In-state tuition rising at more rapid rate

Kansas residents are paying a higher portion of universities' budgets

By CHRIS GREEN
Harris News Service

TOPEKA — The gap between what residents and nonresidents pay to attend the state's largest universities will narrow again this fall.

In 2001, undergraduate students from out-of-state paid about four times more in tuition than Kansas students to attend the University of Kansas, Kansas State University and Wichita State University.

That disparity has significantly decreased in recent years, however, because in-state tuition costs have increased at faster rates than out-of-state charges.

The most recent round of tuition increases approved this past week by the state Board of Regents will push the ratio to well below 3-to-1 at all three of the state's research institutions, according to a Harris News Service analysis of tuition data.

In fact, Kansas State and Wichita State will increase tuition by the exact same dollar amount for resident and nonresident students taking a semester of 15 credit hours this fall — $225 at K-State and $119.25 at Wichita State.

As a result, in-state students will see an 8.7 percent increase in their tuition at K-State, while out-of-state students will see a 3 percent increase. At Wichita State, residents will pay 6.5 percent more compared to the 2.2 percent more for out-of-state students.

Such changes show more of the tuition burden at research schools shifting to Kansas residents at a time when such charges make up an increasing portion of university operating budgets.

WSU trying to shrink gap

Roger Lowe, vice president of administration and finance at Wichita State, said his institution has actively worked to shrink the gap between in-state and out-of-state tuition.

Out-of-state students will pay 2.88 times more than in-state students to attend this fall. The university would eventually like to decrease that ratio to 2.75, Lowe said.

Lowe said the changes were designed to make the university competitive for out-of-state students and to ensure fairness.

"It's a matter of competition, but we also feel that the number we're shooting for is to cover the costs of an education for a nonresident student so that the taxpayers of the state Kansas don't have to pay the costs of it," Lowe said.

In the past, out-of-state students have paid rates that more than covered the costs of their educations, essentially subsidizing lower rates for resident students.

"What we want is a fair charge where the nonresidents students cover the expenses of their academic work," Lowe said.

Outsider advantages?

The state's three regional institutions — Emporia State, Pittsburg State and Fort Hays State — haven't seen significant changes in the spreads between in-state and out-of-state tuition rates.

Out-of-state students pay 3.41 times more than in-state students to attend Pittsburg State and 3.56 more at Emporia State. The ratio at Fort Hays State is 3.77-to-1.

Nonresidents paid 3.79 times more than residents to attend all three institutions in 2001.

Fort Hays State President Edward Hammond said his institution had tried to keep its tuition at the 3-to-1 ratio. Only a small portion of the school's undergraduate population pays out-of-state tuition because the bulk of Fort Hays' enrollment comes from inside the state, he said.

Plus, many of the out-of-state students that do come hail from neighboring states and qualify for a special tuition rate, which is about 1.5 times more than regular in-state tuition, Hammond said.

"We've basically tried not to disad-
disadvantage our in-state students,” Hammond said of the school’s approach.

The smallest gap between in-state and out-of-state tuition is at KU, where nonresident students pay $2.63 for every $1 residents spend on tuition.

KU tries to strike balance

KU spokeswoman Lynn Bretz said that her institution’s highest priority is to keep the cost of tuition as low as possible for the state’s residents.

However, university officials also have to be conscious of not pricing KU out of the range for qualified nonresident students.

That’s because nonresidents pay more than 100 percent of the costs of college at KU, basically subsidizing resident students, Bretz said. A decline in nonresident enrollment could adversely affect resident rates, she said.

Bretz also said that nonresident students also bring other benefits to the university and its students by adding to the diversity of the student body, encouraging in-migration into Kansas and helping the state grow its own professionals in fields where workers are in high demand.

For his part, Low said he doesn’t think the shrinking gap will have a detrimental effect on Wichita State’s in-state enrollment numbers.
John G. Roberts Jr., chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, will deliver the 2008 Vickers Memorial Lecture, sponsored by The University of Kansas School of Business. He will be the first sitting chief justice to speak at the university.

The April 30 lecture at the Lied Center will be part of a two-day trip to KU for Roberts, during which he will meet with business and law students and faculty. Roberts was appointed by President Bush as chief justice on Sept. 29, 2005. Tickets to his lecture will be free but won’t be available until 2008.

The Vickers lecture is named for J.A. Vickers, KU alumnus and founder of Vickers Petroleum Co., and his son, Robert.
Comparisons of the debt loads of 2006 graduates of five Kansas state universities found that those from Wichita State had the biggest bills to pay off: an average $21,368, up from an average $18,510 for 2004 grads, according to Harris News Service. That compares with an average $19,203 debt load at the University of Kansas and $19,000 at Kansas State University. Tuition is higher at those schools, so it’s a concern that WSU’s grads are paying less but apparently owing more.
U.S. Chief Justice John Roberts will be the first sitting justice to speak at the University of Kansas when he delivers the 2008 Vickers Memorial Lecture on April 30 at the Lied Center. According to KU, Roberts is to spend two days on campus meeting with faculty and students in the business and law schools. Tickets will be free, though not available until next year.

David Klepper, dklepper@kcstar.com
It’s a common six-letter name, but it’s the hottest word at City Hall and political gatherings: Gloria.

Just saying the name prompts talk about the role of political spouses and the new administration of Kansas City Mayor Mark Funkhouser.

No surname needed for Gloria Squitiro, the mayor’s wife and highest-profile City Hall volunteer.

From the beginning she has played a pivotal role in the daily operation of the mayor’s office. That has placed her in the middle of most of the criticism Funkhouser has faced in his first two months.

Squitiro attends many 29th-floor meetings, including one last week that the couple acknowledged featured a discussion by some of Funkhouser’s closest advisers about the backlash brewing against her role in the mayor’s office.

So no, it’s no secret to Squitiro that she has become a lightning rod for Funkhouser’s administration.

“This guy has so little to criticize, they have to go after something, and I’m the easy target,” Squitiro said.

Funkhouser has heard it, too.

“There has been a lot of chatter about her role and where does the buck stop,” he said. “The buck does stop with me.”

But it has all come as a surprise to the couple.

“We did not realize the political scrutiny,” Funkhouser said.

Among the controversies:

- Squitiro accepted an offer from a Honda dealer...
FUNKHOUSE: KC mayor’s wife provides ‘easy target’ for his critics

FROM A
leadership for free use of a car for her husband — an offer he later declined due to public outcry.

She suggested the appointment of Frances Semler, a member of a militant group opposing illegal immigration, to the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners.

She called the police chiet to ask him to assign bodyguards for her husband at two forums in predominantly minority parts of town but not for others.

“She has been caught up in things that they didn’t expect,” said former Councilman Evert Asjes, who was Funkhouser’s campaign treasurer and is a member of the inner circle. “It is a learning process.”

The couple thought Squitiro could play a vital role from a perch in the 29th floor, so she picked the desk closest to her husband’s. She isn’t shy about strolling into his office to ask his thoughts and provide hers.

“What makes this different is the actual presence at City Hall, and people are adjusting to that,” said public affairs consultant Jim Bergfalk. “It changes the dynamic.”

Few City Hallers want to talk publicly about the debate over Squitiro’s role.

“This is a very delicate issue,” said Councilman Terry Riley. “We can’t tell him what to do with his wife.”

But some, including even some Funkhouser supporters, say Squitiro is undermining her husband’s effectiveness. They say it’s crucial that they lower Squitiro’s profile.

“Her personality probably works fine being the prima donna of her home,” said Susan Ramirez, who campaigned for Funkhouser. “She is now a public persona. She doesn’t seem to understand you conduct yourself differently.”

To the public, Squitiro has become a topic on radio talk shows and has inspired letters to the editor at The Star.

“I did not know we elected her. I thought we elected him,” said Kathleen Lillis of Kansas City said last week after her letter appeared in the newspaper. “It seems like all of the big decisions have been made by her and he’s agreed with them.”

Supporters bristle at the gos-

sip about Squitiro and say critics don’t appreciate the value that the big-hearted woman brings to the mayor’s office.

They say she is the first in the administration to focus on finding ways to improve the lives of downtrodden Kansas Citians, including insisting that the first mayoral forum be in the inner city.

“She offers a human side to Mark,” Funkhouser spokesman Joe Miller said. “She is always reminding us of the bigger picture that we are all here for.”

Both Funkhouser and Squitiro say they consider any criticism to be coming from a small number of anti-Funkhouser naysayers and wonder whether it is sexist. They say the average rank-and-file voter couldn’t care less about Squitiro.

Funkhouser said that his wife was doing what he wanted and that he saw no point in hiding her at home.

“We are unconventional,” he said. “We don’t pretend to be conventional. She is authentic.”

Still, Squitiro concedes she is hurt and confused by the criticism.

“I hear we are too highfalutin’... but then the next thing I’m hearing is, we are the Beverly Hillbillies,” she said. “I am getting whiplash. Are we too good or are we too bad?”

Some of the questions about Squitiro are substantive and some are, well, just snarky.

City Hall chatter: Gloria is politically tone deaf, leading her husband into briar patches he could easily avoid. Just look at the hits they took in June.

Funkhouser and Squitiro maintain that many of those flashpoints were blown out of proportion by their critics.

“Our political skills are quite good,” Funkhouser said. “Her political skills are quite good.”

However, his biggest regret was not thinking through the reaction to accepting the free-car offer.

The Honda dealership contacted the mayor’s office with the offer. Squitiro says she lobbied her husband for it because he didn’t want a city-provided vehicle and he was taking criticism for driving his aging Toyota. She said it was a fair trade for how all-consuming the mayor’s job is to their fam-

ily.

Besides, and most importantly, state and city law allowed it. So she called the dealership to accept the car.

But then came a firestorm of criticism, and Funkhouser had a change of heart.

“It turned out to be a big deal,” he said. “I didn’t think through the level of attention to my personal life.”

The Squitiro appointment may have created the biggest challenge after some minority and religious communities protested.

Squitiro had known Semler as an early campaign volunteer and encouraged Funkhouser to appoint her to the park board.

The couple said they had been unaware of Semler’s involvement in the Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, but Funkhouser said he was standing by Semler because he respected her right to free speech.

More important, both said, is that Funkhouser is in the process of overhauling the parks system and that the establishment has its claws out for them as a result.

The Squitiro choice and the outcry that followed led to Squitiro’s calls to the police chief asking for police protection when Funkhouser attended town hall meetings that would largely be attended by the black and Hispanic communities.

But she didn’t ask for protection for a Northland forum.

Funkhouser has made a point of declining the police protection his four predecessors received, but Squitiro was concerned about possible disruptions at those two meetings stemming from the Squitiro appointment.

She said she’s not a racist — she’s the opposite, in fact. She acknowledges that Funkhouser told her later that she should have talked to him before calling the police chief so they could have considered the public perception.

And she realizes how the calls were viewed from a political prism.

“I’m going to have a learning curve,” she said.

But she still would make those calls, she said, because she wanted to prevent problems at important community meetings.
City Hall chatter: They campaigned as Bolsheviks but rule as Romanovs. In fact, Gloria acts like a tsarina. She’s even too good to ride in the elevators with the rest of us.

Yes, Squitiro is receiving special elevator treatment.

When she arrives in the morning for work, security officers use the controls to take her straight to the 29th floor, without stops, the same service former Mayor Kay Barnes received.

But Squitiro said it had nothing to do with a queenly attitude. Instead, she said, she has crippling claustrophobia and becomes physically ill in a crowded elevator making frequent stops.

Once she steps onto the 29th floor, she begins a day that can take her everywhere from working on the mayor’s schedule to sitting in on policy discussions.

A top priority is writing condolence notes to the families of every murder victim in Kansas.

City Hall chatter: There’s no dignity in the mayor’s office. Gloria saunters around in her bare feet as if she owns the place.

Yes, Squitiro may have kicked off her shoes on occasion while in the office. In fact, during an end-of-the-day interview, she slipped off her shoes.

She is indeed informal — and definitely the office earth mother.

“I see her as the conscience of the office,” said staff Ken-

City and penning a promise that her husband will work to ensure that others won’t experience the same pain. Letters led Squitiro into the mayor’s office in the first place. During the campaign she composed homey and at times controversial newsletters. Funkhouser wanted to continue that, but she explained it would be impossible to do it from home without knowing what was going on in the mayor’s office with her own eyes and ears.

One afternoon last week she fielded calls from the public, including one from labor leader Bridgette Williams, who wanted to know the date of the mayor’s next “Kitchen Cabinet” meeting and offered Squitiro some encouragement.

Democratic stalwart Dutch Newman called to suggest that the couple attend former President Bill Clinton’s speech in Independence. They did.

Squitiro told one caller not to worry about pronouncing her last name.

“I’m just Gloria,” she said.

She accepted a request to speak to a political group in September.

At one point she walked into Funkhouser’s office to suggest that he add a media consultant to his “Kitchen Cabinet.”

She also called council members or their aides to schedule some additional monthly lunches or breakfasts with Funkhouser.

“I need to get to know the council better so they know I’m not nuts,” she said with a light laugh.

SQUITIRO: Serving as ‘a lightning rod’
The role she plays is to keep us focused on the regular folks."

He said Squitiro was the first to tell staff members to make sure they focused on their spouses and not to let their jobs consume them.

Miller and Funkhouser say that while the mayor reacts cerebrally, Squitiro views issues more intuitively from the heart.

"She is much more of a people person," Funkhouser said. "She just extends my reach."

One afternoon last week a Westport painter dropped off some of his work that Funkhouser had admired and wanted to display in his office. Funkhouser offered a quick thank you and sent him on his way.

An aghast Squitiro shoed her husband out to the elevator bank to grab the painter and express his gratitude better.

City Hall chatter: Gloria stayed out of the auditor's office for the 17 years Funkhouser served there. Why does she now think he can't run the mayor's office without her?

That's apples and oranges, the couple says.

"There is a lot more work to do in the mayor's office," Funkhouser said. "What people don't see is that for better or worse, this job consumes your whole family."

But experts say they need to realize how unusual a situation they've created.

In the short term, the questions about Squitiro's role are hurting Funkhouser politically, says Burdett Loomis, a political scientist at the University of Kansas.

"It seems to me that voters have a right to wonder, 'Wait a minute, she wasn't on the ballot,' " he said. "You are talking about a guy who is a political amateur — a professional administrator, but a political amateur. You've got to have some political feel."

He said that the situation with Squitiro "may work out great in the end" but that Funkhouser will need to show the public that she's a benefit on the 29th floor. That may not be easy.

Asjes, a strong Funkhouser supporter, said he was concerned.

"It is being talked about in the community," he said. "It is different, and that is part of the problem."

He suggests Squitiro not attend forums because it's inevitable that attendees will "tee off" on the man she loves, which can be hard to take. If she still insists on going, he said, she should sit quietly and limit her comments to compliments of folks' attire.

"She will have to learn not to be a lightning rod," Asjes said. "And she will. She is not obtuse. She is smart."

Both Funkhouser and Squitiro say they have no immediate plans to change Squitiro's role in the mayor's office but are willing to "evolve" if circumstances change.

"Eventually," Funkhouser said, "most people will see she is a sweet, decent, wonderful person."

For now, Squitiro knows the political hits will keep coming, but at least she's braced for them.

"All we can do is hold hands and keep moving forward," she said. "I am going to keep doing whatever he needs me to do."

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Kelly Crane, 40

Coordinator of marketing communications graduate program

About the employer: The William Allen White School of Journalism & Mass Communications offers a part-time evening graduate program in marketing communications for working adults at the KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park.

My role: My job is to get the word out about the marketing communications graduate program. It is one of three graduate programs through the School of Journalism & Mass Communications, but it is the only one of the three at the Edwards Campus. My responsibilities also include advising students, working with the faculty and networking with alumni and business leaders.

How long have you been in this position?
Since Jan. 3.

How did you find your job?
After earning my MBA from KU in 2004, I signed up for a couple of classes in the marketing communications graduate program at the Edwards Campus. I was still on the student e-mail list when I received a message from David Perlmutter, associate dean for graduate studies and research for the School of Journalism & Mass Communications. Perlmutter announced that he would be building up the graduate program and adding new hires.

I e-mailed him immediately — introduced myself, gave him a one-to-two sentence summary of my experience and told him whatever the changes would be, I wanted to be a part of it. Within 15 minutes, he e-mailed me back and asked me to send a resume. The application and interview process began not long after that.

What do you think impressed your new employer the most?
My interview. I knew that there were several candidates and I had no experience in higher education, so I had to find other ways to make myself stand out. Because of my preparedness for the interview, I was the unanimous choice for the job.

Advice for others?
Don’t wait for a job to be posted to inquire about career opportunities with a particular organization. If I had waited to apply for this position until it was posted on the KU Web site, I probably wouldn’t have even had an interview.

Sue Dye Babson, special to The Star
Region’s run of disasters proves costly

"This is like a terrible dream," said Denise Lind of Greensburg, Kan., as she returned to her home for the first time after a tornado splintered it and many others.

Snow, tornadoes and flooding are taking a big emotional toll in addition to the monetary damages.

By DAVID KLEPPER and KEVIN MURPHY
The Kansas City Star

With the new year came the costliest storm in Kansas history, blanketing western Kansas in snow and ice, killing thousands of cattle and pulling down 10,000 utility poles.

Then came spring storms and tornadoes that uprooted Greensburg, Kan., and thrashed towns in Missouri. And then floods in formerly drought-stricken Missouri and southeast Kansas that are just now receding.

In between was a bizarre Easter freeze that ruined crops and bedeviled gardeners.

"The boosters may come next," Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said wryly, mentioning the one Great Plains calamity that hasn’t made an appearance recently.

It’s been a wild and destructive year of weather in an area known for wild and destructive weather. While Kansas and Missouri are no strangers to blizzards, tornadoes and floods, the costs — financial and emotional — are adding up.

The ice storm and tornadoes alone have caused more than $1 billion worth of damage, much of it in rural areas that were already having a tough time. The state and federal governments have already spent more than half that on recovery efforts. Insurance companies report claims in the hundreds of millions.

The destruction pales in comparison to that...
DISASTERS: No single factor links ruinous storms

Though the Kansas City area has missed the worst of Mother Nature this year, every county in Kansas has received a disaster declaration from either the state or federal government. The story is much the same in Missouri.

Kansas has received three federal disaster declarations since January. Missouri has had three since December. Only one other state — Oklahoma — has had as many in as short a period this year.

"The weather has been extremely unkind to this region," said Melissa Janssen, spokeswoman for the Federal Emergency Management Agency region that includes Kansas, Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska. "We haven't been this busy since the 1993 floods."

The federal government makes disaster declarations only when it deems the devastation so extensive that communities and states cannot recover on their own.

And the short-term financial burden is not insignificant.

On Friday, Sebelius said she hasn't ruled out calling the Kansas Legislature into special session to deal with the flooding, as lawmakers did to craft a relief package for Greensburg. She isn't sure the state has enough disaster relief funds.

"People talk about the flood of '51 and say it wasn't this bad then," said Kathy Vaneske of Osawatomie, Kan., as she and her husband, Paul, salvaged food from their home in a flood-damaged neighborhood last week.

The most recent flooding in Kansas claimed 3,000 homes, but the dollar losses have yet to be calculated.

Before the floods, the most damaging event was the series of snow and ice storms that hit in late December and early January. The storms did $360 million in damage in Kansas before moving into Missouri.

Then came the spring tornadoes and rain, resulting in $230 million worth of claims from the Greensburg tornado and other Kansas storms. Heavy rains swelled rivers and caused flooding in northwest Kansas.

Southwest Missouri got hit hard first by the ice storm and then two flooding rains in the past two months.

In Webster County just east of Springfield, limbs toppled by that storm washed into drainage systems during the recent deluge — plugging culverts and forcing water over roads.

"It's been a double whammy," said Bill Sexton, director of emergency management in the county.

As if last year's weather wasn't tough enough for the Show-Me State. Spring 2006 saw storms and tornadoes in northern Missouri and the Bootheel. Last July, a severe storm blasted through St. Louis and knocked out power for a half-million people.

Long term, economists say, the storms of 2007 shouldn't have a substantial impact on the state's economies — though they're likely to affect individual communities for decades to come.

The state and federal governments are pitching in to help. Most homes, farms and businesses were insured, though many without flood insurance may receive nothing after the most recent storms.

If the storm clouds have a silver lining, it's that rebuilding efforts will bring jobs to areas that wouldn't have seen them otherwise. Residents in Greensburg vow to seize the opportunity to rebuild better than the town was before.

But without the storm, those extra construction jobs would likely have gone elsewhere.

"You're just shifting resources around from where they were to where they're needed," said Hall, the KU economist.

Whether the affected communities can bounce back depends on their previous economic health, according to Robert Olshansky, a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Illinois.

Communities ravaged by floods or tornadoes often are rebuilt with better amenities — a new city hall or more energy-efficient homes, for instance. But Olshansky said that's not likely to alter challenges like a loss of agricultural jobs.

"If these were aging communities, shrinking towns, then the disaster is probably not going to change that," Olshansky said. "In principle, there's a great opportunity to make a dramatic improvement, but usually after disasters, most of those things don't happen."

It's likely that Kansas and Missouri are through the worst of whatever Mother Nature has in store.

The summer forecast does not call for either extreme moisture or extreme dryness, according to Derek Deroche, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service office in Pleasant Hill.

Climatologists say no single explanation — be it global warming or El Niño or divine wrath — can be blamed.

"If this happens every other year, then 10 years from now we can say it's global warming," said Dominique Bachelet, a Washington state biologist who is director of global climate change science for the Nature Conservancy. "Otherwise, we may say it's an odd year."

The ice storm was bolstered by a strong jet stream, while the floods and tornadoes were the result of a weaker jet stream and moisture from the gulf, said Anthony Lupo, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Missouri.

Bottom line: It's nothing new. It's just a lot all at once.

Thankfully, Kansas and Missouri have avoided one natural disaster that once wreaked havoc across the Plains.

In the 19th century, locusts caused extensive agricultural damage — even eating the clothes off farmers' backs — and prompted the first special session of the Kansas Legislature in 1874.

One swarm came after the Legislature voted to discontinue funds for the House chaplain.

The next year, lawmakers made sure to pay the chaplain.

The Star's Laura Bauer contributed to this report.

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Kansas City Star
Kansas City, MO
Circ. 264063
From Page: 8
7/9/2007
35212
Studio offers an urban option

Top architecture students from KU and K-State will study at a center in downtown KC.

BY KEVIN COLLISON
The Kansas City Star

When top architecture students from the University of Kansas and Kansas State set up shop downtown next month, it will be an academic addition welcomed on both sides of the border.

The innovative Missouri campus, authorized for up to 16 graduate students from the University of Kansas and Kansas State University schools of architecture, will be on the ground level of the Wyandotte Garage at 1020 Baltimore Ave. The 10,000-square-foot space was last occupied by the La Petite Academy child-care center.

The new location of the Kansas City Design Center is expected to become both a training ground in urban design issues for the students from Lawrence and Manhattan entering their fifth and final year of study, and a showcase for exhibits and public access to their work and ideas.

“We're thrilled about this new space,” said Dennis Law, dean of the K-State architecture school. “It will put them in the heart of one of the most exciting and active urban environments in the country right now.”

John Gaunt, the dean of the KU architecture school, said the
downtown facility was the culmination of a joint program that began in the early 1990s on the campus of the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

"It's really terrific point in the history of the Kansas City Design Center," he said. "It's coming together as it should have in the beginning. The idea was to bring the schools to the urban laboratory to the mutual benefit of the students and the city."

The studio will be led by Richard Farnan, a retired partner at HNTB Corp. and a KU architecture professor. Daniel Serda, the executive director of the Kansas City Design Center, also will relocate to the new space.

Students are scheduled to begin class in mid-August.

"The students will be in an urban context and will have an opportunity to interact with local professionals, planners and civic leaders," Farnan said.

Fifteen students — eight women and seven men — were selected for the first semester from a pool of applicants. Most are architecture students, but others are future planners and interior designers. Each will receive a $5,000 scholarship.

Funding for the program is being provided by the William T. Kemper Foundation and the Hall Family Foundation.

"People have been talking for years about the importance of having higher education in the downtown area," said Jonathan Kemper, president and CEO of Commerce Bank and a co-trustee of the Kemper Foundation. "This is absolutely the right thing in terms of regionalism. People are working with the state line instead of against it..."

The development of the eight-story Wyandotte Garage, which opened in 1987, was spearheaded by the Downtown Council. From 1991 to 2000, the ground-floor space was used by La Petite Academy, but it has been vacant since then. DST Reality and Financial Holding Corp. now own the building.

"We've worked with several different groups to get a community/downtown use to create something more active than just a tenant," said Tom McDonnell, president and CEO of DST Systems. "It's a positive for that block and in that area."

The south half of the room will be used for classrooms, studio space and the offices of the design center. The other half will be available for exhibits.

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Kansas Bioscience Authority pledges a tighter focus

By JASON GERTZEN
The Kansas City Star

A tightened focus and heightened transparency are necessary for the Kansas Bioscience Authority to help bolster a lucrative high-tech industry, officials said Tuesday.

"Being transparent in the way taxpayer dollars are used... and showing results is a critical part of this operation going forward," Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius said during an event focusing on the authority's successes and new initiatives.

Since being created with 2004 legislation, the authority has drawn national attention for an initiative that eventually will channel more than $580 million in state money to stimulate research, nurture biotech entrepreneurs and lure established companies from elsewhere.

The state has an ambitious agenda for creating jobs, cures and other benefits from scientific advances, Sebelius told more than 150 university leaders, entrepreneurs and civic leaders at a gathering in Overland Park. Two of the highest-profile projects are the University of Kansas initiative to gain federal designation as a top cancer center and an effort to bring a $450 million federal...
broad terrorism laboratory to the state.

"Without the bioscience authority's involvement, we don't have a shot at being successful," Sebelius said.

Thus far, the authority has operated much as a fledgling startup company. Incentives it contributed played a role in bringing some 2,800 bioscience jobs to Kansas.

"We have made significant progress in the first three years of operation," said Bill Sanford, president and chief executive officer of NanoScale Corp. and the authority's vice chairman.

"We started from ground zero. The state of Kansas did not have vibrant bioscience commercialization efforts underway."

Only last year did the organization hire a full-time chief executive and other staff members. Companies and universities have had questions about how they could seek assistance from programs that state lawmakers required the authority to establish.

Clay Blair, a Johnson County real estate developer, had been active in crafting economic development deals and guiding other efforts while serving as the authority's first chairman. Last month, though, he resigned amid an ethics inquiry and questions about payments the state-funded authority had made to his personal business associates and family members.

On Tuesday, the authority's board elected Sandra Lawrence, executive vice president and chief financial officer of Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics, as the new chairwoman.

She vowed that making the authority's policies and actions clearly visible and acting with integrity would be top priorities.

"We are in the midst of a transformation," Lawrence said. "We have tightened our strategic focus. We have developed an action plan."

Angela Kreps, president of the industry trade group known as KansasBio, was appointed to the authority board after Blair's resignation. Biotech executives, she said, are eager to work with the authority and are pleased with new efforts that spell out eligibility, requirements and expectations of a series of new programs.

"There is a clear articulation of what the opportunities are," Kreps said. "That is critical. The industry has been asking for clarity of the information."

The authority moved forward with a series of investments Tuesday that are examples of how the initiative can stimulate the state's bioscience industry, said Tom Thornton, president and chief executive of the authority.

The board agreed to provide $1.5 million to the city of Manhattan to build labs needed to attract a federal lab specializing in insect-borne diseases. It agreed to provide about $6 million for a project providing new labs for a Lawrence company called Deciphera Pharmaceuticals. It agreed to invest $300,000 and possibly $350,000 more in Innovia Medical. And it agreed to provide $130,000 in vouchers for university research to OsteoGeneX.

"These are fantastic companies and companies we need to work diligently to support," Thornton said.

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Battling bullies

Teachers learning how to deal with bullying

By DAVID CLOUDSTON
Salina Journal

The tips she shared on Wednesday about the causes and ways to stop bullying at school prompted an audience member to ask Noalee McDonald-Augustine a question.

What about school administrators who won't back teachers who step in — before taunted victims turn their tears into tragic retribution against their classmates?

Kansas lawmakers have made it tougher for schools to ignore bullying problems, responded McDonald-Augustine, a consultant for the Smoky Hill Education Service Center, 605 E. Crawford.

For fiscal 2008, all schools are required to institute anti-bullying programs, including written policies with procedures for reporting bullying behavior, staff training and disciplinary procedures.

McDonald-Augustine was the presenter at a continuing education workshop for teachers on bullying. For three days, teachers are learning about the different factors involved with bullying and school violence, as well as “cyber-bullying” through material posted on the Internet.

Seated in the audience with the roomful of teachers Wednesday was a guest, 2007 Miss Kansas, Alyssa George, Minneapolis. George, a business major at the University of Kansas, has as her platform installing an anti-bullying program in public schools.

“I’m here to network and learn

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information,” said George, who is preparing for the 2008 Miss America pageant early next year.

“A lot of it has been very reassuring, because I happen to have been doing a lot of research about this since I was a sophomore in high school,” she said. “It’s still a problem. But it’s good to see there are about 40 people here, so it shows that teachers and staff know this is a problem and want to get involved to make a difference.”

Learned from parents

The typical school bully has been exposed to aggressive behavior modeled by their parents or guardians, and they see aggression as a way to preserve their own self-image, McDonald-Augustine said.

Bullies have contempt for their victims and a sense of entitlement and intolerance toward those who act differently than they do, she said. Their victims lash out, sometimes violently.

“We do see a lot of times school shooters have been turned down by girls, they’ve been rejected and humiliated in a lot of other situations,” she said.

And if adults have legal protection from bullying and violence in the workplace, why should kids be different, McDonald-Augustine asked.

Making schools more “prison-like” with metal detectors and police officers is not what provides the basis for emotional and physical safety, she said. Nor does ignoring the problem with a “there will always be bullying” attitude.

“Kids lose faith. When we’ve created that environ-

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