Spectrum

Consultants recommend cost cuts at hospitals

University of Missouri health care officials said at the Sept. 14 Board of Curators meeting that they hope to have short-term plans in place to cut operational costs by October and plans for long-term operational changes in place by early next year. While administrators did not rule out employee layoffs, they said it would be an action of last resort.

"It is not possible to guarantee that there will not be an involuntary reduction in jobs," said University of Missouri Health CARE Chief Operating Officer John O'Shaughnessy. "But it is our last alternative."

In March hospital officials projected an end-of-year loss for the Health Sciences Center in Fiscal Year 2000 of $22 million.

O'Shaughnessy said that the hospital system hasn't had an increase in patient activity but has had an 8.3 percent increase in operating expenses. If the trend continues, hospital administrators project the operating deficit could reach as high as $80 million within the next three years if nothing is done. O'Shaughnessy said actions being considered by hospital officials are intended to cut expenses and prevent the deficit from growing any larger.

In the short term, there will be improvements in operations stemming from "the top down," O'Shaughnessy said. Such improvements may include elimination of duplicative processes and more efficient ordering of materials and supplies. He said as much as $3 million might be saved if materials management were centralized.

As an example of eliminating duplication, O'Shaughnessy noted the suspension of obstetrics operations at Columbia Regional Hospital. All 19 staff members in the obstetrics program will be offered other positions within the health system.

In the long-term, hospital officials are working with consultants from Johnson and Johnson to streamline overall operations.

In an effort to ensure a feeling of ownership among faculty and staff, more than 400 staff members comprise 47 work teams that are engaged in a grassroots process of reorganization. Despite outside assistance from consultants, the process "is truly ours," O'Shaughnessy said. There have been 19 planning sessions held with employees so far, and there are plans for 29 more by Oct. 1.

The overall goal of the operations redesign process is cutting costs while at the same time maintaining or enhancing quality patient care and service.

Chief Executive Officer Daniel Winship told the Board that the hospital hopes to stem financial losses this fiscal year and operate with a 6 percent positive margin by the end of Fiscal Year 2002.

In other business, hospital officials announced a new identity campaign for the University hospital system. The system will henceforth be known as University of Missouri Health Care. The name will be used for all components of the system, including clinics and management affiliations.

Winship also announced the arrival of Dr. William Crist as the new dean of the UM-Columbia School of Medicine. Crist comes to UM-Columbia from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., where he was a professor of pediatrics and chair of the Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine. He received his bachelor's degree from Central Methodist College in Fayette and graduated from the UM-Columbia School of Medicine in 1969.

UM campuses require faculty to demonstrate language proficiency

Stephen Lehmkuhle

At the Sept. 14 Board of Curators meeting at UM-Columbia, represen-tatives of the four University of Missouri campuses and Vice President for Academic Affairs Stephen Lehmkuhle apprised the Board of Curators of progress and plans regarding English Language Proficiency among faculty.

Lehmkuhle told the Board that results from student evaluations and a March System-wide survey indicate that student concerns with instructors' ability to communicate are more complex than whether professors are proficient in English. He said evidence suggests that a small number of instructors — both primary and non-primary English speakers — receive unfavorable evaluations for communication.

The surveys suggest that the majority of the communication problems are concentrated in a few academic departments, indicating that certain disciplines or types of courses may be a significant factor. In some instances, student evaluations indicate that instructors receive low scores in some classroom settings and high scores in others.

This suggests that, in some cases, the problem may be related to the complexity of the material being taught, rather than with the teaching style of the professor. The findings further suggest that rather than a language issue, the problem may sometimes be a teaching and learning issue that can be isolated and corrected.

Solutions for addressing the problems may include adjusting teaching assignments to take advantage of instructors' strengths and adopting a more learner-centered approach rather than teacher-centered approach to learning.

Taking these findings into account, the four campuses proposed action plans primarily focused on identifying problems and at the same time making students better informed of their options.

University of Missouri-Columbia Provost Brady Deaton outlined several steps in an action plan geared to ensure better communication between faculty and students. Plans include language assessment, conversational English classes and individualized plans for improving communication skills. Students will be apprised of procedures to alert department chairs to perceived problems. Students also will be informed of the advantages of taking classes from non-primary English speakers. Deaton said steps will be taken to assess communication improvement, and English language screening will be improved.

" Evidence suggests that a small number of instructors — both primary and non-primary English speakers — receive unfavorable evaluations for communication."

As another step, a mentoring process will be installed for all new professors. Deaton said if at any time a department chair receives a complaint, a faculty member will visit the class to assess the situation. In some situations, teaching assignments may be changed. He stressed a desire to handle problems on a case-by-case basis.

University of Missouri-Kansas City Provost Marjorie Smelstor reported that UMKC already has strong English language proficiency policies in place. A form is included in every UMKC hiring package to evaluate potential employees for their English proficiency. Instructors in need of further assistance may have to take a course at UMKC's Applied Language Institute, paid for by the instructor's department.

Smelstor outlined progress benchmarks for two classes where problems had been identified. She said administrators hoped to see a drop in dissatisfaction in biology classes from 4 percent to 2 percent. In chemistry, where the dissatisfaction rate is only 2 percent, Smelstor said the goal is to maintain that level.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis has outlined a plan in which any professor with less than 90 percent communication approval on student evaluations will be counseled on an individual basis. The University of Missouri-Rolla will send letters to students in news publications and in the Family Guidebook which will stipulate that English will not be a primary language for many faculty members.

University of Missouri-Columbia seniors Stacy Henry and Roger Johnson, both members of Associated Students of the University of Missouri (ASUM), asked the Board to consider several solutions, including a System-wide message to be placed on all syllabi informing students of options if they feel they are suffering from a communication problem. Questioning whether younger students have the wherewithal to complain to department chairs about communication problems, Henry and Johnson asked for stronger language screening practices for professors.

They said anonymous Web sites are viewed with suspicion by students and probably would not be used regularly. Henry dismissed the notion of cultural insensitivity on the part of students calling for improvements in English language proficiency. She also questioned whether students were mistaking the difficulty of a class for communication problems. "Clear communication is *most* crucial in hard classes," she said.

The office of Academic affairs will hold another System-wide survey in 2001 to monitor progress on the issue.

UM developing mediation service to improve working environment

Paula Short

Representatives from the four UM campuses, working with the UM System Academic Affairs Office, have developed guidelines for a Campus Mediation Service to provide an informal and effective means for resolving disputes between faculty and staff. As a result, President Manuel Pacheco has issued Executive Order 30 establishing the Campus Mediation Service. "A campus mediation service will enhance the climate on each campus by providing an informal means of problem resolution," said Paula Short, associate vice president for academic affairs.

She said low morale and a negative working climate could result when disputes involving faculty and staff go unresolved. In some cases, unresolved conflicts lead to formal grievance proceedings or costly, protracted lawsuits. In other instances there are no procedures in place to help the disputing parties resolve their conflicts, particularly during early stages of the conflict.

"The creation of a campus mediation service provides a tool to each campus for addressing disputes at early stages and helps improve and sustain a positive working environment on the UM campuses," Short said.

As part of the program, a trained mediator will work with the disputing parties to help them clarify their issues and interests, open lines of communication, and develop better working relationships for both faculty and staff. The mediator will have no authority to impose a settlement. Rather, parties will be encouraged to seek solutions that meet their respective needs.

According to Short, campus mediation services will be confidential to the extent allowed by law. "It is a flexible, informal mediation process with no relationship to the formal grievance process," she said. "The use of the mediator service by either faculty or staff to resolve problems and disputes is strictly voluntary."

By using mediation services, both types of dispute can be resolved and lengthy, costly litigious proceedings can be avoided. Informal mediation serves to resolve problems and disputes to the mutual satisfaction of both parties.

"Otherwise, these disputes tend to take root and mature until each party becomes entrenched in her or his position," Short said. "Once entrenched, the only alternative to either party is to become involved in an arduous grievance process."

To operate the Campus Mediation Service, each campus has identified a coordinator. Approximately 12 faculty and staff volunteers, representing a diverse level of academic levels as well as racial and ethnic backgrounds, will be selected to serve as mediators. Mediators can be active or retired faculty, administrators or staff members.

The mediators identified by each campus will attend a three-day training session at the nationally-recognized Dispute Resolution Center at UM-Columbia.

Carnegie classifications revised

Manuel T. Pacheco

UM System President Manuel T. Pacheco reported to the Board of Curators Sept. 14 on recent revisions to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. The Classification is used to describe the commonalities and differences among colleges and universities nationwide.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching announced the changes in the classification system in August. Some critics of the old classification categories said the system gave too much weight to institutions' research and the amount of federal grants they received at the expense of other aspects of their mission, such as teaching and research.

The revised classification focuses on the number and type of degrees an institution awards, rather than on research or selectivity in admissions, Pacheco said. "Carnegie also consolidated groupings of institutions that grant doctoral degrees and moved the classification system's emphasis away from reliance on research funds as a way to rank colleges," Pacheco said.

Institutions that award doctoral degrees have been divided into two categories, down from four previously.

The categories are based on the number of degrees awarded in a given set of disciplines. Institutions that award 50 doctorates a year in at least 15 disciplines fall in the category "Doctoral Extensive." UM-Columbia falls in this category.

Institutions that grant at least 10 doctorates annually in three or more disciplines, or at least 20 doctoral degrees per year overall, are categorized as "Doctoral Intensive," and include UM-Kansas City, UM-Rolla and UM-St. Louis.

"I believe the Carnegie Foundation's action is a positive move away from a hierarchical classification system and toward one that is more descriptive in configuration," Pacheco said.

Pacheco said the new system will be prove to be a step in the right direction if it is successful in discouraging institutions from viewing the classification as a tool for ranking colleges and universities.

"The revised system need not alter a research institution's aspirations toward achieving greater productivity or quality from its research programs. In that context, I believe the University of Missouri is on the right path," Pacheco said.

Policy approved for acceptable use of computer resources

Ralph Caruso

The UM Board of Curators approved revisions Sept. 14 to the Collected Rules and Regulations to add a policy addressing acceptable use of the University's computer resources. "The intent of the policy is to ensure that computer resources are available to students, faculty and staff to support instruction, research and service," said Ralph Caruso, UM vice president for information systems.

Use of computers and networks continues to grow at exponential rates. During peak times the University is experiencing maximum use of its network resources. Before the new policy was approved, each campus had different acceptable use policies intended primarily for students. While incidental personal use is allowed under the policy, excessive personal use of the resource is not acceptable.

"New file sharing technologies such as Napster and Gnutella that allow users to swap audio, text and video files over the network are examples of use that is not acceptable," Caruso said.

The intent of these policies is to provide the computer resource user with information on the University's policies on inspection of electronic information, the responsibilities of users, the prohibited uses of computer resources and the enforcement mechanisms for these policies.

"These policies serve the purpose of ensuring that University computer resources meet the needs of the community of users who depend upon them," Caruso said.

The policy also states that because of unknown new technologies, the University reserves the right to judge use as appropriate or inappropriate, in accordance with guidelines.

The new policy, printed below, also is available on the Web at www.system.missouri.edu/ums/departments/gc/rules/facilities/110/005.shtml.

This policy applies to all users including faculty, staff, students, and guest users of University of Missouri computer networks, equipment, or connecting resources.

1. UNIVERSITY INSPECTION OF PERSONAL ELECTRONIC INFORMATION — Electronic information on University networks or equipment, including, but not limited to, electronic mail and personal information, is subject to examination by the University where:

1. It is necessary to maintain or improve the functioning of University computing resources;
2. Where there is a suspicion of misconduct under University policies, or suspicion of violation of Federal or State laws; or
3. It is necessary to comply with or verify compliance with Federal or State law.

2. ACCEPTABLE USE GUIDELINES
   1. Responsibilities of users of University Computer Resources:
      1. Respect the intellectual property rights of authors, contributors, and publishers in all media.
      2. Protect user ID, password, and system from unauthorized use.
      3. Adhere to the terms of software licenses and other contracts. Persons loading software on any University computer must adhere to all licensing requirements for the software. Except where allowed by University site licenses, copying software licensed for University use for personal use is a violation of this policy.
      4. Adhere to other University and campus policies, including the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri, and, if applicable, the University Business Policy Manual, Human Resources Manual and policies established for a specific resource.
      5. Adhere to data access policies of the University or those established by law.
      6. Use University computer resources in a manner that is compliant with University policies and State and Federal law.

3. Prohibited Uses of University Computer Resources:
   1. Unauthorized or excessive personal use. Use may be excessive if it overburdens a network, results in substantial use of system capacity, or otherwise subjects the institution to increased costs or risks (employees additionally may be subject to discipline for unauthorized or excessive personal use of computer resources.)
   2. Uses that interfere with the proper functioning of the University's information technology resources.
   3. Uses that unreasonably interfere with the ability of others to make use of University computer resources.
   4. Attempting to gain or gaining unauthorized access to the computer system, or files of another.
   5. Use of University computer resources to infringe the intellectual property rights of others.
   6. Use of University computer resources for personal profit, except as permitted under the University's conflict of interest policy.

4. ENFORCEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY — Violation of the Acceptable Use Policy may result in a denial of access to University computer resources, and those disciplinary actions provided or authorized by the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri.

ASP training begins for new software

Training has begun to prepare employees to use software being installed as part of the Administrative Systems Project (ASP), a comprehensive effort to streamline and improve the University's business processes. To ensure a smooth transition to the new systems, the General Ledger and Payroll switchover dates have been postponed to March 1 and April 1, 2001, respectively.

ASP is holding several three-day "Train-the-Trainer" sessions on the new software for certain employees from the four campuses, Outreach and Extension and system administration. Those employees will train other users on the new programs when they return to their units.

"We use a modular training approach so that our graduates can teach others exactly what each person needs to know to do his or her job, rather than requiring everyone to learn it all," says Christine Mayer, ASP's director of training. "We think users will find it is easier than they think to learn the new systems."

Earlier this month the ASP Steering Committee recommended postponing the date for full implementation of the General Ledger software due to problems encountered during testing. Because the new General Ledger system will be closely linked with Payroll, the implementation date for the latter was moved back as well.

The Committee said that the size of the computer programs, the complexity of integrating them with the University's existing systems, and the need to provide sufficient training time before full implementation made the original deadlines unrealistic.

"Every single component must be functioning correctly before the switchover can be made," noted ASP Executive Director Eileen Heveron. "Because these systems play a critical role in the University's day-to-day business operations the Committee felt that it was prudent to introduce a short delay," she said.

Fund to honor O'Dell

To honor his eight years of service on the University of Missouri System Research Board, the UM Office of Academic Affairs is accepting donations for the Boyd L. O'Dell Biochemistry Fund for graduate students.

Professor Emeritus O'Dell served the University of Missouri beginning in 1946 when he became an assistant professor in the biochemistry department at UM-Columbia. He retired from the University in 1988 but continued an active research program and served on the Research Board. His primary research interests are dietary copper and zinc in metabolism.

Questions or comments should be directed to Sam Kanatzar in the Office of Academic Affairs at 573-882-1714, or by email at kanatzars@umsystem.edu.

Morenet resources available to all UM faculty, staff and students

What are the feeding habits of the New Zealand Kiwi? What is author Kahlil Gibran's mother's maiden name? What was the score of the 1991 Cardinals season opener?

These and thousands of other questions can be answered in the extensive library of information databases available to UM System employees and students through MOREnet's Online Resources.

"One of the wonderful things about the Internet is that it has made sharing vast storehouses of information so easy," said Tony Wening, Director of MOREnet's Higher Education program. "The references found in MOREnet's Online Resources collection is available free to all MOREnet customers. The collection is varied and eclectic —there's something for everyone."

The collection is accessed via MOREnet's Web site at www.more.net, (click on Online Resources) and includes:

- **Grolier Online Reference Collection:** Two of the largest encyclopedias — *Encyclopedia Americana* and *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* (*Academic American Encyclopedia*);
- **EBSCOhost:** An online search and retrieval system for thousands of periodicals — for both adults and children; *Funk & Wagnall's New World Encyclopedia*; *World Almanac for Kids*, and *World Almanac of the USA*;
- **NewsBank:** Three searchable databases provide full text articles from the archives of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Kansas City Star* and News Missouri.
- **Gale Research Databases:** Three collections, DISCovering Authors, DISCovering Science and DISCovering United States History, offer essays, bio-bibliographical information, periodical article abstracts, time lines, maps, and more.

"We plan to add some business-related databases to the collection in January 2001. Corporate profiles, stock-related information and product-related information will be among our additions," Wening said.

MOREnet, part of the UM System, is Missouri's state network providing Internet connectivity and instructional technology training to the state's K-12 schools, colleges and universities, libraries, state government and community networks.

New reward program initiated for faculty

Criteria posted for Faculty Performance Shares Plan

The first year of the Faculty Performance Shares Plan, which was approved by the Board of Curators in June, began Sept. 1. The new program recognizes outstanding faculty performance while providing a unique way to defer taxation of income. It is considered supplemental to awardees' regular compensation for the plan year which runs from Sept. 1, 2000 through Aug. 31, 2001.

Stock option plans to reward outstanding performance have been used in the corporate world for many years. Options to purchase stock at a stated price are granted to employees, who may elect to exercise their options when the stock's price has increased.

According to the Faculty Shares Plan, the University can offer an option to purchase shares in a professionally managed mutual fund that invests in corporate stocks, bonds, and cash-equivalent securities.

The Faculty Performance Shares Plan is an additional compensation tool to recognize exemplary faculty activities and achievements that are critical to the successful implementation of the University System and campus and University Outreach and Extension (UOE) strategic plans.

Specific activities or achievements that will be recognized by each campus and UOE during the following year will be identified on an annual basis. The list of activities and achievements proposed by each campus and UOE will be reviewed and approved by the Plan Committee, the University's general officers, in concurrence with the UM president.

Faculty members can immediately exercise their options and receive cash, or hold the options and exercise them at a later date. The faculty member does not pay taxes on the value of the shares until the options are exercised; at that time the University must pay related payroll taxes. Under the program, mutual fund options may be held by the faculty member for a number of years, which provides, potentially, a significant tax advantage for the faculty member holding the options. The minimum award is $2,000 and the maximum award is $10,000.

Criteria for each campus and specific information about the program can be found at the following Web sites:

UM-Columbia: http://web.missouri.edu/~provost/FPSP.html

UM-Rolla: http://www.mst.edu/~ac-afrs/shares.html

UM-St. Louis: http://www.umsl.edu/services/shares/

UM-Kansas City: http://www.umkc.edu/facultyshares/chletter-01.html

University Outreach & Extension: http://outreach.missouri.edu/about/facshare/index.html

Stephenson praises Board, retirees for work

Dr. Hugh Stephenson Jr.

In his report to curators Sept. 14, Board President Hugh E. Stephenson, Jr., praised the dedication of his colleagues on the Board. He cited the work being done by the executive committee and by committee chairs in the areas of academic affairs, physical facilities, finance, health sciences, information and technology, and resources and planning.

"A great deal of our work is accomplished through these committee activities." Stephenson said.

Stephenson reported that fundraising for the cancer hospital guest house project in Columbia was going well, thanks in large part to a generous $1 million gift from a "deeply caring lady" who he did not identify. In addition, more than 500 people attended a recent fundraiser for the project that he called "highly successful."

Noting that the UM System's voluntary early retirement incentive program had added more than 800 retirees to the rolls as of September 1, Stephenson said the University retirement community now numbers nearly 6,000.

He expressed "profound gratitude" for the years of dedication these retirees expended on behalf of the University. He said he is pleased that senior University officials meet regularly with the System-wide Retiree Council and campus retiree leaders, and encouraged campus officials to find ways to tap this valuable resource.

Stephenson encouraged University officials to renew efforts to commemorate named buildings and facilities with permanent markers. He also called for UM-Columbia to continue cooperative projects with other educational institutions, citing as an example the close relationship UM-Columbia maintains with Stephens College.