A new round of cuts to higher education funding will make it more difficult for the University of Missouri’s flagship campus to meet its twin goals of investing in high-quality programs and paying for major new research and academic buildings, Chancellor Alexander Cartwright said Tuesday.

Gov. Eric Greitens on Monday proposed cutting 10 percent from current appropriations for state colleges and universities and putting 10 percent of the remaining funds into a pool that would only be distributed if performance measures are met. That would put more than $80 million of the UM System’s appropriation at risk. About 40 percent to 45 percent of the UM System’s academic spending goes to the Columbia campus.

If approved it would be the smallest state appropriation since 1998.

“We need to understand more about all of what’s in the budget,” Cartwright said Tuesday. “We only saw so much last night. But I have concerns about our ability to really be able to do all the things we would like to do going forward.”

The cuts mean a stronger push this year to repeal or revise the state tuition cap law that limits increases to the rate of inflation.

“We need to be thinking about how do we have the resources needed to deliver on a high-quality education for the citizens of Missouri and beyond,” Cartwright said.

Greitens’ proposed $28.7 billion operating budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1 includes a $136.7 million increase in general revenue spending, the main source of funding for public schools and higher education. Public schools will see an extra $50.4 million in the foundation formula, the basic state aid program for education, but no increase in transportation funding.
Higher education overall will be cut $63.5 million, with a portion of the cut to institutional support offset by increases in scholarship funding.

Greitens has imposed several rounds of cuts on higher education. Within days of taking office in January 2017, restrictions Greitens imposed on higher education reduced UM’s fiscal 2017 appropriation from $431.2 million to $386.6 million in actual support. The appropriation level was cut to $419.1 million for the current fiscal year — UM anticipates actually receiving $395.8 million — and Greitens is proposing $376.5 million for the coming year.

The budget plan proposed by Greitens also eliminates funding for medical education in Springfield, funding to expand the Missouri University of Science and Technology’s program for cooperative engineering with Missouri State University and several other initiatives.

“We are going to have to look at and see how we can deliver on those programs, not having the resources needed,” Cartwright said.

Last year’s budget cuts forced the university to cut deeply, eliminating almost 500 jobs across the system and reducing outlays by $101 million. About $40 million of those savings, as well as $27 million to $70 million in administrative savings identified in December by PricewaterhouseCoopers, were intended to support reallocation to academic programs and construction needs.

President Mun Choi promised the University of Missouri-Kansas City last year that he would find a way to finance a $96 million performing arts campus and he has also promised that later this year he will provide details for financing a new $150 million to $200 million research complex in Columbia.

In his budget document, Greitens justified the cuts by pointing to “administrative bloat” on college campuses. The PricewaterhouseCoopers report identified $26.8 million in administrative savings and $17.5 million that could be saved by changing employee benefits. Expanding the streamlining effort to campuses in Rolla, St. Louis and Kansas City would increase the potential savings to $70 million.

The $70 million figure represents a goal that is likely to be unreachable, Cartwright said.

“Even if we were to implement the things we thought we could, we’re talking about a savings of maybe across the system of $20 million-something to $40 million,” Cartwright said. “We would
like to reinvest those dollars into the education of our students and to what we are doing for the economic development of this state.”

Higher education institutions throughout the state will work to reverse the cuts during legislative debates, said Paul Wagner, executive director of the Council on Public Higher Education. Cutting state funds to capture money identified on campuses for reallocation doesn’t help campuses succeed, he said.

“We don’t think cuts of this size further that goal or any other goal in the interest of the students of the state of Missouri,” Wagner said. “It is really devastating and it would have a devastating effect on our institutions and it is not going to help any more students walk across the stage.”

The impact of increased school support is hard to know at this time, said Michelle Baumstark, spokeswoman for the Columbia Public Schools. Because state money is divided based on attendance, total numbers of pupils and other factors, Columbia could receive less overall or less per student in the coming year.

The district would rather see some of the increase going to transportation costs, she said. The state is supposed to cover up to 75 percent of the costs but has not met that target for many years. This year, only about 18 percent of the district’s $12 million transportation budget comes from the state.

“We have been communicating with our local legislators about our concerns and what we hope to see in funding,” Baumstark said.
Proposed higher education budget cuts come under fire

By Lexi Churchill

JEFFERSON CITY — Several senators were critical of Gov. Eric Greitens’ proposed higher education cuts when they gathered for their first meeting about the governor’s proposed 2019 budget Tuesday.

In addition to the overall budget cuts, concern about the impact on the state’s historically black colleges and universities, or HBCUs, was a focus of the Senate Appropriations Committee meeting.

“Why should I not have the opinion that this governor is hostile toward higher education?” Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, asked Budget Director Dan Haug.

After a five-second pause, Haug replied that the governor did support higher education and was helping colleges like MU find efficiency. He noted a few areas where the university already had found some give and take within its budget to prepare for possible cuts.

On Monday, the governor indicated that University of Missouri System officials had found significant cost savings through a recent audit. MU Chancellor Alexander Cartwright said he felt those savings would be better spent by reinvesting them into the university.

“I believe very strongly in higher education as a driver of economic development,” Cartwright said.

Accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers, hired by the UM system, identified ways to save between $44 million to $74 million, to deal with budget constraints because of falling tuition and state funding.

The governor’s proposed 2019 cuts are not a new trend for the university. The state is constitutionally required to fund 25 percent of higher education institutions, Haug said. Although the state remains above that level, support has been declining. Rowden notes that it once provided about 60 percent of higher-ed funding.

Rowden emphasized that university funding has been cut about 20 percent in the past two years. For 2019, Greitens’ proposed bill would further cut funding by almost 11 percent compared with the budget approved last year.
According to Haug, the governor chose to prioritize scholarship funding instead, promising a $6.5 million increase for programs including the Access Missouri Award, the A+ Scholarship Program and Bright Flight.

No one denied the importance of scholarships. However, Sen. Jamilah Nasheed, D-St Louis, discussed other areas of need that the bill didn’t account for. She pointed out that all universities were receiving the same percentage cut, but the impact of those cuts is not equal, particularly for Missouri’s HBCUs. Those institutions cannot afford to receive any less funding.

“It is troubling to know we are cutting higher ed in the manner we are cutting, but what’s more troubling to me is to know that the historically black colleges will be hit the hardest,” Nasheed said. “They are the ones with the least amount of money being funded in terms of higher ed. If you take Lincoln University, we don’t match the land grant funding. We don’t put up our fair share to receive the federal match.”

Sen. Kiki Curls, D-Kansas City, said the making across-the-board cuts “is not a fair process” because certain schools are struggling and have difficulty competing.

The state has a $500 million “rainy-day,” or budget reserve fund that can only be spent on appropriations if an emergency is declared by the governor for cash flow problems, according to Haug. Nasheed considers the underfunding of higher education an emergency and asked that the governor reconsider his budget, especially when it comes to HBCUs.

Sen. Jason Holsman, D-Kansas City, raised concerns about higher-education related projects for which the state has failed to provide matching money.

He noted that funds for a University of Missouri-Kansas City project were withheld after being approved for five years in a row.

“Either we have a 50-50 match program or we don’t,” Holsman said. “Right now we do on the statutes, and the communities are doing their part and universities are doing their part and we’re doing our part by agreeing that we’re going to appropriate these funds. Then the governor is coming in and saying, ‘Well I’m going to withhold that money, or ‘I’m going to restrict that money from being spent.’”

“Then you come to us and say we need $6 million in new money” for scholarships, “when you you’re not fulfilling the commitment you had on the 50-50 program that we’ve had previously.”
MU chancellor reacts to higher ed state budget cuts: 'I have concerns'

By ALYSSA TOOMEY


University of Missouri Chancellor Alexander Cartwright said he has "concerns" about the state budget for fiscal year 2019, which slashes funding for public colleges and universities by at least $68 million.

"That's a significant dollar amount for Mizzou, for sure," Cartwright said Tuesday. "There are some programs that are affected by it. Springfield medical program, and others, that are affected that we're going to have to look at and understand how we can deliver on those programs not having the resources that are needed."

The roughly $68 million cut to higher education represents about a 7 percent reduction from the current fiscal year. More than $42 million is being withheld from the UM System, which is about a ten percent cut to the system's core funding.

In a statement, UM System President Mun Choi, MU chancellor Alexander Cartwright, Missouri S&T interim chancellor Christopher Maples and UMSL chancellor Thomas George said the cuts add up to $71 million over the past three years.

"We recognize and appreciate the hard work of our elected leaders in addressing the fiscal challenges facing the state. As the largest public institution of higher learning in Missouri, we'll also contribute our share to address these fiscal challenges. The latest reductions in state support for the University of Missouri System add up to $71 million during the past three years with an additional $38 million at risk through performance funding. This has required administrative restructuring, efficiency measures, and cuts to academic and support programs. These budget difficulties also underscore the need for Missouri public universities to have relief from Senate Bill 389 to grow our revenue during periods of shrinking state support. Without this
relief, the quality of our educational offerings, access to critical services by our students, and the impact of our institution in creating economic and community development will be diminished.

"Our commitment to an affordable education is stronger than ever before, and we look forward to working with elected leaders to keep our investment in higher education a top priority for the state of Missouri because of its significant positive impacts for the future of Missouri."

Cartwright also addressed the limitations set by Senate Bill 389 Tuesday. Passed in 2007, the law limits the amount of tuition increases to the consumer price index. Sen. Caleb Rowden (R-Columbia) has filed a bill that would change the tuition cap.

"It means that we really need to be rethinking Senate Bill 389, and we need to be thinking about how do we have the resources that are needed to deliver on a high quality education for the citizens of Missouri and beyond," Cartwright said.

**Governor’s budget proposal has education leaders cautious**

By MARK SLAVIT


COLUMBIA — Missouri education leaders responded to Gov. Eric Greitens’ state budget proposal for next year.

The governor said he wanted to cut funding for higher education and increase state support for public school districts.

Greitens did not make his decision lightly to cut about $70 million out of next year’s higher education budget, [MU Faculty Council Chairman Bill Wiebold said the proposed cuts were](http://krcgtv.com/news/local/governors-budget-proposal-has-education-leaders-cautious)
not a surprise and were disappointing. Weibold said MU campus leaders cut beyond the fat and chomped on his school’s meat and bones.

“We have been through this,” Wiebold said. "We’ve done a pretty good job of efficiently allocating those resources. It gets the point where, wow, it’s very difficult.”

Higher education cuts in this year’s budget forced some Missouri college and university leaders to lay off hundreds of workers. Wiebold said he feared more Missouri higher education layoffs were likely if the governor got his way.

While Greitens wanted to cut higher education funding, he wanted to increase funding for Missouri public school districts. The governor asked Missouri lawmakers to approve an $87 million funding increase for public school students in kindergarten through high school.

Columbia Public School Board Member Jonathan Sessions was optimistic and cautious about the governor’s support for public schools.

“We will continue to operate with a level of wait and see before we get a little too excited and make poor financial choices,” Sessions said.

Greitens said his budget proposal for next year included increases for his priorities such as education, infrastructure and public safety. The governor hoped Missouri lawmakers would make tough choices and eliminate wasteful spending.

If lawmakers approve the governor’s proposal for 2019, Missouri institutions of higher education would have major cuts for two consecutive years.

Fire crews respond to MU building

Watch video at: http://mms.tveyes.com/PlaybackPortal.aspx?SavedEditID=820026ce-4848-4850-8402-075c82d705e0
Boone County lawmakers respond to proposed higher education cuts

By LYDIA NUSBAUM

JEFFERSON CITY - Several mid-Missouri lawmakers are against Governor Eric Greitens’ proposed higher education cuts.

The governor outlined his proposed budget at a news conference Monday evening and said the administration had to make some tough choices. The budget outline suggested cutting more than $68 million from higher education institutions.

Greitens said because of the increase in money spent on health care, “We have to tighten up in other areas of government and spend less money.”

The University of Missouri System in a statement said if this reduction goes through, the system would suffer a total of $71 million in state cuts during the past three years. It said this will put $38 million at risk through performance funding.

“We recognize and appreciate the hard work of our elected leaders in addressing the fiscal challenges facing the state. As the largest public institution of higher learning in Missouri, we’ll also contribute our share to address these fiscal challenges,” MU leadership said.

Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, said in a statement these budget cuts hinder Missouri’s ability to compete.

“We cannot continue to balance the budget on the backs of students,” Rowden said. “They are the future workers and job creators Missouri desperately needs to cultivate.”

Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, said he is concerned to see another year of double digit budget cuts to higher education.
“I will do everything I can to make sure we fight to restore some of the proposed cuts to make sure we can reduce those cuts,” Kendrick said.

However, he did not provide a clear solution to help balance the budget.

“Across the board unfortunately we’re scraping the bottom on our public funding, so there’s just not a lot of fat left in the budget,” Kendrick said. “We’re going to dig into the budget and try to get a better understanding of how some money can be moved around to put some money back into higher education.”

Rep. Sara Walsh, R-Ashland, said she understands higher education is important to people in her district. She said she wants time to look through the budget and analyze it before making any decisions.

"It would be nice if it was just a simple as being able to kind of just pull things and have that, but it is a process, so I’m fully engaged in that process and taking input from constituents in the district,” Walsh said.

Walsh said the budget is an ongoing conversation.

“The way that the budget process works is that the books are four feet tall,” Walsh said. “I’m going down and getting hard copies because I want to be able to take notes and actually go through that page by page.”
Higher education is under the chopping block again after Gov. Eric Greitens released his budget plan for the 2019 fiscal year Monday, where he proposed an almost $98 million cut, or 10.8 percent.

While the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will gain almost $55 million in general revenue in Greitens’ proposed budget, the University of Missouri System will be cut by $43 million compared to the appropriation from the previous year.

This news for higher education comes after a $159 million cut the previous fiscal year.

During a press conference unveiling the $28.7 billion budget proposal, Greitens called his budget “common sense” and “conservative.”

“We are not raising taxes on the people of Missouri,” Greitens said. “We told departments to tighten their belts.”

But some lawmakers — who will have final say over the budget — are saying the higher education cuts are too large.

Higher education

While it’s only the beginning of a long process for the budget, Budget Chairman Scott Fitzpatrick, R-Shell Knob, said he doesn’t want further cuts to higher education.
“If we can have some ‘aha’ moments in the budget and figure out if we can save money in certain places, I think there would be a lot of people in the legislature who would prefer to not see higher education cuts,” Fitzpatrick said.

**Fitzpatrick will be meeting with UM System President Mun Choi next week to discuss how the UM System plans to move forward with the governor’s budget.**

Rep. Donna Lichtenegger, R-Cape Girardeau, criticized the governor’s continued attack on higher education.

“Another cut is going to do nothing but hurt our education system,” said Lichtenegger, chairwoman of the House Higher Education Committee. “People are going to start going out of state to colleges because our professors are going to leave — that’s what I fear.”

Sen. Caleb Rowden, R-Columbia, did not respond to requests for comment, but he said in a [Twitter post](https://twitter.com) after the budget was released how the state needs prioritize higher education.

“We cannot continue to balance the budget on the backs of students; they are the future workers and job creators Missouri desperately needs to cultivate,” Rowden tweeted.

Rep. Kip Kendrick, D-Columbia, said the proposed cuts to higher education is “very concerning” and that “there’s never been a greater need for a highly skilled, well-educated workforce.”

Greitens said that higher education leaders worked with him in preparing the budget, including Choi, and that the UM System identified more than $70 million in savings. The proposed budget also includes an increase in scholarship funding, including Access Missouri Scholarship Program and the A+ Scholarship Program.

MU spokesman Christian Basi said it is too soon to tell how the budget cuts will impact MU and the UM System.

“We understand that the state is facing significant fiscal challenges,” he said. “That’s also why we know that there is consideration to provide some relief related to Senate Bill 389.”

Senate Bill 389, passed in 2007, caps tuition increases for Missouri universities at the rate of inflation.

Repealing that bill “would help by giving us some flexibility in our budget,” Basi said. “So that when we have fiscal crises like these in the future we will have a little bit more flexibility.”

“Regardless of the fate of the bill,” Basi added, “we will always be looking for ways to make college more affordable.”

Lichtenegger said she supports raising tuition caps — even as a temporary resource to colleges and universities in the state. Rowden introduced a bill to raise higher education tuition caps last week.
“Let the universities have a waiver this year on being able to raise their tuition,” Lichtenegger said. “As a Republican, I’m for free enterprise, and I think that people are going to go where they can get the best education.”

When Greitens proposed his budget, he described the cut to higher education funding as being 7.7 percent. That’s because he deducted the amount of money he has already withheld from higher education funding this year when making his comparison. The Missourian is comparing all of the governor’s recommendations to the actual amounts appropriated last year.

K-12 education

Elementary and secondary schools will receive total funding of $6.1 billion. According to Greitens, this is a record high.

One change Greitens wants to see with these additional funds is an increase in teacher pay.

“Teachers in Missouri are not getting the pay they deserve,” Greitens said. “That’s why the 2019 budget increases pay for teachers in state-run schools, and we’re sending more money than ever to our elementary, middle and high schools, and we want to see that our school districts follow our lead and increase teacher pay.”

An additional $2 million will also go to K-12 transportation.

Brent Ghan, deputy executive director of the Missouri School Boards’ Association, said he was pleased with the governor’s proposed funding increase for K-12 education, but noted a continued trend in cuts for school transportation.

“Over the past few years, we have seen nothing but cuts to school transportation which is a significant cost for school districts,” he said. “It definitely puts a burden on the local budgets for school districts because we’ve got to get the kids to school somehow, so that’s a challenge, but the overall (increase) is a positive.”

Ghan said the overall impact of the proposal will vary across the state depending on how dependent a school district is on state funds.

“For those districts that don’t depend a lot on foundation formula funding, transportation could put a strain on their budgets, so it’s kind of a mixed bag,” he said.

Other highlights

The budget also includes funding for programs that support Missouri’s vulnerable children. There is a more than $11.6 million increase in total child welfare spending compared to appropriations from the previous year.

Among other recommendations, Greitens’ proposal includes a $162.8 million in new funding for construction and maintaining state bridges and road systems. The budget also includes $25
million in new funding to establish a Jobs and Infrastructure Fund so local governments can match funding to infrastructure projects.

In April 2017, Greitens proposed a plan to equip every school in Missouri with access to broadband internet with the aid of $6 million in state funding and $39 million in federal funding, according to previous Missourian reporting. Greitens said that this effort will continue this year with another $6 million.

Greitens also proposed a pay increase for some state workers.

If a civil service reform is passed by the end of the session, state employees who make $50,000 a year or less will also get an increase in pay of $650. In addition, “we are going to invest an additional $61.2 million in state employee health care, we are fully funding the contribution to state employee pensions at $14.2 million,” Greitens said.

Among the areas where Greitens believes money can be saved is Medicaid. One of the cuts he is proposing is $40 million in “cost containment initiatives” which he said would not involve cutting services.

“The state of Missouri spends more money on healthcare than we do on K-12 education, community colleges, technical colleges, domestic violence shelters, veterans programs, our judicial system, public safety and our corrections system combined. That massive spending increase on healthcare means we have to tighten up our other areas of government and spend less money,” Greitens said.

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

**Messenger: Don't let Greitens swipe left on Missouri college funding**

Dear Claudia,

Because of your recent elevation as one of the most famous college students in Missouri, I thought you might be able to help me.

Last week, of course, you became an internet sensation after a fellow Missouri State University student emailed every Claudia on campus to try to find you. It seems he saw your profile on the
dating app Tinder, and he swiped left, which dismisses your information. Turns out, he was smitten and meant to swipe right.

You posted his email on your Twitter account and it went viral. But, I read, you also wrote him back. You plan to go get doughnuts on your first date. Good for you.

Here’s something I hope you and the young man talk about:

On the same day you found each other, Gov. Eric Greitens made it likely that your college tuition is about to go up. I am assuming you’ve heard of the governor. MSU has a pretty robust public affairs program, and, besides, he’s been in the news a lot lately, with his admission of an affair, and an ongoing criminal investigation into whether any crimes were committed in relation to that affair.

I’m not sure if the governor ever used Tinder, but he is pretty smartphone savvy. He has used another app called Confide, which erases text messages after they are read. He’s under investigation for that, too.

But I digress.

On Monday, the governor announced his proposed budget for the next fiscal year in Missouri. He cuts about $70 million in spending for the state’s colleges and universities. This comes on top of a cut of about 9 percent in state funding last year.

Greitens is not the first governor to cut higher education funding. In fact, in Missouri and many other states, cutting such funding has been a trend for more than two decades. Here’s a thought: If your parents went to college, ask them what they paid in tuition.

**Twenty years ago, tuition at the University of Missouri-Columbia was about $3,000 a year. State funding for Missouri’s public colleges and universities — your school was called Southwest Missouri State University at the time — was about the same as it is now.**

The result of not letting that spending keep pace with growth and inflation is obvious.

Tuition is going up, and up and up.

In the coming few years, it’s going to get worse in Missouri. If you pay your own tuition, you’re going to feel it. If your parents pay, you might want to let them know what’s coming.

In short, the governor is just not that into you.

The reason that Greitens, and other governors and legislators in Missouri before him have allowed this to happen is that they’re tax averse. They have adopted a political philosophy that
says that taxes are evil, regardless of the state’s commitment to provide for the health and welfare of its citizens.

This year, that tax aversion has created the most delicious of ironies.

The governor says he has plans to cut Missouri taxes even more, while at the same time planning to take out a $250 million loan to help the state pay back tax refunds to residents more quickly. In other words, the state can’t really afford to pay its bills, but it’s going to enact new policies that will make it even harder to pay its bills in the future.

That’s the reality your parents will soon face, particularly if you have any younger brothers and sisters who plan to go to college. The governor and any lawmakers who happen to support his plans to cut college funding won’t say this, but what they are doing is effectively passing on a massive tax increase to middle class parents.

When tuition rises, parents have a choice: Pay the bill or face the reality that their children might not get an education. A few years ago, when my son was in college, we ended up taking out loans to pay his tuition. That money then couldn’t be spent on the kinds of things — new cars, appliances, house repairs — that otherwise could feed economic growth.

Think of Missouri’s budget like a doughnut. In the middle is an emptiness caused by the lack of investment that could make universities strong, reduce tuition, build roads, provide health care to those who need it and raises to the lowest-paid state employees in the country.

Instead of filling that hole, Greitens wants to eat more of the doughnut.

It’s a shame. Anyway, I’m hoping you can share some of this information with your fellow Claudias and other Missouri college students. Let them know that the governor of Missouri is swiping left on your future.

And this time, it’s no mistake.

Sincerely, Tony Messenger
University of Missouri to offer tax filing assistance

By: Tribune Staff

Generated by News Bureau press release: Free tax preparation help available at Mizzou

The University of Missouri will again offer Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, with students, faculty and staff from the Personal Financial Planning Department in the College of Human Environmental Sciences aiding the public in tax form preparation.

The project is a joint effort of the department, the School of Law and University Extension, according to a news release.

The services will be available 3:30 to 7 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturdays in Room 162 of Stanley Hall; 4:15 to 7:15 p.m. Mondays in Room 005 of Cornell Hall and 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays at the Family Impact Center, 105 E. Ash St.

Students, faculty and staff who have been through IRS training and certification will provide the tax help. The program is part of an IRS program to provide free tax help to low- and moderate-income households. In 2017, the university provided tax assistance to 10,000 Missourians, including 2,000 at the MU campus sites, the university said in the news release.

MU to open two income tax assistance sites

By Daniel Konstantinovic

MU will open two Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites on campus from Tuesday through April 17.

The two sites will open as part of the larger, IRS-sponsored VITA program, which provides tax preparation assistance to low- to moderate-income level homes, according to a news release from
the MU News Bureau. There will be an additional site in downtown Columbia as well as sites throughout the state.

The MU locations, which are open every tax season and run by MU faculty, staff and students from the personal financial planning department in the College of Human Environmental Sciences and School of Law, will provide free tax return preparation for Missourians who qualify for the program. All student volunteers are IRS-trained and certified, according to the release.

The two MU sites are in the Office for Financial Success, room 162 of Stanley Hall, and room 005 of Cornell Hall, and will operate at different hours. The Stanley Hall site will be open from 3:30 to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. The Cornell Hall site will be open from 4:15 to 7:45 p.m. every Monday.

COLUMBIA DAILY TRIBUNE

Look for savings, find it

The following editorial first appeared in the St. Joseph News-Press.

A recent focus on cost-savings in vehicle fleets managed by the state of Missouri should be a lesson for government at every level.

Millions of tax dollars will be saved or repurposed annually thanks to this effort that required little more than direction from the top, a focus on efficiencies and a realistic assessment of what expenses truly could be justified.

The Office of Administration announced earlier this month more than $520,000 in potential savings through a reduction of 30 vehicles from 170 in a consolidated pool for Jefferson City-based workers.

The University of Missouri System then said it would update policies and implement cost-cutting measures for its vehicle fleet, which could generate savings of $1.5 million to $2 million.

A few days later, officials said they had achieved another $2.2 million in savings by reducing the vehicle fleet for the Department of Natural Resources for fiscal year 2018. Officials said the cut amounted to 86 government vehicles, or about 14 percent of the department’s fleet.

Importantly, officials contend all of the proposed savings can be achieved without sacrificing service levels in the affected employee groups. In some cases, the cuts were as simple as determining how many vehicles were needed on any given day.
What prompted this success? A year ago, Gov. Eric Greitens appointed Drew Erdmann to become the state’s first chief operating officer to focus on eliminating unneeded regulations and seeking cost efficiencies. Erdmann then convened a task force on management of the vehicle fleets to look at costs, safety and other possible improvements.

The task force included both state officials and industry experts from entities including Ameren, AT&T, Enterprise Holdings, Ford Motor Co., Hogan Transportation, Kansas City Power & Light, McKinsey & Company and GPS Insight. All the experts volunteered their time.

Many of those involved praised the joint effort and the willingness of participants to adopt best practices from private industry where appropriate.

We are encouraged by what this means for the state and taxpayers, but also recognize much more work remains to be done. The state spends “approximately $98 million each year to transport state employees for official business,” the task force reported, and is expected to continue to seek ways to drive down these costs.

Meanwhile, government at every other level has similar costs worth similar close examination.

A recent focus on cost-savings in vehicle fleets managed by the state of Missouri should be a lesson for government at every level.

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Meanwhile, government at every other level has similar costs worth similar close examination.

Northwest Medical Isotopes closer to coming to Columbia

By Sten Spinella

Northwest Medical Isotopes (NWMI) is one step closer to building a production plant in Columbia.

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission heard testimony Tuesday regarding Northwest Medical Isotopes’ application for a construction permit. The hearing signals that the commission is approaching its final decision on whether NWMI can build in Columbia.

The proceedings were concerned primarily with the Atomic Energy Act, which, according to the EPA’s website, was put in place to advocate “utilization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes to the maximum extent consistent with the common defense and security and with the health and safety of the public.”

NWMI produces Molybdenum-99, which is used as a radioactive tracer to detect diseases in bone, kidney, heart and lungs. The company is seeking approval to erect a medical radioisotope production facility in Columbia’s Discovery Ridge Research Park.

NWMI announced its intention to build in Discovery Park in 2014. Originally, NWMI expected to be up and operating by 2016, but the application process has taken longer than expected. A series of studies and evidentiary hearings in conjunction with the nuclear commission, including a 2016 review that determined building would have minimal environmental impact, has
prolonged the launch date to 2020, commission Chairwoman Kristine Svinicki said in the hearing.

“It was going to be a long-term process because of the application process they had to go through,” Bernie Andrews, executive vice president of Columbia and Boone County’s Regional Economic Development Inc., said. “It’s taken longer than we expected, but we’re making progress.”

The plant would bring about 75-85 high-paying jobs to Columbia.

During the hearing, NWMI CEO Nicholas Fowler and Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Haass expressed their desire to be a safe, homegrown source of Mo-99.

“The aspiration of the University of Missouri and Northwest Medical Isotopes is that this research park become an ecosystem, so to speak, of radioisotope production,” Fowler said.

Fowler reiterated NWMI’s attraction to Columbia, emphasizing the location in the center of the U.S., its proximity to MU and its research reactor make the city “an ideal location for the radioisotope production facility.”

Fowler said the plant would be located at the entrance of the Discovery Ridge Research Park on about 7.4 acres.

“This site has been used for generations in agricultural production,” he said. “It has no water features. It is determined to have no threatened or endangered species and no historical or cultural resources have been identified to date.”

Haass and Fowler assured the commission that they’d met with all applicable parties during their internal review, including business, civic, Native American and university groups.

During the hearing, commission staff members recognized possible drawbacks to allowing NWMI to build in Columbia, such as environmental risks and possible negative changes to MU’s Discovery Park, but they acknowledged the U.S.’s general lack of Mo-99 domestic production and NWMI’s persistence in its quest to construct in Columbia.

The commission’s analysis also determined minimal impact on the environment, endangered species and history, specifically in terms of nearby Native American tribes, which led to the NRC’s green lighting the plant’s construction in Columbia.

Svinicki ended the hearing with a promise to resolve NWMI’s application soon.

“As I mentioned this morning, the panel expects to issue a final decision shortly with respect to the complexity of the issues,” Svinicki said.
Survey reports recent MU graduate success in career outcomes

Story resulted from MU News Bureau release: Mizzou’s ‘successful career outcomes’ rate of 90.4% is significantly above peer average

By GALEN BACHARIER

An MU survey regarding career outcomes for recent graduates conducted in December found that 90.4 percent of graduates reportedly held positions in employment, public service, military or postgraduate education.

Graduates from the classes of fall 2016, spring 2017 and summer 2017 were surveyed. The 90.4 percent rate outpaces several peer groups that the university uses as a barometer for success, such as the Association of American Universities public institutions’ 75.6 percent and the Southeastern Conference institutions’ 75.5 percent, according to an MU News Bureau release.

“We’re here to prepare students to be able to secure meaningful opportunities once they get finished,” Jim Spain, vice provost of undergraduate studies, said. “Nine out of ten places us well above average for all the peer groups we compare ourselves with, and we continue to have more employers coming to Mizzou.”

The survey also revealed that 74.1 percent of recent graduates have found employment, with 66.1 percent of them employed full time — also higher than the rates for peer groups. Almost 76 percent of recent graduates took part in the survey, which was distributed at several different increments; one month prior to graduation, at graduation, three months after graduation, six months after graduation and one year after graduation.

The survey was graded according to the national standard set by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, and the university used the vendor GradLeaders to produce the survey, creating a standardized platform.

“Most departments had their own homegrown surveys, but if we’re going to report and aggregate this data, it needs to be a bit more centralized for collection,” said Amanda Nell, senior student service coordinator for the Career Center, who helped gather data.

The Career Center worked with Spain to ensure that all departments, or “units,” on campus were working with the same tools and data.
“Our role was to coordinate the campus effort, because we all have to report our data to the UM System, and the UM System reports our data to the state of Missouri,” Nell said.

Although the results are encouraging for the university, Spain believes there are still improvements to be made — specifically regarding what MU is actually doing to help those graduates that have yet to find success.

“We didn’t do anything intentional as an institution to say, ‘We need to connect you with this resource, with this person,’” Spain said. “We’re at 90.4 percent, nine out of 10, and we want it to be 95 percent, so what are we going to do to help students find that post-graduate career? Doing things that intentionally support and help students reach that outcome, and we’ll make an investment in that.”

Spain added that those measures would include contacting MU alumni, potential employers and faculty to help with employment and graduate school entry.

The survey in its current form began last year, which was the first instance of the university using a nationally standardized platform. It came about as a result of the state of Missouri establishing immediate post-graduate success as one of its funding metrics — this is set to begin in fiscal year 2019, Nell said.

The university conducted a similar survey in the early 2000s called the “destination study,” but due to several university departments conducting competing surveys of their own, it was discontinued, Nell said.

“It was a campus-wide survey, but some of the academic units were doing their own exit survey, so it was a competing effort,” Nell said. “So the university decided their response rate wasn’t great and let the academic units handle it. Some units have been doing their surveys for a long time, and some units didn’t. Our role was to get everyone on the same page, which took several months.”

The university hopes to use the survey to improve future career efforts for students and to ensure graduates have proper opportunities.

“We don’t want a student to invest four years here, get their degree and then not have an opportunity that they’re really excited about,” Spain said. “A college degree is a significant financial investment and a significant investment of four years of your life. I want it to be worth something; we need it to be worth something. That’s our focus.”
Changes to net neutrality concern many at MU

MU communications law professor Sandy Davidson: “A basic question is do you trust market forces more or government regulation more?”

By WILLIAM SKIPWORTH

While MU students enjoyed their much-needed break from school, controversial changes were made to regulatory laws regarding the internet. On Dec. 14th, net neutrality, a regulatory status that guarantees equal access to all sites on the internet, was revoked by a vote from the FCC, led by chairman Ajit Pai.

Opponents fear this decision will allow internet providers to discriminate which websites consumers will get the best access to based on which websites pay more money, or based on what consumers themselves pay for.

The revocation left many around the country frustrated, including some MU students.

“I don’t necessarily trust that companies are going to put what their consumers want over their profit margins,” junior biology major Jacob Stockton said.

His concerns also extend to how this may affect him as a student.

“It may raise costs for the university to have access to materials, but then that could also raise costs for the student,” he continued. “Even subscription-based stuff like a lot of the Mastering software and Pearson and all that.”

Lauren Spear, a sophomore journalism major shared a similar sentiment.

“I think we should have a right to access and have net neutrality, especially for educational purposes,” she said.

Sandy Davidson, a communications law professor at the Missouri School of Journalism has spoken at length about this issue.

“A big question is this: Who do you trust more to do this expansion? The government with all of its regulations? Or businesses with their profit motives?” She wrote in a piece for The Columbia Missourian.

In her view, the debate lies between two opposing viewpoints. First, there are the supporters of removing neutrality who believe the market will ensure consumers get the best internet because
it is in the company's best interest. On the other hand, proponents of net neutrality believe that because there still may be situations where what is best for the consumer isn’t always best for corporations, it is best for the government to regulate the internet.

“You have two conflicting views,” Davidson said. “If Ajit Pai is correct, unleashing market forces will lead to enhanced products and a better internet experience. If you take the opposite viewpoint and you're really concerned about net neutrality, you might be concerned that some voices will be throttled or some might be blocked.”

As for which view Davidson takes herself, she believes it’s difficult to foresee which prediction will prevail.

“I’m mistrustful of business at times because I think if you unleash market influences sometimes what you’re talking about is basically trying to get advantages over your competitors and then things could go wrong, [but] to some people, the idea of big government worries them,” she said.

Although, Davidson has her own ideas about how the internet could be run.

“If I controlled the universe, I would like this country to consider broadband cable as just part of our basic infrastructure like highways, or like electricity,” Davidson said. “So if it’s not economically viable for a company to take broadband out to an area, perhaps that would be a place to have government help.”

However, Davidson doesn’t rule out the possibility that these regulatory changes won’t be reversed in the future.

“I want to be optimistic that if the vision of enhanced internet experiences proves wrong and we do get discrimination and blocking, then the FCC might rethink another vote...say no, we’re going back,” she said.

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**U. of Rochester Faculty Postpones Vote on Censuring Professor Over Sex With Students**

NO MU MENTION

By KATHERINE MANGAN

The University of Rochester’s Faculty Senate postponed a vote on Tuesday on whether to censure a professor over his "inappropriate" and "sexualized" behavior with female students.
The decision came at the end of a tense, two-hour meeting in which more than a dozen people weighed in on whether the professor, T. Florian Jaeger, deserved to be censured.

The testimony and discussion will continue at a meeting next month.

Two weeks ago, an independent investigator cleared Mr. Jaeger, a member of the department of brain and cognitive sciences, of violating university policies on sexual misconduct that were in place at the time of the behavior in question.

The investigator’s report was the third to find that while his actions may have been inappropriate, unprofessional, and offensive, they did not meet the legal threshold for sexual harassment.

That’s not to say his behavior was morally or socially acceptable, wrote Mary Jo White, a former federal prosecutor and partner in the law firm of Debevoise and Plimpton who led the investigation.

The question before the Faculty Senate on Tuesday was whether Mr. Jaeger, who is on paid leave, should be held to a higher standard than the strictly legal one the law firm and the university relied on. The faculty handbook, the motion said, allows the Board of Trustees to revoke a professor’s tenure for "moral conduct unbefitting the position" or for "failure to discharge responsibly his or her fundamental obligations as a teacher." According to the motion that was posted for discussion, Mr. Jaeger committed both, repeatedly, over a number of years. It accused him of engaging in "inappropriate and unprofessional sexual or sexualized behavior in his interactions with students."

That conduct, the independent report said, included flirting, using sexualized language, and otherwise blurring the boundaries between professor and student. He also engaged in consensual sexual relationships with four current, former, or prospective students between 2007 and 2011, a time when Rochester’s policy strongly discouraged — but did not ban — such relationships.

In 2014 the policy was strengthened to prohibit them when they involve undergraduate or graduate students over whom a professor has academic authority. The independent review recommended that those bans should be extended further, to include any professors and students in the same department.

The idea that the sexual conduct was consensual is suspect, the motion said, because of the asymmetry in power between students and faculty members. Mr. Jaeger had academic authority over two of the students with whom he had sexual relations, according to the censure motion.

The faculty handbook cautions that "such relationships, even when consensual, are problematic because they may result in favoritism or the perception of favoritism which imperils the integrity of the educational environment."

Story continues.
The Pressure on Provosts

NO MU MENTION

By SCOTT JASCHIK

Provosts are generally confident of free speech rights at their own colleges and universities, but many are worried about the situation more broadly in higher education, according to the 2018 Inside Higher Ed Survey of College and University Chief Academic Officers, conducted by Gallup and answered by 516 provosts or chief academic officers.

The survey comes at a time of intense debate in higher education and in American society over whether colleges and their students respect the principles of free speech. The survey also comes after a year in which many faculty members -- many of them relatively junior in their careers and members of minority groups -- found themselves under attack. A majority of provosts believe that conservative politicians and websites are unfairly condemning these professors.

Other highlights of the survey include:

- Most provosts believe that the academic health of their institutions remains strong; that level of confidence hasn't changed much in recent years.

- Chief academic officers are strong supporters of the liberal arts, but many are pessimistic about the future of liberal arts programs and liberal arts colleges.

- Most CAOs believe their institutions are working hard to promote civic engagement and civil discourse on their campuses. But most also say this is harder because of the current political climate.

- While a majority of provosts believe that students of all political views feel welcome in classrooms, they are more likely to say that about liberal students and white students.

- Most provosts believe that faculty members should not profit from assigning their own textbooks, but only a minority of colleges ban the practice.

- More provosts than in the past see value in competency-based education, but support remains stronger in public than in private higher education.
Free Speech and Academic Freedom

The last academic year has seen a national debate over free speech on campus, set off by the shouting down of Charles Murray by students at Middlebury College in March (at right), but extending to many other incidents, involving such speakers as Milo Yiannopoulos, the conservative pundit, and Richard Spencer, the white supremacist. Many inside and outside academe have questioned whether colleges have appropriately stressed the value of free expression.

In general provosts said that they believed principles of free expression -- related to speaking invitations and respect for speakers -- were solid on their campuses. But as the data below show, significant minorities of provosts had doubts about whether invitations were being extended across the political spectrum. And provosts were nearly uniformly confident of the respect that would be accorded to liberal speakers, but not quite as certain about the respect accorded to conservative speakers.

While provosts were generally supportive of free speech rights, they were divided on the question of whether colleges should ever interfere in invitations extended to speakers.

Story continues.