

Mizzou Weekly

April 15, 2010 Volume 31, No. 27

A budget balancing act



Gov. Jay Nixon, right, chatted with custodians Judy Geotz and David Lee when he visited MU's Reynolds Alumni Center April 7 to discuss his blueprint to "right-size" state government and to close a \$500 million gap in next year's state budget. Shane Epping photo

'Right-sizing'

Gov. Nixon stands by tuition freeze agreement

As the Senate Appropriations Committee worked in Jefferson City to slash \$500 million from next year's state budget, Gov Jay Nixon visited the MU campus April 7 to give an update on his administrations efforts to refocus priorities.

He said that state tax revenues continue to lag even though the economy is slowly improving. Nixon pointed out that tax revenues last month were \$100 million less than in March 2009. "That presents us with a challenge familiar to all hardworking families and businesses across our state. We have to balance the budget, get savings wherever we can and be smart about spending," Nixon said.

The governor said that he would stand by an agreement he made last November with the state's public colleges and universities. That agreement freezes undergraduate, in-state tuition in exchange for the schools accepting a cut in state funding of no more than 5 percent. For MU, that would mean a cut of nearly \$10 million compared to the state appropriation for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30.

That agreement had been called into question a few days earlier when the Senate Appropriations Committee cut an additional \$15 million from higher education. When asked by reporters if that negated his tuition freeze agreement, Nixon said there was still time to work things out.

He pointed out that the House Budget Committee had stuck to his recommendation on higher education funding, and the Senate had not yet begun debating the appropriations committee's recommendation. If necessary, Nixon said, the two legislative bodies could work out their differences when versions of the appropriations bill are reconciled by a joint conference committee.

The governor also said that he applauded a piece of legislation being considered in this session "that will correct an inequity in the amount of scholarship aid for higher education." He was referring to the Access Missouri program, which provides need-based scholarships.

Currently, that program gives almost twice as much in scholarship aid to students attending private schools as it does to public college students. "Needy students deserve the same level of support, no matter where they decide to go to college," Nixon said. In a statement following Nixon's visit, Gary Forsee, president of the University of Missouri System, said he appreciated the governor's and the legislature's work on the 2010-11 fiscal year budget.

"As the budget process has worked its way through the House and Senate in the past couple of weeks, we have been very engaged in representing our value and accountability," he said.

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Faculty facilitators are named for Mizzou Advantage initiative areas

Investment impact

Goal is to increase MU's impact and stature

For the past several years, MU has worked to identify its top five competitive assets and to develop a plan to capitalize on those strengths, collectively known as the Mizzou Advantage.

Provost Brian Foster recently announced the appointments of five Mizzou Advantage faculty facilitators and one education coordinator. These individuals will facilitate interactions, relationships and creative dialogues that will lead to innovative projects in the five competitive areas. The appointments are effective immediately.

"Our competitive assets differentiate us from the biggest, best-resourced universities and allow us to do things they can't do," Foster says. "These facilitators will be responsible for guiding these five strategic areas, encouraging research collaborations, identifying specific grant opportunities and helping to recruit visiting scholars and prominent scientists. This is the time to invest in our resources as our students, the state and the nation will benefit from these collaborations."

Foster has budgeted \$6 million to fund the Mizzou Advantage each year. He hopes this strategic effort will result in greater impact and stature for MU and more opportunities and jobs for Missourians.

The five strategic assets are Food for the Future; Media of the Future; One Health, One Medicine: The Convergence of Human and Animal Health; Sustainable Energy; and Understanding and Managing Disruptive and Transformational Technologies.

The five facilitators are:

- Jo Britt-Rankin (Food for the Future) — Britt-Rankin is associate dean for research and graduate studies in the College of Human Environmental Sciences and associate professor of nutrition and exercise physiology. As an MU Extension faculty member and administrator, she has developed statewide, regional and national networks in the areas of food, nutrition, health and physical activity.
- Charles Davis (Media of the Future) — Davis has served as chair of the School of Journalism's news-editorial department and executive director of MU's Freedom of Information Center. He has been the executive director of the National Freedom of Information Coalition since 2005. His research has studied homeland security and freedom of information issues, and curriculum reform at Moscow State University.
- Carolyn Henry (One Health, One Medicine) — Henry is a professor of oncology with dual appointments in veterinary medicine and medicine. Under her leadership, MU's veterinary oncology program became a charter member in the National Cancer Institute's Comparative Oncology Trials Consortium. Her research focuses on comparative models of human disease and on biomarker discovery and application for cancer screening and diagnosis.
- Cerry Klein (Sustainable Energy) — Klein, professor of industrial and manufacturing systems engineering, is a member of the American Society for Engineering Education, Institute of Industrial Engineers, and the Society of Industrial and Applied Mathematics. His research interests include information systems, entrepreneurship, health care and supply chains.
- Carsten Strathausen (Understanding and Managing Disruptive and Transformational Technologies) — Strathausen, associate professor of German and English and chair of German and Russian studies, has been a faculty member at MU since 1997. His research focuses on the relationship between words and images, the impact of technology on society and new media.

Foster said the five initiatives were defined by the economy, culture and social fabric which are all in the midst of transformational change. Educational programs associated with these initiatives will help students ready themselves for the constantly changing

global marketplace. Initially, the educational programs associated with the initiatives will focus on certificate programs that will provide context for graduates as they pursue their careers.

Foster has appointed LuAnne Roth, who will graduate from MU in May with a doctorate in English, to become the education coordinator of Mizzou Advantage. Roth has been an instructor in MU's English department since 2001 and has taught classes on film and folklore.

She will facilitate development of the certificate programs and courses, which will have a heavy emphasis on problem-based learning, hands-on learning, teamwork and practical experiences outside the classroom. Many of the courses will be cross-listed across department and college boundaries to capture the interdisciplinary ideas that characterize each of the five initiatives and complement existing majors at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

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Staff updated about online SkillSoft training program

E-learning

Online 24/7 access to more than 3,000 courses

At its April 8 meeting, the Staff Advisory Council heard an update on an online learning program that is in the pilot stage throughout the University of Missouri System.

Bonnie Gregg, manager of human resource support services, told the council that the program, provided by SkillSoft, is part of the UM System's commitment to faculty and staff to provide resources for training and professional development. She is one of eight staff members on the project implementation team representing each campus and the System.

Gregg said there are several reasons for looking at e-learning programs. Not only will this help employees develop competencies in various subjects, it also will help departments manage resources, especially travel expenses, since employees can get the training they need either from work or from home.

This program is not a substitute or replacement for instructor-led training courses, Gregg said. "Rather, it is designed to supplement traditional methods and provide greater opportunity for skill development while minimizing demands on our limited training resources."

More than 1,000 employees throughout the UM System are participating in the three-month pilot that ends May 28. They have round-the-clock access to more than 3,000 courses and more than 10,000 books and additional resources such as highly technical topics, software application instruction, business skills development and legal compliance awareness. Gregg said those in the pilot provide feedback on the training, and their evaluation will help to decide whether to offer this type of online learning to employees in the future.

Employees interested in seeing what is available through SkillSoft may call Gregg at 882-4840 or e-mail greggb@missouri.edu (<mailto:greggb@missouri.edu>).

In other business the council discussed:

- Staff Recognition Week, May 17-21. Committee members are planning a week of activities geared around the theme of "Keeping MU Strong for Over 170 Years." Among the events will be the annual staff recognition awards ceremony, the second consecutive showcase of talent, human resource seminars, the chancellor's botanic garden tours, and a farmer's market. Also all week, the council will hold its online auction to raise money for its education award.

Details for the week will be posted online at staffcouncil.missouri.edu (<http://staffcouncil.missouri.edu>).

- Upcoming election. The council seeks nominations for its election to be held this summer. Nominees must be full-time MU campus or Extension staff members who have completed one year of service before being nominated. Elected members will serve a three-year term beginning in September. Self-nominations are accepted. To nominate a staff member, complete the form found at staffcouncil.missouri.edu (<http://staffcouncil.missouri.edu>) and return by May 28 to the council's office at 27 Jesse Hall.

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George Justice will drop ‘interim’ from Grad School job title

Best scholarship

‘Graduate education is central to MU’s missions’

Provost Brian Foster announced last week that George Justice has been appointed as the dean of the MU Graduate School and vice provost for advanced studies. Justice had been serving as interim dean graduate school dean since July 1, following the resignation of Pam Benoit.

“I have appreciated Dr. Justice’s leadership as interim dean here at MU for the past year as well as his leadership nationally — especially with the Council of Graduate Schools,” Foster said. “I’ve been impressed by his accomplishments and positive vision for the Graduate School, and his interest in facilitating a campuswide discussion on the national issues in graduate education. I’m looking forward to having George as a permanent part of our team.”

Before joining the Mizzou faculty in 2002, Justice was a faculty member at Marquette University in Milwaukee and Louisiana State University. Here at MU, he has been director of graduate studies for the Department of English, and assistant and associate dean of the Graduate School.

Justice is the author or editor of numerous essays and books in the fields of 18th century literature and the history of the book. He serves on the membership committee of the Council of Graduate Schools, and has been an editorial consultant for several publishers.

“I am honored to be able to continue leading the Graduate School at MU as dean and vice provost for advanced studies,” Justice says. “Graduate education is not only central to the university’s missions in research, education, service and economic development, but it will increase in importance to the lives of the students we attract here for their advanced studies — Missourians, other Americans and the many international students who are drawn to campus for our outstanding faculty and facilities. I look forward to working with the deans and faculty across the university to sustain and build graduate programs responsive to the best of scholarship in our disciplines and attuned to opportunities for our graduates once they leave MU.”

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Calling all faculty

The spring semester general faculty meeting has been scheduled for 3:30 p.m. Thursday, April 29, in Memorial Union's Wrench Auditorium.

According to a draft agenda for the meeting, Leona Rubin, chair of Faculty Council and associate professor of biomedical sciences, will give an update on the council's work. Former council member Tom Phillips, professor of biological sciences, will report on intellectual property issues in the classroom.

Chancellor Brady Deaton will discuss student enrollment projections, the campus budget and the new Mizzou Advantage initiative.

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Your world begins at home

MU's personal financial planning department in the College of Human Environmental Sciences is hosting a personal finance symposium — “Your Financial World Begins at Home” — at the Reynolds Alumni Center April 21.

The daylong event features a panel of Chinese finance scholars who will discuss what is known about Chinese household finance. Other experts will discuss behavioral finance, the 21st century investment world and a macroeconomic view of the oil industry. For cost and registration information, contact Amy Sanders at 884-5958 or at sandersal@missouri.edu (<mailto:sandersal@missouri.edu>).

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Adventures in education

Jesse Hall will be your destination for family learning and fun April 24 at Mizzou Adventures in Education. Child-friendly activities related to art, engineering, computers, music and science will be available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Jesse Hall rotunda. All the activities are planned and taught by MU graduate students. There will be free Tiger Stripe ice cream for the first 200 kids.

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Coffee beans to biodiesel

MU students recently collected used coffee grounds and turned the oil from them into biodiesel. Their project was part of ongoing research into using alternative feedstocks such as vegetable oils, used cooking oils and gasified shredded tires to produce biodiesel fuel. Biodiesel from these treated feedstocks is fed into diesel test engines to measure performance and efficiency.

The oil in coffee grounds is extracted by a standard method that uses hexane as a solvent. The oil content of spent coffee grounds is almost 14 percent. "The properties of the coffee oil are similar to the properties of soybean oil, the major source of biodiesel," says Bulent Koc, assistant professor of agricultural systems management. Solids remaining after the conversion can be converted to ethanol or used as compost.

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