The Associated Press

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Employees said at least five people who work in the building have been diagnosed with brain tumors in the past eight years.

"The cause of the brain tumors is unknown," said Dr. John Neuberger, epidemiologist at the university's School of Medicine.

Neuberger led a team of researchers who spent a year trying to determine if the 34-year-old building posed health risks. A 21-page report on their efforts was released Friday when Neuberger and other research team members met with about a dozen current and former staff members from Wescoe.

The study recommended that the building's air-handling systems be replaced. Air tests in 2006 detected low levels of formaldehyde, but Wescoe was found to be environmentally safe. A $3 million project to replace the air system on Wescoe's first three floors has begun and will continue into 2009.

The inadequate airflow system didn't cause brain tumors, Neuberger said, but it could cause respiratory problems and eye irritation.

Betty Banks, a retired associate professor of classics, said she and other former staff members didn't have much hope that the system would be fixed because previous attempts have failed.

"There have been so many tries before and it was an in-house operation," she said. "It was going to be a rare day when the university said it allowed people to live and work in substandard conditions for 30 years."

Steve Scannell, an architect in school's design and construction management, said the building's intake air duct was half the size it should be. He said the duct system had been modified sometime in the 1980s to conserve energy.

Don Steeples, vice provost for scholarly support, said the work on the airflow system will force some personnel to move to other offices and cause other disruptions. About 600 people have offices in Wescoe.

"We're going to have to evacuate at least half a floor and possibly a full floor at a time," he said. "This is going to be a fairly good challenge."
Lawrence-bound migrant workers focus of grant

Lawrence (AP) — A group of universities and community colleges has been collaborating in an effort to obtain federal funding for a program to help college-bound children of migrant workers.

Kansas State University will lead the effort, which will also include the University of Kansas, Emporia State University, Garden City Community College and Kansas City, Kan., Community College.

The $2.1 million grant request Kansas State submitted would be for five years, reach 148 students and provide tuition for 12 credit hours per semester and a living stipend during their first year of study at an institute of higher ed.

The collaboration began after the U.S. Department of Education denied the University of Kansas' grant request to continue its College Assistance Migrant Program. The CAMP program had paid tuition for six credit hours and $750 in living expenses per semester for up to 24 students a year.

When the grant renewal was denied, a group of college officials started discussing how to collaborate and provide services throughout the state, Kansas State's Bob Fanning said. Fanning is director of a program that helps children of migrant workers finish high school and assistant director of Kansas State's English as Second Language program.

GCCC already collaborates with K-State on another federally funded program that helps migrants, the High School Equivalency Program, which allows migrant students to attend classes and earn a GED while receiving a stipend to cover some living expenses, but this CAMP program is directed at higher education.

Under the proposal submitted in the spring to the Education Department, Kansas State would house CAMP and contract the service out to other schools with eligible students.

Fanning said at the same time the department denied Kansas' grant, the Education Department renewed a five-year grant for a Kansas State program that targets high school students.

Lynn Bretz, the University of Kansas' director of university communications, said the university wanted to have a strategic plan to continue its program for migrant workers' children, especially as federal funding declines.

Fanning said if the grant was approved, the program would give students more choices.

"We had a number of migrant students that just completed high school and had jobs in the local community. They couldn't leave because they needed the employment," Fanning said. "Now they can attend university while continuing to work."

Staff writer Emily Behlmann contributed to this report.
Kansas Water Congress plans annual session

TOPEKA (HNS) — Urban and rural interests in water policy and new farm water conservation programs will be among topics at the Kansas Water Congress annual conference in early August.

Wichita State University joins the congress, an organization that seeks to develop public consensus on water policy and management, as host of the event Aug. 2 and 3 on the WSU campus.

A main topic this year will be the concept of "public interest" as interpreted by state agencies enforcing Kansas water law and developing future public policy, said Dave Brenn, congress executive director.

University of Kansas water law professor John Peck is scheduled to speak on the issue before leading a panel discussion on Aug. 2.

Other high-profile issues on the conference agenda include water consumption in biofuels production and new farm water conservation programs.

Also slated to speak is David Pope, who recently retired as head of the Kansas Division of Water Resources. Pope will give a retrospective of his work in water regulation.

The acting chief engineer of water resources, David Barfield, also will give a report on the status of litigation between Kansas and Nebraska over Republican River water and an update on other interstate compact issues.

The two-day program will close with a panel of state legislators discussing water policy.

Participants also will tour Wichita’s aquifer recharge project, a groundwater cleanup project and flood and stormwater control programs.

Students earn officers’ commissions

Two southwest Kansas students who just graduated from the University of Kansas were honored as newly commissioned officers in the armed forces during ceremonies coordinated by the Army ROTC.

Greeley County High School graduate Ryan Thomas Dittmer, who earned a bachelor of science of education degree in sport science, is an Army second lieutenant. He is the son of Loren and Beverly Dittmer of Tribune.

Michael Scott Merz, a Garden City High School graduate who earned bachelor of science degrees in physics and engineering, is a Navy ensign. He is the son of David Merz of Garden City.

Army Brig. Gen. Butch Tate of Charlottesville, Va., administered the oath of office to Dittmer and the other KU graduates who were honored, and a friend or family member pinned the lieutenant or ensign rank on the new officers’ shoulders.
Kansas University boosts penalty for illegal downloading of music, movies on campus

LAWRENCE (AP) — In an attempt to deter students from illegally downloading music or movies in University of Kansas student housing, the school has instituted a zero-tolerance policy.

Beginning this fall, university officials said they will deactivate ResNet Network access for students in residence halls if they are notified of a copyright violation and an appeal is denied. Students could still access computers on campus labs and use their university e-mail addresses.

The previous policy used a three-strike system, but with an increasing number of complaints from organizations and pressure from the Recording Industry Association of America, officials decided to make the change.

The association recently announced it had sent 408 pre-litigation settlement letters to 23 universities, including the University of Kansas. Association spokeswoman Cara Duckworth said illegal downloading is disproportionately high on college campuses.
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS TO CRACK DOWN ON ILLEGAL DOWNLOADING

By The Associated Press

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Honored at KU

David Peavler of Emporia received the University of Kansas Outstanding Graduate Teaching Award at the April ceremony in Lawrence. Peavler, a doctoral student in history with emphasis on race relations, graduated from Emporia High School and Emporia State University with a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in U.S. history. He is a staff sergeant in the Kansas Air National Guard and returned to KU on Feb. 28 after a six-month deployment to Kirkuk, Iraq where he was a trainer of more than 100 Iraqi fire-rescue-emergency medical personnel. He is the son of David Peavler and the late Connie Peavler.
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