

## REGENTS

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Kansas City, Kan. The increases will vary — and some students won't see higher rates — with the biggest boost experienced by new, out-of-state undergraduates at the University of Kansas.

The regents acknowledged concerns that fewer high school graduates can afford to attend state universities as tuition rises each year but said extra funds are necessary to keep programs from slipping. Boosting admission standards at the University of Kansas is designed to improve graduation rates by making sure incoming students are prepared.

"I think this just says, not that we're excluding people, but we're trying to help them succeed and help them financially," said Regent Robba Moran of Manhattan, the wife of U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran. "We don't want students to go to KU and not be successful at a large research institution. Then, that racks up their debt."

Students can now enter any state university by scor-

ing 21 out of 36 points on the ACT college-entrance exam, having a 2.0 GPA in a college prep curriculum or graduating in the top third of their high-school classes. The state plans to change those requirements in fall 2014, so that students must achieve the ACT score and meet one of the other two requirements.

But the new standards for automatic admittance to the University of Kansas would be even more stringent. A student with an ACT score of 21, 22 or 23 would have to earn a 3.25 grade-point average on a 4-point scale in high school. A student who scored 24 or better on the ACT could get in with a 3.0 grade-point average in high school.

According to the university, about 65 percent of its freshman would have hit either mark, and Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little stressed that students who can't will have their applications reviewed individually. In many cases, she said, they'll be admitted and receive guidance on how they can improve their chances of succeeding.

Regents still expect to draft regulations to help flesh out the details of how

the new plan will work. University of Kansas officials believe that not only will a lower percentage of students drop out but that some high achievers will stay in Kansas instead of going out-of-state.

"If we do it right, we're going to raise our profile and increase demand," said Provost Jeffrey Vitter.

The board approved the policy, 8-1, with the only dissenting vote from Regent Janie Perkins, of Garden City, who worried not only about the effects of the higher standards but the university's plans to set a new, Feb. 1 deadline for students who want to be admitted automatically.

"I just feel like it may be a roadblock," she said. "I hope it's not."

The regents were unanimous in backing tuition increases proposed by the state universities but, in what has become an annual ritual, they bemoaned the need to raise the additional funds.

While the University of Kansas' increase for new out-of-state undergraduates is 6.9 percent, about 65 percent of its returning undergraduates are in a tuition compact program that sets a single, guaranteed rate for four years.

## CIA steering arms to Syrian rebels

BY ERIC SCHMITT  
New York Times

WASHINGTON — A small number of CIA officers are operating secretly in southern Turkey, helping allies decide which Syrian opposition fighters across the border will receive arms to fight the Syrian government, U.S. officials and Arab intelligence officers said.

The weapons, including automatic rifles, rocket-propelled grenades, ammunition and some anti-tank weapons, are being funneled mostly across the Turkish border by way of a shadowy network of intermediaries, including Syria's Muslim Brotherhood, and paid for by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, the officials said.

The CIA officers have been in southern Turkey for several weeks, in part to help keep weapons out of the hands of fighters allied with al-Qaida or other terrorist groups, one senior U.S. official said. The Obama administration has said it is not providing arms to the rebels, but it has also acknowledged that Syria's neighbors would do so.

The clandestine intelli-

gence-gathering effort is the most detailed known instance of the limited U.S. support for the military campaign against the Syrian government. It is also part of Washington's attempt to increase the pressure on President Bashar Assad of Syria, who has recently escalated his government's deadly crackdown on civilians and the militias battling his rule.

With Russia blocking more aggressive steps against the Assad government, the U.S. and its allies have instead turned to diplomacy and aiding allied efforts to arm the rebels.

By helping to vet rebel groups, U.S. intelligence operatives in Turkey hope to learn more about a growing, changing opposition network inside of Syria.

"CIA officers are there and they are trying to make new sources and recruit people," said one Arab intelligence official who is briefed regularly by U.S. counterparts. U.S. officials and retired CIA personnel said the administration was also weighing additional assistance to rebels, such as providing satellite imagery and other

detailed intelligence on Syrian troop locations and movements.

Spokesmen for the White House, State Department and CIA would not comment on any intelligence operations supporting the Syrian rebels, some details of which were reported last week by The Wall Street Journal.

## CIVIC

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Journey, a Sedgwick County District Court judge. "It's hard to relate."

He also cites time constraints and economic woes as reasons younger members don't join.

Nancy McArthur Snyder, director of the Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs at Wichita State University, agrees with Journey and also attributes changes in society to the decline in membership.

"What we're finding is people keep redefining community for themselves," Snyder said.

Younger generations can now find community online and through different, newer social outlets, she said.

"They've just grown up differently," she said. "There's more choices available to people."

Snyder thinks it will be difficult for older civic organizations to survive in their traditional forms, and that their futures will depend on leadership.

"(The organizations need) people who will give time and energy to them," Snyder said. "They'll have to reinvent themselves."

Of course, reinventing an organization is easier said than done. And sometimes, not even the older members want to lead.

"Year after year, no one wanted to be an officer," Brown said of the Hypatia Club. "It doesn't sound good, but it's the truth."

### Communities lose

When civic organizations disband, more is lost than the clubhouse and familiar atmosphere for members — contributions to the community also disappear.

Lions Clubs around the world donate time and money to many charitable projects, but they focus on service that assists the blind and visually impaired. The Haysville club, like many Lions Clubs, has donated eyeglasses, raised funds for guide dogs and donated money to libraries for large-print books and to the University of Kansas' KS Lions Eye Clinic and Research Center. They have also provided scholarships to local students and built a shelter house in the Haysville Park.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Rebekahs — a branch of the Odd Fellows — also make donations to many charitable groups and provide thousands of dollars in scholarships and financial aid to students. They are also the largest non-corporate sponsor of the Arthritis Foundation, said JaNell Clark, secretary and past president of the Rebekah Assembly of Kansas.

The financial donations are important for many charities, but the donation of time is equally important.

"(Civic organizations) get people involved in group situations and give someone another outlet to volunteer,"



Bo Rader/The Wichita Eagle

**Downtown Lions Club members welcome one another at a noontime membership meeting Wednesday.**

Clark said.

For Journey, the Lions Club is a way for people to volunteer, and he hopes more people join to do just that.

"It's more than just a bunch of old guys getting together," Journey said. "It's about doing something for your community."

### 'Bucking the trend'

Not all civic organizations are facing such dire straits.

Rotary is one civic organization that is "bucking the trend," Rotary Club of West Wichita president Jody Besthorn said. With 65 members, she said the West Wichita Rotary has a stable and younger membership, compared to some civic groups in the area.

"We have a cross-section of all ages: retirees, mid-career professionals and young professionals looking for a way to get involved," Besthorn said.

Interact, the student version of Rotary, helps introduce Rotary to young people.

"It brings more awareness (of Rotary) to kids and their parents," Besthorn said. "It strengthens the intergenerational connection."

The Downtown Wichita Rotary club also sponsors Rotaract, a Rotary-affiliated club for young professionals, ages 18 to 30. Downtown Rotary president Sheryl Wohlford said that organization helps attract younger members and keep them involved.

"Service organizations have to find a way to keep their members engaged and wanting to do the service projects," Wohlford said. "People's time is valuable. They have to see a connection with the service project."

Derby's Rebekahs is another organization successfully recruiting younger members. The club will initiate five people in July, Clark said.

Clark attributes the success to the lodge's frequent involvement with other community organizations. Community visibility, combined with recruitment programs and advertisements, helps bring in new, younger members to the Derby lodge.

Still, Odd Fellows and Rebekahs lodges are not immune to the membership woes civic organizations face. Clark said Kansas lodges have seen an 8 to 12 percent decline in membership for the

and retaining members the "biggest challenge" facing civic organizations.

"You got to keep it interesting," she said. "Because without members, you don't have a club."

The disbanding of some groups is part of the evolution of civic organizations.

"You reach a point where you have to say, 'We've done good, and it's time for something else to replace us,'" Besthorn said. "There will be things to fill that void, but they will be different."

In Haysville, Journey is waiting to hear the club's decision. Should the club decide to disband, Journey may try to join another nearby Lions Club.

"It's going to be a hole in my life," he said.

As for the Hypatia Club, Brown plans to have lunch with former members but doubts the club will be restarted by younger women.

"Never in a million years" did she imagine the club would one day close, Brown said. "Hypatias were so dedicated and so loyal to one another. At one time, it's my understanding, they had over 200 members."

"I can't tell you how many of the good ones have passed away."

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