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Doctor, Veterinarian Funding Restored

Expansion of doctor and veterinarian training is back on after Nixon's veto upheld.

Story by Erik Potter

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State budget provisions for two MU training programs were restored following the state House of Representative's failure Wednesday to overturn Gov. Jay Nixon's veto of a business and individual income tax cut bill.

Lawmakers fell 15 votes shy of the two-thirds margin needed to override the veto, garnering 94 votes in favor and 67 against, with 15 Republicans joining the Democrats in opposition.

In June, Nixon, BA '78, JD '81, withheld \$400 million from the state budget pending the outcome of the Legislature's veto override attempt. Nixon said the withholdings were necessary because the tax cuts would reduce future revenue if enacted. He estimated the cuts would reduce future revenue by \$800 million when fully phased in.

Among the \$400 million in withholdings were \$10 million in annual funding to expand MU physician's training and start a clinical campus in Springfield, Mo., as well as \$1 million in annual funding to expand MU's large animal veterinarian training. Another \$7 million in MU core funding was slated for withholding over the course of the 2014 fiscal year, which would have forced MU to create a contingency budget plan for increasing revenues, decreasing costs or both.

On Thursday Nixon released \$215 million of the \$400 million he withheld, including all of the money for Mizzou.

For the School of Medicine, that means it can increase enrollment 33 percent, going from 96 students to 104 students next year and jumping to 128 students in 2016. The school is pursuing a mixture of public and private funds to start a clinical campus in Springfield, Mo., in partnership with CoxHealth and Mercy Health Systems, and a new education building in Columbia. The clinical campus, where students will begin the final two years of their medical education, is expected to be ready by 2016 to accommodate next year's eight additional students. Weldon Webb, the school's associate dean for rural health, says he also expects the education building to be open to students in time for the full enrollment expansion in 2016.

The College of Veterinary Medicine plans to expand its large animal veterinarian program by upgrading Middlebush Farm, a 288-acre farm located south of Columbia. Dean Neil Olson said he plans to double

the number of cows on site from 30 to 60 and build a new clinical skills laboratory for large animal care instruction. He also wants to add up to three faculty and additional technicians for the program as well as replace the college's two large-animal ambulance vehicles.

“We are relieved that our budget will not be adversely affected and that we will be able to move forward with expansion of two important programs,” says Mary Jo Banken, MU spokeswoman. “We will now be able to continue educating more doctors ... to fill the shortage of medical professionals in rural Missouri and training more large animal veterinarians to meet the needs of cattle and dairy farmers in treating their livestock.”

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