused to settle for Netscape stock, and a lawsuit and cash settlement followed — costs that easily could have doomed the fledgling company.

Though Andreessen beat the odds and eventually took his company public, Petr Taborsky, an undergraduate at the University of South Florida, wasn't so lucky. After assisting with a university project that failed to yield results, Taborsky carried on in his spare time and discovered a method for treating polluted water. When USF asserted ownership of his invention, Taborsky retrieved his research notebooks from a university lab and filed his own patent applications. USF deemed Taborsky's actions "theft" and pressed charges. Taborsky ultimately spent eighteen months behind bars, including two on a chain gang, for stealing his own discovery.

Extreme overreactions aside, universities' stance on student inventions might be reasonable if officials limited their claims to the results of school-financed research, but this has not been the case. In fact, universities have asserted ownership of student inventions with no tenable connection to any university support.

Look no further than the University of Missouri, which recently asserted rights to a popular iPhone app developed by students who naively entered a campus entrepreneurship competition that attracted attention from school administrators. Missouri eventually relented, but only after the dispute attracted negative media attention.

Fortunately, Harvard's minor role in Facebook's history has attracted a different reaction: a star-studded Hollywood blockbuster, a reinvigorated reputation as a dream school for entrepreneurial teens, and warm feelings among millionaire alumni who may

become large donors. By contrast, few know that modern web browsing was born at the University of Illinois, and Netscape's embittered founders vowed never to give another dime to their alma mater-turned-adversary.

Here's hoping officials at the collegiate home of the next Facebook know which university made the better deal.



Celery extract shows promise in MU cancer research

COLUMBIA, Mo. (AP) - Researchers at the University of Missouri say they've identified an extract found in celery and other produce as a potential weapon against breast cancer.

The research was recently published online in the journal *Hormones and Cancer*.

The study found that cancerous tumors shrank in mice that were implanted with breast cancer cells and treated with the extract, called apigenin. Some of the mice were also treated with a synthetic hormone given to menopausal women that has been shown to increase the risk of breast cancer.

Salman Hyder, a professor of biomedical sciences at the university, says the next step is to pursue human clinical trials with apigenin. The extract is also found in parsley and some spices.

Does using the net make you depressed? Heavy use of games, file sharing and chat services can be warning signs

By Rob Waugh

People who find themselves using file-sharing services and flicking aimlessly between different apps might be depressed - and

Researchers at the University of Missouri found that depressed students tended to use file-sharing services, send email and chat online more than the other students.

It's one of the first surveys of computer use and depression that relies on data from the university's own network - watching students' actual computer use - rather than surveys.

Students showing signs of depression tend to use file-sharing services more than their counterparts, and also use the Internet in a more random manner, frequently switching among several applications.

'The study is believed to be the first that uses actual Internet data, collected unobtrusively and anonymously, to associate Internet usage with signs of depression', Chellappan says. 'Surveys are a far less accurate way of assessing the way people use the internet.'

'This is because when students themselves reported their volume and type of Internet activity, the amount of Internet usage data is limited because people's memories fade with time,' Chellappan says.

'There may be errors and social desirability bias when students report their own Internet usage.' Chellappan and his fellow researchers collected a month's worth of Internet data for 216 Missouri undergraduate students.

Before the researchers collected the usage data from the campus network, the students were tested to determine whether they showed signs of depression.

They found that students who showed signs of depression used the Internet much differently than the other study participants.

Depressed students also tended to use higher 'packets per flow' applications, those high-bandwidth applications often associated with online videos and games, than their counterparts.

Students who showed signs of depression also tended to use the Internet in a more 'random' manner - frequently switching among applications, perhaps from chat rooms to games to email.

Chellappan thinks that randomness may indicate trouble concentrating, a characteristic associated with depression.

About 30 percent of the students in the study met the minimum criteria for depression. Nationally, previous studies show that between 10 percent and 40 percent of all American students suffer from depression.

Chellappan is now interested in using these findings to develop software that could be installed on home computers to help individuals determine whether their Internet usage patterns may indicate depression.

The software would unobtrusively monitor Internet usage and alert individuals if their usage patterns indicate symptoms of depression.

'The software would be a cost-effective and an in-home tool that could proactively prompt users to seek medical help if their Internet usage patterns indicate possible depression,' Chellappan says. 'The software could also be installed on campus networks to notify counselors of students whose Internet usage patterns are indicative of depressive behavior.'



New Biomarker Test Predicts Arthritis Before Symptoms Appear

More than 27 million adults currently suffer from osteoarthritis, which is the most common form of arthritis. In the past, doctors have been unable to diagnose patients with arthritis until they begin to show symptoms, which include joint pain and stiffness. By the time these symptoms are present, it is often too late for preventive and minimally invasive treatment options to be effective. **Now, a research team from the University of Missouri's Comparative Orthopaedic Laboratory has found a way to detect and predict arthritis before patients begin suffering from symptoms.**

James Cook, a researcher from the MU College of Veterinary Medicine and the William C. and Kathryn E. Allen Distinguished Professor in Orthopaedic Surgery, along with MU researchers Bridget Garner, Aaron Stoker, Keiichi Kuroki, Cristi Cook, and Prakash Jayabalan, have developed a test using specific biomarkers that can accurately determine if a patient is developing arthritis as well as predict the potential severity of the disease. The test can be run off of a single drop of fluid from a patient's joint, which is obtained with a small needle similar to drawing blood.

"With this biomarker test, we can study the levels of specific proteins that we now know are associated with osteoarthritis," Cook said. "Not only does the test have the potential to help predict future arthritis, but it also tells us about the early mechanisms of arthritis, which will lead to better treatments in the future."

In their study published in the *Journal of Knee Surgery*, the MU researchers report that they developed the test by analyzing the joints of dogs that suffer from arthritis. Veterinarians predict that 20 percent of middle-aged dogs and 90 percent of older dogs have osteoarthritis in one or more joints. Since canine joints operate similarly to the joints of humans, Cook says the test is being adapted to human patients.

"This test has already shown early usefulness for allowing us to monitor how different treatments affect the arthritic joints in people," Cook said. "With further validation, this test will allow doctors to adjust and fine tune treatments to individual patients. Also, being able to tell patients when they are at a high risk for developing arthritis will give doctors a strong motivational tool to convince patients to take preventive measures including appropriate exercise and diet change."

The biomarker test is currently available for licensing and is in the process of gaining FDA approval.



Webber proposes limits to college-themed plates

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — The appearance of the Kansas jayhawk on Missouri license plates became less likely yesterday when the Missouri House approved an amendment from Rep. Stephen Webber to limit college-themed plates to in-state schools.

The University of Kansas Alumni Association, using a loophole in state law, is seeking state approval for a specialized Missouri license plate. It needed to sign up 200 people willing to use it, pay a \$5,000 fee to the state and find a legislative sponsor, all of which it had done.

Webber's amendment, added to a bill that began as a measure to realign the terms of the Missouri State University Board of Governors, would close the loophole. Webber said he hopes the legislative objections will spur KU to resume the athletic rivalry with the University of Missouri that ended when MU decided to jump from the Big 12 to the Southeastern Conference.

Webber, D-Columbia and a law student at MU, called his amendment "an opportunity to kick the Jayhawks in their nonexistent teeth."

Current Missouri law limits college-themed plates to in-state schools, but that language only applies to license plates where the revenue goes directly to the school. Webber's proposal would add foundations and organizations representing schools to the in-state-only list.

He also added language to another section of law dealing with applications from not-for-profit organizations. Those organizations can win a specialized plate if they meet all the requirements and get approval from the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight during a regular legislative session.

The KU Alumni Association had hoped to obtain that approval next year. Webber's amendment would require that the sponsoring lawmaker be in office at the time the committee takes a vote. The KU Alumni Association plate is sponsored by Rep. Charlie Denison, R-Springfield, who is leaving office this year because of term limits.

Webber told the House he would be willing to repeal his new proposal if KU resumed the sports rivalry.

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Senate sends jayhawk plate issue to Nixon

By Rudi Keller

JEFFERSON CITY — Gov. Jay Nixon will decide whether the University of Kansas Jayhawk will adorn a Missouri license plate.

The Senate, on a 29-0 vote, on Wednesday evening sent a bill dealing with several higher education issues, including the Jayhawk license plate, to Nixon. Lawmakers responded quickly to news that an application had been submitted by the KU Alumni Association to issue a Missouri license plate.

Under current Missouri law, any organization can submit a request, along with 200 names of people willing to buy the special plate and a \$5,000 fee, for consideration by the legislature's Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight.

There was little debate as Sen. Bob Dixon, R-Springfield, asked for a vote to approve his bill, which also includes changes in the terms of the Missouri State University Board of Governors and other provisions on higher education.

Under the provisions sent to Nixon, only the logos or mascots of college and universities in Missouri would be allowed on state license plates. Under current law, the logos or mascots were restricted to Missouri schools only when the request came from the school itself. The KU alumni request exploited a loophole that was silent on whether not-for-profit associations or foundations could make such a request for out-of-state schools.

The limits were added to Dixon's bill by Rep. Stephen Webber, D-Columbia, during House debate.

"I'm very happy Stephen's fix for the license plate was passed," Sen. Kurt Schaefer, R-Columbia, said.

The bill also includes authorization for a fund to pay for capital improvements on college campuses. It would pay for half of new construction costs, if there is money available, to match privately raised funds on public campuses.



ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Mo. lawmakers act to stop Jayhawks license plate

Associated Press | Posted: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 9:35 pm | [\(0\) comments.](#)

Legislation aimed at stopping Missouri from issuing a specialty license plate featuring the University of Kansas is on its way to Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon.

Lawmakers attached the measure to a higher education bill approved Wednesday in the Senate. The amendment says only Missouri schools may be featured on license plates unless the Legislature votes otherwise.

Fans of the University of Kansas and its Jayhawk mascot launched an effort last year to get the plate.

The amendment's sponsor, Democrat Rep. Stephen Webber, has said he'll seek to repeal it if the University of Kansas challenges the University of Missouri to a football or basketball game next school year.

The measure won't affect Missouri's recent approval of a plate featuring a different Kansas institution _ Pittsburg State.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Bills growing as Missouri session winds down

By ELIZABETH CRISP

MU mention page 2

JEFFERSON CITY -- Missouri House members on Wednesday continued to load bills with amendments that likely will have to be worked out in conference.

Some of the amendments were related to the original bills, and some ... may be a bit of a reach.

Rep. Jay Barnes, R-Jefferson City, managed to add a bill that would set up a path for certain crimes to be expunged into a bill titled "outdoor resources."

"I have go-go gadget arms," Barnes said when asked about whether the amendment fit.

In its original form, the Senate Bill 760 dealt only with hunting permits and privileges. The current version includes such varying items as auditing of solid waste management, criminal statutes related to switchblade knives, concealed carry age restrictions and commercial activities in state parks.

Rep. Jill Schupp, D-Creve Coeur, said she's concerned that the chamber could render bills unconstitutional by packing on unrelated items.

"The body needs to be careful about violating Hammerschmidt with these amendments," she said. "I think we need to be watching what we're doing with some of these larger omnibus bills." (Hammerschmidt is a reference to the state Supreme Court's 1994 decision that requires single-subject legislation)

Senate bills coming before the House this week have faced dozens of proposed amendments — some drawing 40 or more requests.

Some have been more tailored to the bills that they appear on, but it's still a gamble whether the added items will stick to the legislation once the dust settles.

Language that changes the state's fee schedule for companies transporting radioactive waste has been added to several bills.

Lawmakers also have been tacking on an amendment that would bar the state from creating specialty license plates for out-of-state universities and colleges. The bill doesn't name any school in particular, but those pushing the bill have said they are targeting the University of Kansas.

"The athletic rivalry between MU and KU has been very important to both states and especially the Kansas City region," Rep. Steven Webber, D-Columbia, said in explaining the effort. "It is a shame that KU leaders have chosen to abandon more than a century of tradition by refusing to compete against Mizzou for the foreseeable future. This snub makes now the absolutely wrong time for Missouri to honor Kansas with a specialty license plate."

Some of the conference committees already are busting up the bills to weed out the additional items. Due to House deadlines, conference reports will have to be settled by today for those bills to make Friday's 6 p.m. deadline.

Wednesday afternoon, a committee met to discuss one of several judiciary-related bills that have grown to cover a variety of issues.

"I don't like omnibus bills to start with," Sen. Jack Goodman, R-Mt. Vernon, said during the committee's meeting.

Senate Bill 636 started as a one-paragraph item but grew to more than 80 pages with more than 40 amendments.

Sen. Joseph Keaveny, D-St. Louis, said the committee removed a provision that would eliminate a disparity in crack cocaine sentencing because of the potential for a criminal code overhaul next year but he also didn't think the bill was the appropriate avenue.

"This was a trust bill," he said. "It didn't belong in here."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Study of KC flash mobs could offer lessons for Delmar Loop outbreak

BY TODD C. FRANKEL • tfrankel@post-dispatch.com > 314-340-8110 | Posted: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 11:13 am | [\(4\) comments](#).

Boredom seemed to be the main driver behind the mayhem last summer at a popular Kansas City shopping district, according to [a new study](#) of what led the large group of teens to turn violent.

Teens, reached in focus groups and by surveys, said they used online social media to coordinate plans to meet up. And while the gatherings might be large, they did not need to be violent. A lack of things to do can make events take a turn for the worse.

As one focus group participant said: "We give 'em something to do or this is what happens when you get a group of kids together and they're bored, they get creative and destructive, and that's what it is like, it was boredom and destruction."

Last summer, three youths were shot at Kansas City's Country Club Plaza as hundreds of teens milled about, having gathered in a flash mob. City officials were alarmed. The new study focused on this incident.

In April, St. Louis got [its own taste of flash-mob violence](#). More than 300 young people, coordinating by social media, converged on the Delmar Loop. Two people were shot.

The study, released Tuesday, was conducted by researchers at the University of Kansas and University of Missouri-Columbia.

The study recommended the development of alternative activities for young people. It also urged authorities to develop social media strategies for engaging with young people and for encouraging "good flash mobs."